



RECIPES  
FOR  
ENCHANTMENT

*The Secret Ingredient is YOU!*

*Volume 1*

*A Wisdom Book of Stories for Women  
with Space to Journal Your Journey  
In 3 Volumes*

*Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein*

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## INTRODUCTION

**I am Barbara Becker-Holstein, psychologist, mother, wife, friend, child, and woman. Let me tell you more. After many years of study, I became a psychologist and developed a thriving private practice with my husband, Russell Holstein. But one day, I suddenly became aware that I had a small “hole” in my heart. It wasn’t the kind of hole that requires surgery. It was the kind that heartache creates.**

**I began to realize that the hole had been there for a long time – in fact, since I was a little girl – and that the emptiness and pain that accompanied it could no longer be denied. It seemed to have grown out of the accumulated insults and disappointments I had sustained over many years.**

**Some of the pain was a direct result of the insulting messages, some subtle, some not, that society had given me and other women – a society that prizes external values over internal truths and that often views physical beauty as more important than inner wisdom; a society that dotes on youth, competition, money, and the outward trappings of success; a society in which I had grown up idolizing and identifying with movie stars rather than appreciating the other moms who lived on my block; a society that taught me not to accumulate cellulite on my thighs and encouraged me to marry young.**

**Over time I have also slowly come to recognize that many other women I know, both professionally and personally, seem to experience this emptiness too. With my clients, and even my own mother, I could identify particular ways in which they had all been diminished and demoralized. For example, my mother had been told by the patriarch of her family that she was beautiful but dumb, and her options were to be a saleslady in Filene’s or a clerk. Needless to say, she didn’t want to be either and chose instead to marry my father at 19.**

**One client told me how her husband deflated her every time she had a good idea by saying, “Well, that and 10 cents will get you a cup of coffee.” Another client recalled that her husband had once turned to her and said, “You know, you’re a very ineffectual and inefficient person.” I have seen how the blows to these women’s self-esteem not only penetrated their hearts but also took years of effort to repair – if indeed they could be fully repaired.**

**I wondered what other subtle, insidious, or mixed messages had contributed to the hole in my heart. Did they have to do with my definition of who I was? Did they have to do with the loss or discouragement of early talents, hopes, dreams? Did they have to do with living in a society that did not value sacred space and privacy? Did they have to do with the gradual erosion of a sense of joy or the difficulty of bringing enough joy into my daily life to give me pleasure?**

**My first book, *THE ENCHANTED SELF, A Positive Therapy*, tells at great length what I discovered about myself – how I became aware of the hole in my heart, and**

how I began the long journey that resulted not only in the healing of this hole, but also in my growing determination to bring more joy and happiness and a sense of well-being into others' lives as well as my own. I hope you will take the time to share my journey by reading *THE ENCHANTED SELF, A Positive Therapy*.

Indeed, the repair work had everything to do with reclaiming lost parts of myself, including my potential, interests, talents, and dreams, which had been stifled or disregarded by myself or others. It had everything to do with treasuring my own history, my own story, and seeing my life as a miraculous unfolding that had positive value for both myself and others. And it had everything to do with finally having the courage to redefine myself according to a definition that made me feel like a glorious and talented and wondrous woman with a full life, rather than struggling without motive and squelching definitions that people in my life, and society at large, had attempted to give me.

A turning point in repairing my heart and opening myself up to joy – which is certainly relevant to this book, *RECIPES FOR ENCHANTMENT, The Secret Ingredient is YOU!* – was the period in the early 1990's during which I interviewed a series of women who were not clients. These women, ranging in age from 35 to their 80s, gave *me* a gift, which I eventually called “enchantment.”

I perceived that these women, even with such difficult lives, were able to live positively for the most part, at times seemingly by magic – to live lives of integrity while deriving pleasure, having fun, meeting challenges, seizing opportunities, and, in general, experiencing a sense of well-being. Even those women whose lives were interwoven with disappointment, pain, family difficulties, divorce, and loss of loved ones were able to do this.

I began to realize that we have been conditioned to perceive ourselves as women in more negative ways than necessary. How can I ever forget the excitement I felt while listening to a woman in her 70's tell me how she had been able to recapture so much joy after ending a bad marriage of 40 years! Her descriptions of herself folk dancing, rediscovering her love of playing the piano, managing her own money, becoming a nutritional guru of sorts, were all so life affirming. She even negotiated successfully with her landlord so as not to receive a rent raise.

The psychologist and educator in me began to realize that we could practice positive states of well being and integrate them into our lives more and more often. I saw that I could teach my clients to see themselves in a more positive light, to recognize and focus on the best in themselves. I saw that I could do that with myself too. It became apparent to me that the more we women learn to negotiate and meet our needs more effectively, the more possibilities we will have to develop a sense of joy. The better we feel about ourselves, the more courage we will have to utilize ourselves effectively and develop our talents. This shift in perception of ourselves which encourages well-being, joy and a determined effort to live a life of purpose unique to each of us, became *The Enchanted Self*.

I developed a paradigm shift in my treatment, using my clients' memories to retrieve good times, happy times, and funny times and to focus on the functional aspects of their childhood rather than the dysfunctional. I began to teach clients how to recognize and itemize their talents and lost potential, how to view their lives as joyful journeys even with their many twists and turns, disappointments and complications.

I began to find that if we practice, we can recognize what brings us pleasure and joy, that it's not so hard to put that into words, and even to have more of it. The joy can come from a very small thing, as with a client who told me how elated she felt just taking a bath for half an hour with the door closed and a couple of candles lit, away from her children, her husband, and the television. There was a sense of returning to herself that was so special.

What I didn't realize by the time the first book was written was how I continued to grow spiritually and joyfully as I let in positive glimpses of life. I hadn't realized how many opportunities I would have to be charmed by others. But enchantment suddenly began streaming into my life from all directions. My clients were teaching *me* positive capacities, courage, and coping skills as fast as I could listen to them. Strangers were giving me lessons in wisdom and sharing their joy. Even people on television I would probably never meet were sharing good news. Forgotten fables and fairy tales, from my past and my present, were bringing joy into my life. So many random opportunities were giving me a sense of hope and a belief that the miraculous can happen.

Those responding to my book, *THE ENCHANTED SELF, A Positive Therapy*, to *THE ENCHANTED SELF NEWSLETTER*, to the website, [www.enchantedsself.com](http://www.enchantedsself.com), and to my presentations, were pouring forth their experiences--sharing their moments of enchantment, joy, and happiness. They wrote me e-mail, they sent their stories to the newsletter, and they became my guests on *THE ENCHANTED SELF* radio show and recounted positive events from their lives. It quickly became apparent that a new book would be emerging. *RECIPES FOR ENCHANTMENT* is the result.

There are three ingredients in any "recipe for enchantment." The first ingredient is a positive feeling within oneself – of optimism, hope, a sense of well being, purpose, determination, wholeness. You will see more nuances of these feelings in the book. The second major ingredient is a positive action, such as sharing, giving, loving, helping, befriending. The third major ingredient that is always necessary is your uniqueness, your perceptions of the world, reactions, interests, abilities, and passions. In essence, all three ingredients are parts of YOU. That is why I say that YOU are the secret ingredient – your positive energies combine with your unique history, your strengths and hidden potential to create *RECIPES FOR ENCHANTMENT*. Again and again you create magic by combining your positive

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feelings with positive action in your special way. Let me illustrate with two short episodes about real people.

Kay's happiest memories as a child were with a pencil and a sketchpad or with watercolors. Her life as an adult was very stressful and hectic. She had difficult teenagers and a marriage that perhaps many of you can identify with, one that left much to be desired. Her husband was often harsh and critical. One of her goals in treatment was to get back some of the joy she had experienced as a child.

Over the months she had practiced taking time for herself in order to do this, particularly to draw. Talking about her recent vacation in the Bahamas, she said, "Oh, it's filled with all the usual family bickering, but I'm so proud of myself. Every night as the sun set, I was able to get out my sketchpad and draw. I didn't allow my family to get in the way of this wonderful part of me that I've rediscovered. I love being able to own my own talent. Inside I feel an excitement growing as I take sketchpad in hand and pick a color, looking out at an image and recapturing it on paper. There's almost a tingling inside of me, and I know that I'm coming closer to my true essence. I share everything else in my life, but my talent belongs to me."

Here's another little story, about Tess. Tess was very artistic as a child. She had loved making doll clothes and using bits of fabric to make clothespin dolls. But as a young adult, she had a boyfriend who, although he seemed perfect for her at first, became very negative, putting her down and making her feel unhappy. They finally broke up. Rather than feeling depressed, Tess felt liberated. She started making clothing again, but this time for herself and her friends, not for dolls. "I was able to tune into my younger self," she told me. Eventually she found a wonderful guy, married; walking down the aisle in a beautiful gown she had designed. "I agree that people have to get more in touch with what was positive in their youth and then be true to those parts of themselves," she says. "It really worked for me."

Each of these women became to focus on what was right about herself rather than what was wrong. As each did, positive changes occurred. All the stories that follow are designed to teach you about the happy outcomes that are available to all of us when we focus on the positive rather than on the negative. They are also designed to help you begin to construct a more meaningful life by giving you the courage, insight, wisdom, and humor to take more positive actions every day.

No, we cannot prevent life from being challenging, difficult, at times overwhelming and even despairing. But we can bring into our lives the special ingredients that turn even the most trying times into moments in which the human spirit triumphs.

Each little story or glimpse that I share comes to you from my special collection of "recipes for enchantment." Like any good recipe box, this collection has grown over the years through many sources. There are clippings from all sorts of writings I

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have read, short accounts from things I saw on television, and wonderful stories that clients and friends have told me, or that other people have sent in to my newsletter.

When you eat something delicious, it feels good and it warms your heart as well as your stomach. A “recipe for enchantment” also feels good, provides nourishment, gives you a sense of well being and, hopefully, sets your mind, heart, and spirit in motion to create more enchantment.

Some of the words that can be ingredients in the recipes include giving, helping, trusting, forgiving, remembering, forgetting, loving, hoping, thanking and caring. I am encouraging you to focus on positive actions because that’s what’s required to create a sense of well being in one’s life, or a shared sense of joyfulness and pleasure. This action may involve the simple step of thinking about someone in a positive light, or looking for the good in an event. Or it may be a more involved sequence of steps that requires brainstorming, problem solving, perhaps even learning a new way of living.

As you can see, actions taken in our lives can have both positive and negative consequences. Some words, such as “remembering,” can be used both positively and negatively. You may reminisce about the worst times in your life, or the best times in your life. The focus will be different, the feeling aroused will be very different and the information taken from these memories will lead to different consequences. This is part of the tremendous responsibility and awesomeness of being human. Indeed we are capable of taking the best from a situation, whether it's in the past or present, or the worst, remembering what didn't work and allowing ourselves to feel discouraged, hopeless and fearful as a result.

However, your uniqueness remains priceless and is often stored in your memories. At the end of each story, you will find a learning opportunity. You can take the major ingredient in that particular story—sharing, caring, loving—and search your own memory bank for a unique experience in which you or someone else took a positive action. If you wish, you can write about that experience and in doing so, bring to life the “seasonings” that are uniquely yours – your background, your interests, your values, your potential. Often you can use the activity following each story as a jumping off point to stimulate personal growth or merely for yourself and pleasure.

Above all, let this book serve as a means for you to see your gifts through reflecting on these extraordinary, yet ordinary, people. Take the time to acknowledge what makes you special and let your courage to truly become your **ENCHANTED SELF**.

Let a sense of well-being permeate your life. Let joy become your rightful companion. Proudly live a life of purpose, unique to your style, your talents, abilities, and potential. The stories I’ve included have been chosen intuitively by me as useful teaching stories. I believe their particular voices serve as mentors whose vibrational energies go out to you. They can help us create larger and larger circles



of harmony and good will, circles where we live lives of meaning and experience joy while feeling to our very core our uniqueness and our personal capacities for inspiration.

My journey has led me to the following conclusions that I would like to share with you as you go on to read these stories:

- ✚ You are entitled to joy, pleasure and repeated states of well being.
- ✚ You're entitled to a life of meaning.
- ✚ You are unique and the world needs your special gift.
- ✚ The story of your life is your most precious gift and the most precious gift you can share with others. The stories of your life contain all the information you need to recognize your talents, interests, preferences, skills and potential. How you use your uniqueness in a positive fashion is your personal assignment.
- ✚ All the lessons you will ever need are being taught all the time around you – stay open to them.
- ✚ Never forget that you're also one of those loving teachers. View yourself in a positive way filled with light and always available to mentor someone to cheer her up, to share some wisdom whether you can see it in yourself or not. Rest assured that you are one of the messengers of enchantment.

## A BLESSING

*I am changed by you Forever*

*Let it be good!*

*Let my influence on you be life-enhancing and yours on mine*

*May we learn from each other, golden threads of selfhood and together may we make a life-enhancing tapestry*

*Let me always remember that the teacher is in the student*

*And, in awe, I see the beauty in all.*

You have the opportunity to participate after reading each story or vignette in this book. My hope is that you will do so and then, like any good cook, pass back to the universe your very best “enchanted recipes.” To do this, please send your stories to me at [encself@aol.com](mailto:encself@aol.com) so that *RECIPES FOR ENCHANTMENT* can continue. May this little book and the activities that follow inspire you.

**BAKING: Loaves of Love**

One beautiful Wednesday morning, I drove from my home in suburban New Jersey to Borough Park in Brooklyn, a densely populated Jewish neighborhood. Men in long beards, little boys with side curls, and women wearing long, dignified skirts and wigs filled the streets. On a street of small grocery stores and plain row houses with well-kept gardens, I found Toby's house. She stood at the top of a long staircase, and seemed delighted to see me – a warm, friendly woman without a hint of make-up. Her hair was covered with a kerchief and she wore a housedress that looked like a bathrobe, the kind my grandmother used to wear. She also looked five months pregnant. I later discovered that she had 10 children – the oldest, 22, was already married – but only one was currently at home, a little girl, about two and a half, who clung to her mommy's apron strings.

Toby ushered me into her clean, but by American standards, barren kitchen. There were no photographs or magnets on the refrigerator, no paintings or wallpaper of fruit and vegetables, no radio or television – in fact, no appliances at all. It was as simple a kitchen as I had ever seen. Yet the old stove was already warm. I immediately felt a sense of peacefulness as if the whole apartment was radiating positive energy. The windows were open and even the Brooklyn air smelled fresh. Children's voices and traffic noises wafted up from the street, combining to create a silence that somehow felt sacred.

Toby showed me a giant dishpan in which a batch of challah dough was already rising. She explained that we would need another batch and asked if I wanted to do this by hand or by electric mixer. I chose the hand method. I was craving to get my hands into the dough. Toby said that many women prefer using the mixer, which is easier. However, her radiant face indicated her implicit approval of my choice.

She then produced another giant dishpan and told me to combine five cups of sifted flour, a cup of oil, five egg yolks, and salt. The leavening yeast was left to rise in another dish. After a while, when she told me to mix the ingredients together, I plunged my hands into the redolent mass feeling as if I were a girl again, playing in a sandbox. I didn't stop mushing until Toby told me to roll the dough into a giant ball and place it on her countertop. It was time to knead.

What a transforming experience! I felt as if God's feminine side whispered in my ear, "You have a wonderful task to do and it involves working this dough to the point of pure pleasure." For half an hour I pressed, rolled, pushed, pulled, squeezed, turned and lifted the dough as hard as I could. Toby, an instinctive teacher, praised my kneading technique and the strength of my hands. I found myself talking about my grandmother and the homemade challah she made when I was young. My hands, it seemed, had been inherited from a long line of women empowered by a sacred undertaking.

When my hands and arms grew tired, Toby encouraged me to rest and have a snack—delicious marble cake, creamy cheesecake, and homemade coffee ice cream—all handmade from the egg whites left over from her challah baking.

After our snack, we returned to our baking. Toby produced a bowl in which the challah had already risen. That's when I realized that the batch I had fashioned would be presented to Toby's next student – a woman I didn't know but to whom I was giving something very special, just as a stranger had bequeathed her kneading bowl to me.

I cut my new dough into six pieces, which I then rolled into long, thin strips. Toby showed me how to braid them. I tried to follow her as she spoke: "Bring these two strips close together and then bring this one under them and then it goes up over the right." Or did she say left? "Then the other goes down, and then you start all over."

I loved braiding the dough. After all the loaves were shaped, we made some miniature loaves with the leftover dough. Everything went into the oven. Toby invited me to visit the neighborhood while the bread baked, so I shopped. The time flew by. When I returned, about an hour later, I found Toby walking down the steps from her house with big gray plastic garbage bags in her hand, filled with the fruit of our labor. She placed the bags in the passenger and back seats of my car. We hugged and kissed each other. She told me to come back any time for my next lesson.

The aroma filled the car. I had enough challah to last at least a month. Toby climbed the stairs back to her family, and I began driving toward the Verrazano Bridge. It was rush hour, but I was calm. I felt as if I had accomplished something special, a feeling I hadn't had for years, perhaps not since I was a girl and learned how to skip or ride my bike. The scent of the challah and the memory of its baking replenished me. I had a restorative sense of a job well done.

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*One of the core ingredients for a Recipe for Enchantment lies in the doing. Sometimes this doing happens privately, even within one's own mind such as meditating. Sometimes it happens between people in ways that are refreshing such as playing together or visiting. There is also a concept of "doing good deeds". When we are doing in the service of others, often a host of positive emotions take place. The person doing the action can feel happy, uplifted, wanted, special and certainly the person who is the recipient of the "doing" can feel joyful, contented, special, involved, loved.*

- 🔥 Think for a moment about when you have been “doing” in a way that either enriches your life or someone else’s. Don’t be shy – the hardest part of this may be giving your self credit where credit is due. Have you helped someone out? Been there in a special way for a friend? Have you taken good care of

**yourself? Been your own best friend by an action you took – be it a pampering bath or finally divorcing an abusive spouse? Share some of your “doings” here.**

- ✚ On the other hand have you felt good when someone gave to you by “doing”? Perhaps a teacher gave time and extra tutoring that made all the difference? Or a friend had a meal waiting when you got home from the hospital? Share what the person did and how it made you feel.**



**BELIEVING: Joey Figures it Out**

Joey, the youngest child in his family, was almost universally adored. No one could resist a ten-year-old with red hair and freckles who always waved hello, sported an ear-to-ear grin, sent thank-you notes after receiving a present, and actually listened when adults talked to him. He had other talents as well. Not only was he the star batter on his local little league team, but he always impressed his teammates, their parents, and his coaches with his good nature and good sportsmanship. Joey was always ready to shake hands, and to offer a hand in need.

But one spring, with little league practice just three weeks away, Joey became sick with a headache and body pains that wouldn't quit. His concerned parents took him for tests that revealed the worst: Joey had cancer.

Though the hospitalizations were grueling, Joey survived the first ones with his good humor intact. But during his last stay, he became withdrawn and quiet, barely speaking a word to anyone. His nurses, doctors, parents and grandparents all became terribly concerned. Joey the fighter was gone. In his place was a boy they didn't know who seemed to be acquiescing to his disease.

One day, a middle-aged woman appeared in his hospital room and said, "Joey, I'm Mrs. Davis and I've been sent here by your school to work with you on your English. I'll be here three times a week for one hour. You have an awful lot of work to make up, so let's get started." Mrs. Davis worked with Joey on vocabulary and diagramming sentences, gave him some homework, and said she'd be back in two days.

Upon her return, the nurses caught up with her before she had a chance to enter Joey's room. They were amazed, they said, that after weeks of little or no progress, Joey had perked up and seemed like his old self. The nurses attributed the change to Mrs. Davis. She was flattered – but puzzled. She couldn't understand how diagramming sentences and memorizing vocabulary words could have changed Joey's attitude.

At the end of the session, after assigning Joey's homework, she asked how he was feeling.

"I'm feeling so much better, Mrs. Davis. I really think I'm going to get well. You'll see, I'll be playing baseball before the season is even finished."

"That's wonderful," Mrs. Davis said. "What makes you so sure you'll be playing?"

"Well," Joey said, "my school would never have sent you here to work with me on verbs and vocabulary if I wasn't going to make it. They must think I'm going to get better or they wouldn't waste all this money. So you know what? I'm going back to school, and to baseball practice, as soon as I can."

## How Can You Relate To This Story?

*So often our attitude and perception of events make a huge difference not only in the ways we interpret our lives but in the strength and endurance we bring to our lives so that we can go on living. And often our attitudes and perceptions are derived from how we first react to a situation. This was certainly the case for Joey. What Mrs. Davis' appearance meant to him was that the school system counted on his getting well. Their time together indicated to Joey that he was worth the school's financial investment in his future.*

- ✚ Can you remember an occasion when your reaction to a situation led to positive action?

*I remember a beautiful example in my life. When I was in third grade, I could hardly read because I had undiagnosed dyslexia. Frustrated – unable to keep up with even the lowest reading group – I felt a sense of dread every time the teacher asked us to take out our reading books. One day Mrs. Johnson called me up to her desk and she said, "Barbara, I can see you're having a lot of trouble reading, and I have a suggestion. You're a smart little girl with a good memory. Why don't you stop trying to sound out words and instead simply memorize them? Soon you'll know hundreds and then thousands of words by sight and by the time you finish third grade, you will be a very good reader – I promise you."*

*Her words inspired me, giving me the courage and confidence I needed to learn to read. Actually, I'd been trying her approach in secret. But her permission, combined with my eagerness to please her, gave me a burst of energy. By the end of third grade, I had memorized so many sight words that I won the prize for having read the most library books.*

- ✚ I hope you can remember a time when you were similarly inspired and found the courage to change your behavior. It may take a little while to think of an episode in your life, as often we tend to dismiss the encouraging words others give us.

*Come back to this page anytime if nothing comes to you now. On the other hand ...*

- ✚ Can you think of something positive you could say to anyone in your life right now?

*It's possible that your encouragement might make a huge difference in that person's life. Maybe there's something you could do for someone, the way Mrs. Davis came to the hospital to tutor Joey. Over the next few weeks, think about your potential to create positive change in someone else's life – and consider doing it.*





**BELONGING: When Saturday was Really Saturday**  
**Bernice Becker**

**“Bernice, are you almost ready? We're leaving for Grandma and Grandpa's soon.”**

**"Yes, Mom, I'm almost finished brushing my hair." I wanted my hair to shine the way Grandma Sara's lustrous dark hair did. I was nine years old, and dressed in my best Saturday outfit – a sapphire blue blouse and a plaid shirt that blended with the top. I wore my black patent Mary Janes, which made me feel special.**

**My parents, two brothers – Arnold and Howard – and I were invited for a 12:30 Shabbat dinner. Grandma's cooking was better than anyone else's, even my Mom's. Perhaps we'd have a stuffed capon or a pot roast with little roasted potatoes.**

**Grandma and Grandpa lived with three unmarried sons, one of whom, Herbie, was adopted, and one daughter, Aunt Ethel. Orphaned at age two during a terrible flu epidemic, Herbie had been raised by the Watchmakers who lavished attention and love on him. The family had a loyal housekeeper who did the cleaning. But Grandma shouldered the enormous cooking and baking chores for the large family. My grandfather was Orthodox and he wouldn't eat out except where kosher food was served. My Aunt Ethel excelled in the desserts.**

**As we walked the several short blocks to Ruthven Street, we exchanged greetings with the people we knew. Folks were strolling along Elm Hill Avenue where the streets were lined with wonderful, stately elm trees in full bloom on this spring day. The mingled fragrances of honeysuckles and lilacs perfumed the air. When I took a deep breath it was like a cool sweet drink. I felt connected to my neighborhood and enjoyed the comforting sense of belonging.**

**Before we reached our destination our mother cautioned us, "Be polite and watch your manners."**

**"It's gross when your mouth is full and you're talking," Arnold said.**

**Howard added, "You shouldn't stuff your mouth anyway. You could choke."**

**We reached Ruthven Street and walked up one flight to the spacious nine-room apartment where our grandparents were waiting for us. As the baby of the family, I got extra hugs. I soon detected the mouth-watering aroma of potato kugel – a good welcome.**

**In the living room, we were served fresh kichel bread with chopped chicken livers – well worth their weight in gold and cholesterol. "No one can make kichel and chopped liver like you," my mother told her mother. "It's the absolute best."**

The chairs in the gracious dining room were upholstered in burgundy and gold damask, which matched the drapes. The sparkling chandelier cast its light on the crystal goblets, gleaming silver candlesticks and fine china. Grandma had crocheted the champagne lace tablecloth herself. When I saw the dish with jumbo green olives on the table, I said, "Oh, you remember how I love those." Then Grandpa, who was short but handsome in his velvet smoking jacket and yarmulke, made a prayer over the golden brown braided challah from which we each took a piece before dinner was served.

First we ate fresh fruit cup with sherbet which was followed by tender, lean brisket of beef au jus, with candied carrots, stuffed mushrooms and wonderful kugel. The men talked about prize fighting and the famous champion of the era, Jack Dempsey. The women discussed recipes and the current stage shows in downtown Boston.

Encouraged to participate in the conversation, I told related the story of my neighbor, Tootsie Freedman, who accidentally got a cherry pit stuck up her nose. The pit moved up and down with her breathing, but wouldn't come out. Her frantic mother, Tootsie, and I drove to the Children's Hospital, where the offending object was removed. What a newsworthy story, I thought!

After a foot-high lemon meringue pie and hot tea with little fruit-flavored sugar cubes, our delicious meal was over. Everyone made the usual comments about the fabulous food. Heaven only knows how many pounds we had gained that day.

All the children went to play in Herbie's bedroom; all his great books, games and puzzles were a treat for us. None of us had such a large stock of material goodies. After we had played for a couple of hours, our parents told us that it was time to go home. I didn't want to leave, but Grandma reminded me that I'd be visiting during the week, after school.

At the front door, my affectionate, generous Grandpa Isaac placed a dollar bill in my hand. "For you, Shayna," he said. My brothers received their share also. We were fortunate to have him for one more year. Walking home satisfied and well fed, I sensed our silent consensus that we had spent another memorable Saturday seated around the bountiful table "breaking bread together."

This was one of the times in my life when I could sense my ENCHANTED SELF emerging. I had such positive feelings when I was surrounded by my loving family. Occasions such as these were unforgettable, and I cherish the memories of when Saturday was really Saturday.

Food has always been important in my life. Sometimes I feel guilty because I think about and enjoy food so much, but then I realize that "breaking bread" with family and friends has always been a way of life for me. So many wonderful memories are associated with the holiday celebrations, or with Saturday afternoons, sitting

around the table feeling connected to the people I care about and who care about me.

Thankfully, I am pretty well in control about what I eat and I do watch my weight. Besides, I have many interests other than eating.

Well, I must stop writing now. My lunch is ready and it smells so inviting ...

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*This is such a great story because it helps us acknowledge that belonging to a loving family soothes and refreshes us much the way the aromas from a savory meal whets and then satisfies our appetite. No everyone has had a chance to feel as special as Bernice felt when, as a child, she trusted that her story about Tootsie Freedman would be welcome and appreciated by the other adults. But I hope that you have shared a good meal with friends or family during which you felt special or acknowledged, or during which the food itself was an acknowledgment of the special regard in which the others held you.*

- ✚ Can you remember a special meal? Replenish yourself by going back in time to that wonderful meal, where everything was so enjoyable – the food as well as the company! Take a few minutes and let the memory come back to you: the smells, the tastes, the atmosphere of the room, the weather, what you wore, what was happening at that time in your life. Can you think of one word to describe the most special quality about that occasion? Perhaps words like "belonging," "replenishing," "sharing" or "connecting" come to mind.
- ✚ Now brainstorm three ways that you could get close to that quality again. For example, if I were Mrs. Becker, I might decide that the most important quality was "sharing." If so, I might invite some dear friends to my home and serve them some of the wonderful foods from my childhood memories. Or if I decide that I want to emphasize belonging, I might make an effort to get together with family members who are still around. In this case, the food might be secondary, taking a back seat to the importance of being with them again.



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### **CARING: Doggy Day Care**

**Watching CBS this morning, I saw a wonderful story that touched my heart. It was about an extraordinary, long overdue innovation – day care for dogs! Located in Manhattan (where else!), the center watches over dogs while their owners go off to work.**

**I saw a snippet of film about what happens during morning drop-off time. One by one, pet owners come in with their pets on their way to work, and say goodbye. In the center, the dogs can hardly contain their happiness: they leap up and lick their day-care friends. Together, dogs and caregivers enter a big room that resembles a gym with a beautiful wood floor. Some dogs want to play, some lounge, and some work out – on specialized treadmills and other sports equipment.**

**Most remarkable of all, the dogs' owners can watch their pets. The center contains concealed video cameras that transmit images over the internet. With this arrangement, the dogs don't know they're being watched so they are not distracted, but their owners can make sure that their pets are happily enjoying themselves. (I have a feeling that many children's day care centers will want to install video cameras as well so that anxious parents can assure themselves that their children are doing fine, just as the dog owners can.)**

**At the end of the day, owners retrieve their happy pets before going home. Rather than having to mark time in an empty apartment, the pets have had a full day of companionship and kinship.**

**This program touched my heart for several reasons. First, it fills a real need. In our lonely society, with so many people living separate lives, we turn to pets for friendship and love. Yet when we go off to work, we make our poor pets stay by themselves to wander the house, chew slippers, jump on furniture, stare woefully out of windows. It's so much more sensible to bring our dogs to a day care facility where they can receive loving care and attention. Yes, animals need an emotional network as much as we do!**

**It's also an enchanting story because the person who created Doggy Day Care did something positive in the world by identifying a need and filling it. Clearly, the idea is a good one since so many people are using the facility. In this story, everyone ends up feeling good: the owners, who are making a good living from the center; the pet owners, who know they are doing right by their animals; and the pets themselves. There's nothing wrong with a Recipe for Enchantment that addresses God's other creatures.**

### **How Can You Relate To This Story?**

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*This is a wonderful story that you can refer to when you have the urge to make the world a better place. Try to brainstorm some ideas now. Let your imagination run wild. You are the CEO of this project, and your budget is limitless.*

*So often, a small, overdue correction or invention makes a huge difference. A slight turn, shift in perspective, or new interpretation can cause huge changes in the course of our lives and of the world. For example, think about the First Temple built in Jerusalem, which I was privileged to visit a few years ago. In structure, it resembled all the temples that had been built before it.*

*The worship service there was also similar to those in other temples – priests sacrificed animals and used purified water. But there was one difference that ended up changing the future of mankind: before the construction of the First Temple, people prayed to many gods. But when people came to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, they prayed to one God. From that point forward, history was changed forever.*

*We're all capable of assessing the world in which we live and intuitively grasping which small corrections may have an enormous impact. I've noticed several such corrections in the past few years – billboards suggest that we indulge in random acts of kindness; organizations adopt stretches of highway to keep litter-free; people band together to create community gardens in public spaces in our cities and towns; tutors visit students and shut-ins at home to instruct them in various subjects such as computer science.*

*Here's another example: job-sharing, which my father, who devoted his career to education, advocated. In this way, two people, whether teachers or administrators, split one position between them, allowing each person more time to conduct the rest of his or her life. According to this model, one plus one equals more than two since each person will work more than fifty percent of the time, and will be more than half invested in the job. In addition, two people will be able to be active members of the professional world for the cost of one paycheck. Best of all, the beneficiaries – in this case, the children – will benefit from more help and expertise than they've paid for.*

- ✚ Now take some time to brainstorm some positive corrections that you've come up with. Remember, you're in complete charge and money is no object. Have fun changing some of the ways we construct our daily lives.

*Return to what you've written here once in a while and see if any of your ideas urge you into action. If so, you may be on the road to making an extraordinary, long overdue innovation. Good luck!*



**COMPLETING: Mr. Diamond's Last Trip through Elizabeth**

When Mr. Diamond recently passed away, everyone in his neighborhood was bereft. They knew him not only as the local butcher, but as a warm, generous man to whom many had turned over the years for help and advice. Even before his funeral, stories of his kindness began to circulate. “Remember the packages of meat he used to leave at your front door? If you ordered four lamb chops, you'd open it to find three pounds of ground beef and some bones for a cholent stew as well – and a bill for only the four chops.”

People also remembered how thoughtful he was about lending money, never asking any questions. Over the years, his wife and neighbors had encouraged him to invest some of his savings. But Mr. Diamond always said, “Who knows if these monetary investments will ever pay off? What I do for my friends – that’s my investment in the future.”

The day of his funeral dawned gloomy and gray. Because Mr. Diamond was going to be buried in Israel, there was a long motorcade procession to the airport. Police escorts from surrounding towns led the cortege along the most direct route. But at one point the procession was diverted through the downtown streets of Elizabeth, New Jersey. No one knew why. Did the police officers make a mistake? Almost a half-hour elapsed before the procession was re-routed onto a major road.

Mr. Diamond's son turned to his mother and said, “Why do you think we drove through Elizabeth? Did Daddy ever have a connection there?” It was as if this boy had great faith and knew that nothing happens by chance.

“As a matter of fact,” Mrs. Diamond began, “Daddy did have a connection in Elizabeth. Years ago, he did business with a slaughterhouse there, which he soon realized was passing off non-kosher meat as kosher. For example, they claimed to have 20 kosher carcasses on hand and yet 25 kosher tongues. Impossible! After he passed this information on to the authorities, the slaughterhouse was quickly closed down.”

“Everyone knew that the slaughterhouse was owned by the Mafia,” Mrs. Diamond continued. “Friends encouraged your father never to set foot in Elizabeth again. And he never did – until today.”

Was it an “accident” that the police officer leading the funeral cortege lost his way? Perhaps Mr. Diamond in some way engineered the mistake, realizing that now that he was untouchable, he could safely return to the town of Elizabeth one more time in order to complete the circle of his life.

**How Can You Relate To This Story?**



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*This story is about divine justice – about people finding recognition, having the last word, or righting a wrong that occurred many years ago.*

*Let me explain with an example from my own life. Years ago, Boston University had to cancel its graduation ceremonies due to student rioting. It happened to be the year I was to receive my Doctorate in Education, a degree I'd worked long and hard to attain. Instead of the formal ceremony to which I'd been looking forward, I had to content myself with a celebratory dinner with my family.*

*Twenty-five years later, I received an invitation from the University to attend graduation ceremonies. My first reaction was to decline. After all, I technically had my degree. Also, the thought of attending the ceremony seemed particularly out of synch with my stage of life: graduating was for young adults, and here I was, in my middle years.*

*Not only that, but I'd have to drive to Boston, meet up with people I hadn't seen in many years, and put on a cap and gown which would probably make me feel foolish. But because my parents were eager to see me graduate – the whole process felt incomplete to them as well as to me – and my husband and son agreed to accompany me, I agreed to attend.*

*As it turned out, the ceremony was thrilling, and I was delighted to reconnect with so many old friends. So what if I was older? I gained a sense of completion, and allowed myself to enjoy the feeling of being honored. In truth, I was probably more relaxed and appreciative of the festivities than I would have been 25 years earlier.*

*From this very belated graduation ceremony I learned that sometimes we have to seize important opportunities. Even those that seem "out of synch" with our present-day lives may have special relevance to us, and help us to complete our life journeys.*

✚ Have you ever completed something left incomplete in your life?

✚ Have you known someone who was able to complete such an act?

*Perhaps there's something in your life that you still need to complete. And perhaps you'll need to take some action in order to accomplish this. Maybe you have to get together with someone whom you knew years ago even though this may entail traveling to visit that person; perhaps you need to finally finish an abandoned project. Use this opportunity to think about unfinished business in your life and jot down notes about how you can begin. Remember, most of us don't need to wait for our funeral cortege to execute unfinished business.*



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### CONNECTING: Sally's Family Ties

The Greene family – Sally, her husband Bob, and their twelve-year-old daughter Sara – had outgrown their house. The snug, two-bedroom Cape Cod into which they'd moved soon after Sara's birth, had been a wonderful home for all those years. But now, with Sara on the brink of adolescence, it was proving much too small. After months of discussion and probing questions – should they move? build an extension? – they decided to gut the house and build a new one on the same site. They pored over plans for the new house, hired an architect and a contractor, and were told that the project would take about five months. In the interim, they decided to rent a tiny apartment in town. Sally dreaded the idea. It seemed so ironic – here they were, trying to expand their living quarters, and ending up with even less space than they were used to. Unfortunately, there was no other solution. But Sally was in for a surprise. For after only a week of living in the new apartment, she realized that this move was a godsend. None of her worries had materialized. There were no fights over privacy, no harsh words, no tense moods. Quite the opposite! Living in the cramped apartment, her family was drawn closer together than they'd been in years.

In their old house, for example, there were two TVs, one in each bedroom. The apartment had room for only one which they put it in the living room. As a result, they tended to watch television together. But best of all, they watched less TV.

Sally noticed other changes. In their old house, Sara tended to take her time in the downstairs bathroom she had to herself. With only one bathroom in the apartment for all three of them to share, Sara showed surprising thoughtfulness and courtesy. She neither hogged the mirror nor spent too much time in the shower.

Bob was also changing. In their old house, he'd get up immediately after dinner and retreat to the living room to read the newspaper. Now, he lingered at the kitchen table, taking time to talk to her and to Sara. He began to ask about the details of their lives in ways he never had, and showed interest in all their activities. The more he knew, the more he wanted to know. And because he better understood his wife and daughter, he was less irritable around the house. In fact, everyone was kinder to each other.

The small, temporary space fostered a welcome sense of interconnectedness and belonging. Sally sometimes found herself wishing that they wouldn't have to leave. But her deepest wish was that her family could preserve their newfound closeness and take it with them to their new house. Who would have thought that their newfound closeness would become their most precious possession!

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*A few years ago, I became friends with the Rosens, an orthodox Jewish family. As was typical, they had a large family – eight children – and lived in a modest home with no*

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*television. Yet despite their close quarters, they led very private lives sanctified by prayer. Rachel and her husband treated each other and their children with respect. The older children helped younger ones. I remember in particular one Shabbos afternoon when even though fourteen children were playing at one end of the living room, I was actually able to have a conversation with four other women – in the same room! Yes, something positive was going on in that family. Thanks to mutual respect, the family had developed in such a way that everyone had time and space. They were able to get to know each other, relax, take a nap, talk to friends – all within a small, shared space.*

- ✚ Have you ever known a family like the Rosens?**
- ✚ Or did you know a family in which the members felt isolated from each other?**
- ✚ Do you feel isolated?**
- ✚ What helps you to feel more a part of a family or closer to others?**

*Jot down notes that respond to any of the above questions here.*

- ✚ Tell a story about a time in your life when everyone shared and felt connected – for example, at a family reunion, or the time the lights went out.**



**DANCING: Dancing the Sardana****Claire Wintram**

Forty years ago, when I was eight, I was on holiday with my parents and four-year-old sister in northern Spain. To me, an Anglo-Jewish child from an English Midlands village with only loose connections to the local urban Jewish community, the country seemed full of magic.

Everything entranced me: eating on the patio of the restaurant under the stars, watching women carrying live chickens and guinea fowl in baskets to market, and savoring the tiny delicious pastries and pastel-colored ice cream with unimaginable subtle flavors. I remember the intensity of light reflected in the rock pools on the beach, the sights and sounds of the local fairground where we made ourselves sick on the swing boats, the huge billboards rising up out of the middle of maize fields, and the sight of donkeys pulling farm carts wearing hats with holes for their ears. In retrospect, this holiday, with its countless vibrant images, is overflowing with ENCHANTED MOMENTS.

But the most wonderful ENCHANTED MOMENT happened one night. I'd already gone to sleep in my white nightdress spangled with tiny, deep blue stars. Sometime during the middle of the night, my father woke me up and told me to put clothes on over my nightdress. Leaving my sleeping sister and mother behind, we went downstairs, crossed the hotel lobby, and stepped into the moonlit square.

A crowd of people was dancing the Sardana, an ancient, graceful dance. Turning round and round in circles, arms linked across shoulders, they looked both happy and stately.

It was wondrous and exciting to see people dancing in the street, something I'd never before witnessed. Even though I was only a spectator of this joyful scene, I felt privileged. As I stood there, holding my father's hand, bewitched by the sight, one of the waiters from our hotel approached us, bowed solemnly, and invited me to join the dance with him. Astonished and delighted, I agreed.

I was filled with anxious pleasure as I joined the circle of celebration. I didn't know the steps, but it didn't matter. People were friendly and welcoming, and we spoke to each other beyond language. I felt honored, even in my youthfulness – a feeling I hadn't experienced in England. I danced for I don't know how long.

The images of that magical night with its ENCHANTED MOMENT have stayed with me all these years. But I am sure that its influence goes much deeper than conscious memory. For example, though I have always loved watching flamenco and taking part in Spanish and Latin American dances, I have only recently begun to discover the connections between gypsy and Jewish dancing and flamenco. This awareness has helped me understand my responses to the vibrant, sensuous movements so characteristic of Spanish music. Despite my obvious Ashkenazi

heritage, I am sure that I have Sephardic blood in my veins – I can feel its presence in my soul.

I am convinced that the ENCHANTED MOMENT I experienced as a child in Spain forty years ago recurs for me now when I hear certain dance music today, as an adult woman. The Sardana has surely had a significant and lasting impact on my life.

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*Think about Claire as a young child dancing in the moonlight, bewitched by the grace, charm and responsiveness of the dancers. It's a magical scene. How wonderfully proud of herself she must have felt – and so alive. It's a wonderful, strengthening feeling to experience yourself as totally accepted by those around you, and in the center of an intense activity.*

*I remember an event that was much more private but left me feeling strong, appealing and special. When I was 11, my parents and I were vacationing in Provincetown, Massachusetts. I begged them to let me take an airplane ride over the town – and finally they agreed. Never in my wildest imagination could I have understood their courage in letting me go. Neither of them had ever flown at all – and I'd be sitting in one of the single-engine plane's two seats, right behind the pilot!*

*I remember my parents waving to me as the plane soared higher and higher. Up, up, up we went until all the houses seemed tinier than the tiniest dollhouses. The sky was blue with fluffy clouds and I felt literally on top of the world. The handsome pilot was kind and gracious to me. At some moment, I must have indicated that I was feeling somewhat anxious because I remember him saying to me, "If you wish, you can hold my hand for a while." There I was, up in the sky, having achieved something no one else in my family had, and holding the hand of Prince Charming to boot!*

*All too quickly the ride was over. I could sense my parents' delight and relief in their smiles and hugs. For me, this was a moment of courage and independence. I remember feeling valued – not only by my parents who loved me without question, but also by a total stranger.*

*Let your mind drift back to various times in your life, and poke around until you remember a time when you experienced a moment of wonderment, connection, or courage. Maybe it was a time when you finally got your way, or when certain people included you in a special activity. Your experience may be as different from Claire's as mine was. If you're having trouble remembering such a time, here are some key words to help you get started: feeling accepted; feeling powerful; a moment of courage; total pleasure; a heightened moment; victory; a euphoric moment.*

 Now write your memories here.





**DISCOVERING: The Mysterious Rabbi**

Once long ago, in central Europe, there was a Jewish boy, Joseph, who went off to live in a Yeshiva to study. His days were filled with prayer and learning. He particularly enjoyed his time studying with his favorite Rabbi. Oftentimes when he was daydreaming he would think that he wished he knew more about this Rabbi. “What did he do with his time when he wasn’t with the boys?” he would muse. Every day the youngster had a study hall in an upstairs room of the big old building that served as the Yeshiva. He would gaze out of the window daydreaming. Gradually he noticed that his Rabbi, the very one he wished he knew about, walked away from this building and left the premises at exactly the same time every day. He could see him going off into the distance and then returning thirty or forty minutes later. He left the premises rain or shine regardless of how cold it was. Joseph became fascinated. Where did the Rabbi have to go at exactly the same time every day? He certainly didn't have time to get back and forth to his home and to have a meal with his family. Joseph tortured himself. After all, it was really none of his business but then again he so admired and respected his Rabbi. Didn't he deserve to know more about his life?

One day his ruminations got the best of him and he snuck out of the study hall waiting for the Rabbi to leave the campus. Sure enough at exactly three ten, the Rabbi left. There was Joseph, following him from well behind. The Rabbi went up one hill and then down a hill and through a neighborhood. Finally he stopped and stood at the bottom of the busy street on the curb. The Rabbi just stood as if he had stopped dead in his tracks. He appeared to be waiting. Joseph was perplexed. What was going to happen now? The moments began to tick by. Nothing was going on here except push carts and horses and buggies were going up and down this busy business street. Suddenly a peddler pushing a very large heavy cart appeared down the end of the street. Joseph noticed the Rabbi insistently waving until the two of them made eye contact and the peddler came nearer to him. As the peddler came very near with his heavy cart, he moved from the center towards the left of his cart so that his hands were now on the left side pushing. He had left space at the right and to Joseph's amazement, what happened next was something of which Joseph never would have dreamed. The Rabbi moved in effortlessly next to the peddler, and put his hands on the right hand side of the bar. Together, with great effort exuded by both of them, they pushed the peddler's cart up the steep hill. Then at the top of the hill, just as effortlessly, the Rabbi moved away from the cart, simply waving goodbye. The peddler again moved into the middle to balance his cart and the Rabbi came down the hill. The Rabbi's face was flushed as he came back towards campus. He wiped his forehead with a handkerchief where the perspiration was still pouring off of him. Joseph thought as he watched him that he had the glow of a person who has been helpful. A couple of minutes later he was back in the building preparing for his next class.

Joseph thought to himself, “So that's what the Rabbi does with his forty five minutes off campus everyday. He goes and waits for a peddler, an ordinary man, a

stranger who has a heavy burden and he helps that man up the hill.” Joseph was amazed and even more in awe of his Rabbi.

This story adapted from the Mussar movement in Jewish history is a beautiful example of an earth angel. It always amazes me how good I can suddenly feel when I’ve been truly helpful. But perhaps I have an even more heightened sense of joy if I get a chance to be helpful in a capacity that is not part of my normal repertoire. That’s what this Rabbi was doing. A very learned scholar, he was now offering his arms and his brute strength in a simple way, repetitively every day to a stranger.

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*I can remember one time when I suddenly stretched myself to help a stranger. In this case, it was a poodle dog. I was walking and saw a dog trembling with a tattered bandage, half off. This bandage appeared to have been around his abdomen. I myself have never owned a dog and am not particularly comfortable around them. My love is cats. But I found myself scooping up this poodle who was so frightened and feeling his relief as he settled into my arms. It was a simple step to walk the few blocks with him to a veterinarian’s office that I knew was located down the street. I sat waiting with the dog, to give him over to the veterinarian and found myself filled with a sense of purpose and sudden love for this little creature. It was a shocking sense of connection that I had never expected to experience. Not only was I feeling good about having helped this little dog, but I actually began to hope that I might get a chance to adopt him if no one else came forth.*

*The good news was that his owner indeed had not abandoned him and soon came looking for him at the veterinarian’s. So he was safe and cared for again. The bad news was that I had to settle for my positive feelings of helping and going out of my way to stretch myself with new behaviors rather than suddenly becoming this dog’s new parent.*

- ✚ Can you think of a time when you had a chance to be helpful, particularly a time when you were helpful in a way that wasn’t tied to your normal roles or your profession? Tell the story here.
- ✚ If you can’t think of a time, let your heart begin to be open to the universe, indicating that you are willing to help out. I am certain that the divine will pick up on your energies and let you be an earth angel quicker than you can possibly imagine. If that happens, come back later and capture the episode in words on this page.



**FINDING: There By the Grace of God**

Phyllis, a young retired woman, lives and travels with her husband in a mobile home. They enjoy our beautiful country, and manage to stay in touch thanks to a cellular phone and constant access to e-mail.

Last year, camping in a national park, Phyllis noticed a cat sleeping on their picnic table. Presuming it was a hungry stray, she left some scraps on the table. After a while, she noticed that the cat hadn't touched the food, which seemed odd. Usually stray animals are hungry for any morsel. Curious, she started to walk toward the cat, talking softly all the while. But then she stopped dead in her tracks. Part of the cat's face had literally been ripped off. No wonder she couldn't eat – her jaw was injured.

Phyllis was upset beyond words. She wanted to bring the cat to the local veterinarian. However, it was the day before July Fourth, and her husband was leery – he worried that the cat had a disease. Though he finally agreed to accompany Phyllis to find a vet and a cat carrier, he assured her that by the time they returned the cat would be gone.

He was right.

Phyllis felt terrible. She and her husband were supposed to leave the next day, but she realized that she couldn't leave without knowing what had happened to that poor, injured cat, unable to eat, hiding somewhere in the woods. Her husband said, "Don't be ridiculous. If the cat's gone, she's gone. She knows instinctively how to take care of herself and she's not gonna come back." Needless to say their Fourth of July was filled with friction and frustration.

But this time it was Phyllis who was right. The next morning, the cat wandered back. Phyllis was ready. Wearing thick gloves, she put the cat in the carrier she'd borrowed, and called Annie, a woman she'd learned of who lived nearby and who saved animals.

When they met, Phyllis gave Annie the carrier with the poor cat huddled in a corner. Annie promised to keep Phyllis informed. Sure enough, she called a few days later to say that the cat needed several operations, and that some young veterinarians had volunteered their services.

Though the operations were successful, the cat would have to eat by a tube for months. Because the veterinarians were not prepared to keep the cat during the long months of recovery, Annie adopted the cat, whom she named Grace, as in "There but for the Grace of God."

As Phyllis traveled around the country, she called Annie for Grace's medical updates. Grace was making good progress – she could lick her blended food, though she was as yet still unable to chew.

To Phyllis, Annie's name should have been Grace as well. For Annie not only took in stray cats, but also cared for ten other animals, including an abandoned donkey. In time, the donkey seemed lonely, so Annie found a mate. And wouldn't you know it – now Annie has a baby donkey to care for as well.

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*This is a wonderful, true story about two insistent women, each dedicated to caring about life and not abandoning those in need. To all the Phyllises and Annies in this world, I want to say, "Thank you." You keep us on earth connected to the Divine.*

*Do you know someone or have heard of someone who is a wonderful doer? Perhaps she is someone who just quietly goes about her business helping others or protecting the environment, or being there when a child needs some extra tutoring or an ill person needs a visit. This is a good opportunity to take some time to write about that person. If you are writing about someone who is alive, you might think about sending her a thank-you note or mentioning to him that you appreciate what he's doing.*

- ✚ Maybe that person is you. If so, write about what you do for those in your life.
- ✚ Pat yourself on the back and reward yourself with an extra treat. Maybe you want to buy yourself a gift, take a day off, indulge in a massage – or simply give yourself a secret hug.



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### **GIVING: The Universe Comes through for Judy**

**Judy was on a real high today. She told me that a few months ago, her husband, Donald, had lost about \$720. He had given the money to a salesman in a furniture store as a deposit on a beautiful bedroom set. The salesman turned out to be a crook: he kept the money for himself. Donald couldn't find his sales slip, and without it, the owner of the store wouldn't make up the loss. So he was out the money, and he and Judy were out the bedroom set.**

**They were terribly distressed. Judy's mother suggested they go to a second-hand furniture store such as the Salvation Army, where they might find a used brass bed or something else of decent quality. At the time, they were sleeping in an empty bedroom on a very worn mattress on the floor.**

**One day, as Judy and Donald were leaving her mother's apartment, they noticed a beautiful brass bed in the gutter. It appeared to be totally new, and they were stunned. Gradually, as they examined it more closely, they saw that the bed was slightly worn, although it still looked good. Next to it sat a mattress and box springs, both apparently in excellent condition. All three items were clearly being thrown out.**

**With growing excitement, Judy and her husband discussed how to hoist the bed. They carried it upstairs, cleaned off the mattress, put the bed together – and, low and behold, they had the most exquisite brass bed! To top it off, while Judy was examining the mattress and box springs, she noticed tags indicating that the two pieces had cost a total of about \$720 retail. Later that week, Donald found a lovely old table in another gutter, and he fixed it up and used it as a nightstand. Judy had been given some money for her birthday, and she used it to complete the ensemble by buying a quilt, a bedspread, and a few lovely throw pillows. She was truly ecstatic – the universe had indeed come through.**

- 🌈 Has the universe ever paid you back in full in a positive way? Tell the story.**
- 🌈 If not, what are three wishes you would like the universe to fulfill for you?**





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**GRIEVING: Memories, Grieving and Resolution**  
**Bernadette Hoyer**

**I didn't cry when my father died nearly two years ago. In fact, I felt nothing—neither the intense anger and hatred that my sisters had toward him, nor the devoted, undying love that my mother professed (how I envied her for being able to feel that much unquestioning love for a person).**

**Never one to dwell on depressing thoughts, I'd always been able to talk or cry when I felt sad, until I felt cleansed. But with my father, I couldn't express how I was feeling. All I felt at the time was a sense of relief. I hoped that with his passing, our lives would turn to some type of "normality." I was eager to get on with it, but my surprising emotional paralysis concerned me.**

**My father touched my life in ways that I could never forget. He nurtured my strong will. He taught me to protect myself from unkind, greedy people. Determination, will and shrewdness – that's what he told me I would need to be a success in business. To teach me right from wrong, he shared his childhood stories with me. But he never allowed me to experiment on my own, to learn from my own hard knocks. As a result, I grew to adulthood not knowing how to take care of myself. I knew what I was supposed to do, but not how to do it.**

**This caused me a great deal of pain and loss. Whenever I would ask him for a sympathetic ear or help, he would say, "You made your bed, now you lie in it. I had nobody to help me!" This comment was so hurtful to hear. Eventually, the closeness I'd always felt with my father started to fade until, at his death, only numbness remained.**

**From time to time, I would search my heart and mind, trying to find the feeling that was sorely missing. I knew that I needed to grieve for him, but grief wouldn't come. Finally, I decided to get on with life. And so I did – until my mother died this past March. At her death I was able to cry, as I knew I would. Flooded by pain and sorrow, I smiled at the memories of her that I cherished. We had shared so many good times. Mourning for her, I kept searching for the link that would somehow release the flood of tears I knew I had stored up for my father. Nothing. The grief for my mother, however, took a long time to dissipate. Only months later could I speak about her without choking up. I continued on in my life as I knew I must.**

**Then, this morning, a memory flashed across my mind's viewing screen. I was tapping into my "ENCHANTED SELF" as I often do. I saw myself as a child playing with my dog Blackie in our yard. I was having so much fun with him! He was jumping hoops through my encircled arms, one of the many tricks he knew. I never questioned how he knew them or how he had come to be my dog. I only knew that Blackie and I loved each other and were very happy.**

But this particular day, a man and woman walked by and asked me how Blackie knew those tricks. I told them I didn't know. They looked at each other a moment, and for some reason I started to feel afraid. "That's our dog," the man said.

Protectively, I grabbed Blackie and said, "No, he's my dog!" They asked how long I had had Blackie, and how old he was, and what his name was. I didn't know. Growing more and more frightened, I said, "I'm going to get my Daddy." Taking Blackie with me, I ran into the house for my father. I told him what happened, and begged him to tell these horrible people to go away.

He went outside. I watched from the front window. After an agonizingly long time, they left. When he came in, he told me that it was all taken care of. Relieved, I thanked him, hugged Blackie, and went on with my life.

When Blackie disappeared a short time later, it happened so quietly that I barely even noticed. I knew the ways of animals; sometimes they stayed and sometimes they strayed because they were "called" and they had to go. No one told me this. I just knew that deep inside an animal's heart was wild. I accepted this without question. In fact, I was glad. I knew in my heart that Blackie was all right and that someone else was having the opportunity to play with him and love him.

There I sat this morning, drinking my tea and remembering this story, and suddenly I was sobbing. Tears for my father! I'd known for a long time that he'd made a deal with that couple to let me keep Blackie for a short time longer so that I wouldn't feel the pain of having the dog so abruptly torn from me. Though I'd replayed this memory many times, it had never before had this impact on me, and I knew it was time to grieve for my father.

By dealing with Blackie so sensitively, my father performed a great act of love. He knew how devastated my sisters and I would have been if we had had to so suddenly give up our dog. So, he did what he did best: he made a deal and, by doing so, he protected me from suffering a crushing loss.

Smiling through the tears, I found myself beyond negative thoughts. Releasing them, I discovered a wealth of happy experiences I'd shared with my father. I cherished our unique relationship. I am the richer for it.

The tears keep coming, and with them, relief. It wasn't the same kind of relief I'd experienced when he died, and I was grateful for that. This time, I was relieved to know that he truly loved me. What my sisters said – that he hated all of us and didn't really want us – wasn't true. I'd always believed that he did in fact love us even if he couldn't always show it as clearly as he had on the morning he saved Blackie for me.

Now I knew that I had been right. As my tears washed over me, I felt cleansed and happy, knowing that I can be at peace with his memory. I understand he'd had his

own fears, that he sometimes he felt betrayed by us – within him was a residue of painful memories from his own childhood. In the 86 years he was alive, he rarely spoke of his own father but chose to hide his pain. How sad for him.

Dad, I want you to know that I understand now, and I'm happy that you have found your peace. I've finally come to terms with our relationship, and now you too share my "ENCHANTED SELF."

### How Can You Relate To This Story?

*This magnificent story of grieving and finding peace speaks eloquently to the part of each of us that needs to finish a dialogue. Now you have an opportunity to finish your own dialogues – to reach out through writing. Maybe you'll show your words to the person with whom you have an unfinished conversation, or maybe you'll keep them to yourself, in which case writing will have been a cleansing process for you.*

- ✚ Have you known someone whose goodness or personal struggles you've recognized or acknowledged only after the passage of time? Can you now see that this person had been a good friend to you? Take some time now to tell this person what time and distance has helped you see, what you know feel and understand about him or her.

*This cleansing process is so personal and private that some of you may prefer not to write your message. As a psychologist, I've seen people who are unable to write, sit and talk to an empty chair in which they imagine the person they want to address is sitting. Others prefer to write a letter that they then hide or destroy. If you're writing to someone very important in your life, like an ex-lover, or someone who is still alive, you may well be concerned about privacy issues. If so, share your thoughts and words in a very private way. But find a way to speak your mind. Speaking or writing the words in your heart will not only cleanse you but will release your psychic energies so that you will be able to live a more emotionally free and comfortable life.*



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**CONCLUSION**

*“Always remember:  
Joy is not merely incidental to  
Your spiritual quest.  
It is vital.”*

**Rebbe Nachman of Breslov**

**Dear Readers:**

**I hope these stories that I have shared with you will become good companions as you journey through daily living. Each story, like any good friend, has its own disposition and style. Likewise, the activities that follow each story take you to different places and stretch you in different ways.**

**And as with good friends, there is always some work involved in getting the most out of the opportunity presented. I hope that your mental perspiration as you responded and shared your own feelings, thoughts, and stories was far outweighed by your inspiration. I hope you experienced a sense of purpose and joyfulness by taking this shared journey.**

*Remember, that above all, you are the secret ingredient in creating a life that is filled with positive actions and experienced as joyful and above all, unique to you.*

**I wish you wonderful adventures, pleasures beyond counting, and most of all I wish that every day of your life, you feel centered, whole, and that being YOU is the most fabulous adventure of all. Let this adventure resonate with the Divine. I wish for you that if you could be in touch with the celestial angels, you would hear them sing in harmony with you, your very own song.**

**Please send your stories of enchanted living with or without follow-up activities to: Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein at [encself@aol.com](mailto:encself@aol.com).**

*Perhaps you would like to cut out and post this picture to keep as a reminder of your special journey. Enjoy!*



**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

**Becker, Bernice – BELONGING-When Saturday Was Really Saturday**

**Hoyer, Bernadette – GRIEVING – Memories, Grieving and Resolution**

**Wintram, Claire – DANCING – Dancing the Sardana**