

~ Inquiring Minds, Searching Souls ~ #15 May 28, 2012

“Miracles are not contrary to nature, but only contrary what we know about nature.” -St. Augustine

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A Movie on Male and Female Shifts in Values

We found Wayne Dyer's 2009 movie *The Shift* entertaining and informative. Of many topics, I found most interesting that various surveys (by [Abraham Maslow](#) et al.) hold that men and women have different sets of values early on, but then at some stage (often brought about by some life challenge) each shifts to a different set or priority of values. Dyer says the values which work in *the morning of our lives* will not work in *the afternoon of our lives*.

According to the data, most men valued the following before the shift: wealth, money, adventure, achievement, pleasure and respect, in that order. After the shift, men generally valued: spirituality, personal peace, family, a good sense of purpose, and honesty,

Women before the Shift: family, sense of independence, career, fitting in, and attractiveness. Women after the shift valued: personal growth, self esteem, spirituality, happiness, and forgiveness of those who hampered their progress.

Brazil's John of God: A Force to be Reckoned with

Investigated by ABC, Oprah, Dr. Mehmet Oz, and Dr. Wayne Dyer; the so-named [John of God](#), Joao Teixeira de Faria (b.1942) of Brazil, had my hopes up for a legitimate healer in modern times. This was even more true since my

wife is a believer in so many things which I hold in question, and I thought this would be something or someone we could share the same beliefs about. (We do respect our differences, but I had the blessing or the curse of having majored in Philosophy, and so I pretty much question everything.)

The various favorable CDs we viewed on Joao De Faria portrayed him as a humble man who worked as a tailor for half the week and a psychic surgeon for the rest, taking no money or credit for acting as a medium for numerous healing



medical entities acting through him. Yet thousands, reportedly millions, have flocked to him since the late 70's, and he and his work have received worldwide attention.

Joao de Faria's treatment emphasizes prayer, meditation, a two week diet of herbs, sexual abstinence, and certain other practices. Healing may also be done remotely. There are reports of many miraculous healings. One doctor from Harvard entered as a skeptic but experienced spontaneous bleeding and had his worldview seriously shaken.

Three red flags for me were these: 1) according to the next site, the remote healing and \$35 cost of herbs generates some \$300,000 a year; 2) the tourist businesses are booming, as is the local economy;

and 3) I found it a little contradictory that the man with two years of formal education performs miracles by using quasi-medical interventions such as nasal probes and unsterile knife/finger operations. Why operate at all?

Interesting to note, according to many accounts I have seen or read there have very few incidences of pain or infection from John of God's open-air operations. That there are no lawsuits is a miracle in itself.

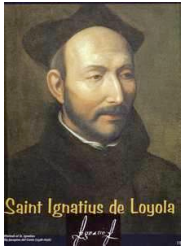
Another Point of View

Even though I wanted to believe, the critical thinker in me told me to investigate this from another point of view. I came across the following account on the [John of God](#) phenomenon in a website I am very excited about called [The Skeptic's Dictionary](#). This site was founded, or at least maintained, by [Bob Carroll](#) Phd who taught courses on Critical Thinking, logic, law, and more at Sacramento City College for 30 years. He lives in Davis, CA. He is now retired, and maintains this promising site which tries to separate fact from fiction. I find his defining various terms of logic and various types of reasoning very informative, as are his essays. This site is much easier to navigate than snopes.com, For example, of faith-based inquirers he says:



“The answer is that they (believers) can believe because they are desperate and have faith, and they are not too demanding of what they consider to be evidence

for deception vs. true healing. (Believers are fond of Loyola's statement of faith:



For those who believe, no proof is necessary. For those who disbelieve, no amount of proof is sufficient.)

No argument I make, or any evidence produced by someone who might actually do a follow-up on about a hundred of John's patients selected randomly, is likely to alter that faith. Nevertheless, such a study should be done, just for the record."

A Synthesis of the Two: A New Reason for Faith?

Interestingly enough, Dr. Carroll does not dispute the value of the placebo effect and the empirical benefits of acupuncture as a pain reducer in some. Could it be that this "healer," as maybe many before him, helps people heal themselves by changing their belief system? ("Daughter, your faith has healed you." Luke 8:14)

The mind is indeed much more powerful than many believe, as evidenced by the blindfolded prisoners in WWII who were told, and believed, they were to be branded, but in reality were touched by a piece of ice. Yet their skin blistered because they believed they were being burned.

As such, persons and/or places ([Lourdes](#) in France, [Fatima](#) in Portugal, [Medjugorje](#) in Bosnia, [Guadalupe](#) in Mexico, plus non-Christian sites worldwide) who and which inspire the faithful to heal in mind, body, and/or spirit, can be very



Cathedral at Fatima

valuable indeed, and should be respected and revered if not even fully understood. This I do believe.

A Case for Caution and Hope

Yet the very nature of the internet, the ease of self publishing without anyone taking responsibility for what is said has led to an erosion of *due diligence*--the operative phrase these days.

Dr. Carroll (the Skeptic above) tells of several soldiers injured in Afghanistan because they used a dowsing rod sold as a bomb detector. Also how [acupuncture reportedly diminished their pain](#) as is being used widely on the battlefield to treat the wounded for pain.

I am very interested in reading more about Critical Thinking from above website, but I hope the author is not too cynical to those who believe otherwise. We are, after all, surrounded by the miracles [if one defines miracle](#) as "that which is statistically unlikely but beneficial" or just simply "wonderful to behold" like childbirth, or "against all odds," like so much around us.

Meanwhile, just as the brain and the heart inhabit the same body, both science and belief have to be tolerant of each other in the ongoing process of separating the wheat from the chaff. Amen.

MY STATUS IN RECOVERY

Below is a SUMMARY to clear up any questions or confusion where I am in the progress on my back.

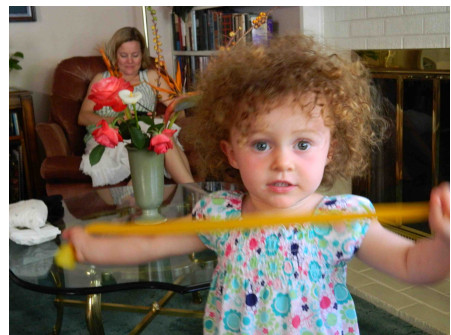
FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS I CAN: walk, sit, drive, do small jobs like mow the lawns, ride my bike careful not to fall, chip and putt, and sleep--all without pain. These simple things are huge.

SO FAR I CANNOT: run, play tennis or golf, and will not even try these things on my own without first having the approval of my chiropractor, Dr. Nick Athens. SLOWLY DOES IT since I have

suffered two major setbacks over the last seven months, mainly because I tried to come back too quickly without the buildup of core muscles first. I am in no hurry, and my wife will kill me if I overdo it! MY EXERCISE REGIMEN for now is 50 crunchies, 50 bridges, and various stretches three times a day, plus a 1-2 mile hike every day. I am seeing the chiropractor now once a week, but gradually backing off to once a month for evaluation and maintenance. I WILL BE DOING THIS PROBABLY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE because tight core muscles will protect and hold my compromised spine in place. I am NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET, but I have a shot at the green, and I believe I can do it.

Thanks for your well-wishes, kind thoughts and prayers over the past seven months. Knowing your presence and concern kept my morale up and rallied whatever spiritual forces there may be, including the angels my sister Ginny sent.

Family Update Pic and Videos (daughter, granddaughter, Mimi, and more)



Lois with Aimée in the background

---Three Favorite Family Videos---

Patricia's Sweet Kingdom, backyard, the first video I posted 4 years ago

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAPZfXqMDqo&list=UUYdIg-N5YFg9fsG3HpGgYdA&index=4&feature=plcp>

Lois dancing to the crank organ

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE7Sia2rtV4&list=UUYdIg-N5YFg9fsG3HpGgYdA&index=3&feature=plcp>

My New Run in an Old Park (requested)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hY4w42sy8zs&list=UUYdIg-N5YFg9fsG3HpGgYdA&index=1&feature=plcp>

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