

***SANCTUARY***  
*from*  
***STRESS***

**Creating Sanctuary Wherever You Are**

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## CONTENTS

<b>Called to Care</b>	4
<b>The Problem is Stress</b>	11
<b>The Solution is Sanctuary</b>	15
<b>A Sanctuary of Your Own</b>	25
<b>Living in Sanctuary</b>	28
<b>Sanctuary as a Spiritual Space</b>	32
<b>Sanctuary as Sacred Service</b>	34
<b>Sanctuary Wherever You Are</b>	36

# Introduction

*Creating Sanctuary Wherever You Are* is divinely inspired – literally. It's part of an imperative given to me by a divine presence during a near-death experience when I was a teenager. At that time, I was told to create sanctuaries in the world -- places of rest, recovery and renewal for those suffering from the unrelenting stresses of modern life, especially those who spend their lives caring for others. I have lived more years than I shall reveal in pursuit of that mission.

My dedication to my mission has led me to create, at different times, three Sanctuary Centers where burned-out caregivers such as healers and ministers came to receive massage, color and aroma therapy, personalized cuisine, prayer, solitude, inspiration and other forms of rejuvenation. It has led me to write this book and share with everyone the revitalizing benefits of creating, and taking refuge in, your own sanctuary. And it has motivated me to create a line of Sanctuary Living products that enable anyone to create Sanctuary wherever they are. In the process, I have developed Sanctuary as a whole lifestyle designed to counteract the life-diminishing effects of stress.

Evidence of the need for Sanctuary is all around us. Stress is endemic. How successfully we deal with it determines the quality of our lives. There are many well-known techniques for dealing with stress – but they are all made more effective when performed in a space designed to enhance the stress-relief process. Sanctuary is such a place, a sacred space that fills all the senses with relaxation generators, from the soothing stimulation of therapeutic colors to the subtle sounds of nature. Everybody needs Sanctuary!

It is my hope that in the following pages you will find not only practical advice for turning virtually any quiet space into Sanctuary but also the inspiration to use Sanctuary to actively enhance your life. For many, Sanctuary is a place to practice self-support and renewal. They walk into Sanctuary feeling stressed and walk out feeling refreshed. For others, such as myself, it is a place to experience spiritual inspiration, a place to deeply connect with the Holy Spirit. I encourage everyone to explore the benefits Sanctuary holds for their own lives. It is often a life-changing experience.

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# Chapter One

## Called to Care

I grew up like a lot of girls in my part of town; loved, affluent and sheltered. I grew up in a church that taught me to be kind, giving and self-denying. I went to good schools, had good friends and good times. I was well liked by my classmates. I went to parties. I had a wonderful life and a bright future. I wanted to be a modern jazz dancer and the best wife in the world.

Then I went to a party.

I was 17. My boyfriend, Richard, invited me to a party at a friend's house and, of course, I said yes. We had a good time at the party. We danced, we talked and Richard and I shared a drink given to us by a friend. Then my boyfriend took me home and I kissed him goodnight.

The next day, the friend who had given us the drink became ill. People said he just collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. It turned out that he had hepatitis. So everybody who was at the party with him got a phone call telling us to go get a gamma globulin shot. Richard and I went to the doctor together but his family didn't have any money and he couldn't afford his shot, so I gave him mine, just as I believed I had been taught to do. When the nurse came in with just one shot and asked which one of us was to get it, I pointed to Richard -- and I didn't tell anyone, because I didn't want to embarrass him.

Hepatitis eats away your liver. The experts say it takes about two weeks for the symptoms to show up but, when you're young and vibrant, it can take longer. When I did start feeling symptoms -- fatigue, mental confusion and the feeling of being tired and sick all the time -- it was as if my entire life force were being drained away. But, I didn't want to disappoint my parents by being a complainer, so I kept my symptoms to myself, never once thinking I might have a deadly disease.

One day I woke up dizzy. When I tried to walk, I couldn't walk straight. I kept running into the walls. That frightened me terribly. I had no idea why I was feeling that way. I thought I must be going crazy. So I stumbled into the living room where some of my family were and told them I felt like I was going to die... and the next thing I knew I was running down the street with a butcher knife in my hand screaming like a maniac. Then I remember telling my beautiful mother and my brother that I was going

crazy and asking them to take me to a mental hospital. Even as a young girl I had always been pretty self-aware and I knew that what I was doing was not rational. I wasn't thinking clearly; I wasn't verbalizing clearly – but nobody around me had any idea these were symptoms of hepatitis, me most of all.

After that I remember being shuffled from one car to another amid lots of chaos and confusion. My parents took me to a compound of buildings cloistered off the road. It was a mental hospital. There were five buildings in a circle and there was a sidewalk around the circle going into each building. All the buildings looked the same except one and that one gave me a very bad feeling. By the time we got there I was mentally paralyzed and mindlessly signed a waiver saying I was committing myself without even thinking about it. I had no idea I had just given the people who ran that place complete power over my body, my mind and my life. In essence, I had signed my life away.

Because of the incident with the butcher knife, they decided I was dangerous, immediately gave me pills to calm me down and put me in the building that gave me the bad feeling. That was maximum security. It was a sterile, cold and cruel place. At that point I realized what a mistake I had made, that I wasn't crazy and that I wanted out of there! But it was too late. I was locked up. Not even my parents could get in to see me or talk to me.

As the drugs did their thing, I remember watching everybody around me and thinking, "This isn't happening; this isn't real!" From then on, I was The Dangerous One. As I thought about it, I became so angry I found myself thinking, You think I'm the dangerous one?!! Well ,I'll show you the dangerous one! Then somebody stole a plastic knife from the lunchroom and they accused me of it. I found myself thinking, What did I do? That's what their intimidation did to me -- it made me doubt myself and wonder if I really were crazy – that, and the disease toxins building up in my brain day by day.

After a time, as I lay there shivering, a beautiful young girl who looked like an angel came into my terrorized world, the only pleasant sight I had seen since my arrival. She was a patient like me and she came to my bedside and shook me and said, "Hi, my name is Allyson. You want to do something fun? Come on. I'll take care of you."

So I got out of bed and put on my slippers and went down the hall with her to an empty room. There she handed me an old-fashioned thick-glass perfume spray bottle. It smelled old and sweet, almost like my grandmother. She had one, too. Then all of a sudden she threw her bottle against the wall and it shattered and she screamed, "Do it! Do it! Do it!" though I was shocked speechless, I felt like screaming, "My reality's not like yours!" and wanted to run away but, all of a sudden, alarms went off. I froze and just stood there with that bottle. Allyson took the bottle out of my hand and threw it against the wall. That's when the white coats came in and carried both of us away to different places. They thought I had thrown a bottle and treated me horribly after that. I never saw Allyson again.

The beds at this mental hospital all had rings at the foot and at the head. Those were there to strap the patients down for electroshock treatments. It turned out that the hospital was conducting major electroshock therapy at the time. After lunch, I would see the orderlies in their white coats chasing down their next victim, whom they would strap down to their bed, spread eagle. Then the orderlies would wheel the electroshock machine up beside the bed, attach the electrodes and put a rubber stick in their victim's mouth. Then the lights would flicker and, when it was over, the patients went into a deep sleep for about 45 minutes. After that, the doctors would stimulate them somehow and they would wake up acting like zombies. They would bloat up and walk around not knowing who they were. They couldn't remember the conversation we had the day before. They were fried. I was terrified that was going to happen to me.

Even my parents couldn't reach me in there. They called our family attorney, telling him, "They won't let us see our daughter!" So one day I escaped! It wasn't easy but I felt invisible. I went to a building in the middle of the institution where the main office was, broke in and called my boyfriend. "Please come get me, come get me!" I begged, but then they caught me -- and before I knew it I was in a straight jacket with needles going into me and I was thrown all alone into a room with thick pads on the walls. Nobody loved anybody in that hospital. If you weren't crazy when you came in, that place would make you crazy.

Then one day, after I had been in the hospital about three weeks, I reached a point when I just couldn't take it anymore and I staggered into the nurse's quarters and said, "I feel like I'm dying!" They took my temperature. It was 105°. So this time they believed me. They still didn't know it was hepatitis because my medical records showed I had received

a gamma globulin shot, the shot I gave to my boyfriend. So they moved me out of maximum security and into a ward that had been evacuated to protect people from this terrible unknown disease. I was in quarantine. I was not only a Dangerous Criminal, I was Typhoid Mary as well!

Now people were coming at me in special suits with masks and gloves. The way they were treating me, like a dangerous animal, told me something was seriously wrong with me -- but I could only wonder what it was. They say then I began to drift in and out of consciousness. I don't remember. I just know I must have been in that condition for quite a while because there came a point when I could no longer walk. I remember begging for a glass of water but nobody would give me one. The nurse who had been the meanest to me had this terrible look of alarm on her face. They took my temperature and I felt a sudden rush of energy all around me. The next thing I knew, they pulled back my covers and started throwing alcohol all over my naked body. As soon as they did that, time went into slow motion and the aroma of frankincense and myrrh almost overpowered me with a very pungent but very desirable fragrance, the most intense fragrance I had ever smelled. Somehow I knew this was the essence of Jesus.

The mean nurse knelt at the foot of my bed and started to cry. Flashes of light and darkness swirled around me like a whirlwind: light, darkness, light, darkness, like opposing forces fighting each other. A doctor said, "We're losing her!" and I remember thinking, "You're not losing me! Losing me where?!!" but I was frozen in my body and could not speak.

The next thing I remember was being lifted out of my body, up into a corner of the room, watching the doctors work on me and shout orders at the others. Then I found myself going through a long tunnel. I passed through the tunnel in super slow motion, with thoughts firing in my mind much faster than I could ever really think. That was because they weren't my thoughts. Those thoughts were being downloaded to me -- and they were filled with messages from the Holy Spirit. The process was effortless.

While I was in the tunnel I was told that there would come a time when everyone would have to shift their vibrations to stay on the planet, that they would have to balance and simplify their lives. I was told that a spiritual evolution was going to occur, all the floodgates would open and I was to assist people in making this shift by giving them transformational experiences of nurturing, compassion and sanctuary. I was told there

would be five “sanctuary for life” centers in various places around the world where people could come and experience a profound, healing, rejuvenating experience that would change their lives forever. I was also told to show people how to create sanctuary experiences wherever they might be. This, I was told, was to be my mission in life.

At the end of the tunnel was a magnificent white light. It was so brilliant I wanted to bathe in it, let it absorb me and embrace it for eternity. But almost as soon as I reached the light, I was turned back. I remember being disappointed by that but also completely at peace with it. I was told, “It’s not your time; you’re to go back and help people heal, especially women.” It was really more of a “knowing” than a “hearing,” a vibration as pure as the whiteness and the brightness of the light. Then, as soon as I had been turned back, I was back in my body. Even through the pain I felt, I knew something had shifted, something had happened to me. I came back different.

It wasn’t until a girl from another high school actually died of hepatitis that my boyfriend realized that I was in the mental hospital because he took my shot. He called and told them. The mental hospital called a medical hospital but the medical hospital refused to take me because I was so contaminated. So I had to be treated there in that house of horror.

After a time (I don’t really know how long), I woke up one morning knowing that something serious had happened but feeling pretty good about it because I was still alive. I had heard them say they lost me but I was still here. Then I noticed that there were brown paper bags taped up all over the mirror in my room.

It took everything I had to get the covers off my body and I was wobbly as I stood. There was no one in my room to help me so I had to hold on to the bed and then the dresser to get to the mirror. All those bags just weren’t making any sense to me. So, when I got to the mirror, I ripped one of the bags down, saw myself -- and screamed. Looking at myself in that mirror was like seeing a dead person. I had gone from a 128-pound, vibrant 17 year old to a 98 pound creature of skin and bones with no hair and yellow acne. I don’t remember what happened after that. All I know is that I passed out and hurt myself.

When I woke up, all the paper sacks were gone. I remembered what had happened earlier as more of a dream than reality. I wondered, “Whoa, did that even happen? You’re in a mental hospital after all!” I had to look in



the mirror to find out. I pulled back the covers, swung my legs over the side of the bed and noticed they were, in fact, as thin as bones. I touched my face and went to the mirror. What I saw verified my worst fears. It had not been a dream. What I saw was horrid, just horrid. I got back in bed and started to cry.

Then a lot of people came in and stood around me acting like they were seeing a corpse. They no longer had masks on and I could see looks of shock on their faces. They had expected me to die. Then the most amazing thing happened; I found I could sense the intentions of the people around me, which had never happened before. Something had happened to me. I had been cleansed, burned clean as it were, when I traveled to the white. I had experienced a miracle and now, as a result, I was more present, more aware and able to sense things about people I couldn't sense before.

I didn't know what had happened to me but I knew it was supernatural. I had experienced a miracle. I had come back from the light different. I was alive and had a purpose. I couldn't wait until I could talk to somebody about it because I didn't understand it. I had been to the white light and I had been shown so many wondrous things. It didn't take long, however, to learn that if I told people something like, "I know what you're feeling" or "I know what's going to happen" or "I went to the light," they would all just tell me, "You had a very high fever and that causes hallucinations."

One day a doctor came in and sat down next to my bed. That was unusual. The doctors usually stood and nobody wanted to touch me. But this doctor touched my hand when he sat down and I suddenly realized how very long it had been since I had been touched by another human being and how important it is to touch and be touched. Because of his touch, I felt loved when he gently rubbed my stomach and said, "I hate to have to tell you this but, because of the injury to your liver and the extent of the damage, you're going to have to give up being a modern jazz dancer. You're just going to have to find something more suited to you and your life." When he said that, I thought, "I don't believe you! I don't believe you!" but I accepted that he knew more about it than I did. At the same time, I had a "knowing" that it wasn't true because the Holy Spirit had told me so.

They tried to reassure me that my hair would grow back and I would gain weight. They said my grandparents, Ma and Pappy, were going to bring me hot fudge sundaes and banana splits every night to put weight back

on me. They told me my family and friends could come visit now and did what they could to make me feel better about my situation. But I was skin and bones and I couldn't walk anymore! I knew I would have to relearn.

So I asked for strength from whatever power had taken me to the light and I pulled myself up. There was a full-length window in the room and I just had to see something alive and growing, something in the light of day. But my legs were so wobbly I had to grab the back of a chair and use it as a walker to get to the window. When I got to the window, my arms went up in the air by themselves and I started praying, "Heavenly Father, what do you want from me? Why did you bring me back? What do you want me to do? Why didn't you take me?"

While my arms were up, powerful vibrations enveloped me. I felt intense sensations of gentleness, healing and love, delivered to me like a gift all tied up with a big bow. Even though it was a sunny day, an incredibly beautiful rainbow came across the sky and I tingled from head to toe. It was a tingle that gave me ultimate pleasure and reassurance. Rapid-fire images showing me all the aspects of the sanctuaries I was to create and the lives I was to touch flooded my mind at an incredible pace. I saw discord between men and women, confusion, sickness, pain -- while waves of love, compassion and trust rippled through my body and permeated my soul.

I took that rainbow, and the tingling sensation it brought me, to be a confirmation of the messages and life purpose I had received in the tunnel. It was the completion of my transformation. Ever since then, whenever I meet someone that I know I'm supposed to meet, I tingle like that. From that moment on, I started getting stronger. I began to heal so quickly the doctors and nurses agreed it was nothing short of a miracle.

If you were to ask me what the most significant turning point in my life has been, I would have to say it was then, when I went to the white light and my life purpose was downloaded to me. I went in a little girl and I came out a woman with a mission. That's why I'm here today. That's why I'm on this planet doing what I'm doing, creating Sanctuary wherever I can.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Problem is Stress**

The earliest known sanctuary lies in the Cave of Chauvet in southern France, where, around 35,000 years ago, the Aurignacian people painted images of the animals that sustained their lives. These breathtaking images are not there to decorate a living space. There is no evidence of human occupation in the cave. The Aurignacian people must have come to Chauvet for some other purpose.

All we know for sure that they did in the cave was paint -- with astonishing style, sophistication and precision -- images of the animals that assured their survival. So it seems reasonable to assume that somehow, through incantations, psychedelic sacraments or ritual frenzies, people must have used this space to supplicate, celebrate and commune with the forces of nature. Here we can imagine them entering the spirit world, experiencing epiphany and undergoing transformation.

We can easily envision the Cave of Chauvet, along with similar sites such as Lascaux and Altamira, as places where Paleolithic people left the ordinary world behind. Absolute darkness and unnatural silence engulfed their senses. Sensations were heightened, perceptions stretched, anxieties suspended, stresses transcended. Flickering firelight brought the animal drawings to life. Dramatic reverberations gave songs and incantations a magical quality. The very spirit of the place was transformational.

In today's world, such sanctuaries are needed more than ever before.

#### **Life is Full of Stress**

A 2011 national survey by the American Psychological Association<sup>1</sup> found that:

83% of us agree that stress can have deleterious effects on our health.  
94% -- more than 9 out of 10 -- believe stress can contribute to the development of major illnesses, such as heart disease, depression and obesity.

75% of us report money as a source of stress.

70% cite work as a source of stress.

Also cited as sources of stress were the economy, relationships, health challenges, housing costs and personal safety.

The physical symptoms of stress reported are just as wide-ranging.

42% say they have experienced irritability or anger as a symptom of stress.

39% feel nervous or anxious.

37% experience fatigue.

32% get headaches.

24% experience indigestion.

Changes in appetite and sex drive are also reported as symptoms of stress.

Emotionally, stress is just as debilitating.

30% report feeling as though they could cry.

35% lose their energy and motivation.

37% become depressed.

44% lie awake at night.

And 44% of us report that our stress is increasing.

### **It's Only Natural**

But isn't stress a natural part of life? Yes, it is. Today there are no more "natural" (or inevitable) parts of life than work and money, and the APA survey found that work and money are reported by about 75% of us to be causes of stress. More than half of us identify housing costs, workload, children, families, health concerns and intimate relationships as causes of stress. About half of us find stress has a negative effect on personal relationships and job satisfaction. Half of all employees report having made career changes as the result of workplace stress. One in four have experienced personal alienation, separation or divorce as a result of stress.

Stress also increases the likelihood that we will engage in unhealthy behaviors. Two-thirds of smokers report smoking more when stressed. 17% of drinkers report the same thing. And fully half of us say we lay awake at night when stressed.

So stress can be very harmful, especially if nothing is done to relieve it. According to cellular biologist Dr. Bruce Lipton<sup>2</sup>, the damage is done on the cellular level. In his book, *The Biology of Belief*, he tells us that our cells have two basic modes of operation, growth and protection -- but they can only operate in one mode at a time. In the growth mode, the cell exchanges material with its environment freely; nutrients come in, waste products go out, the cell performs its function as it should and reproduces itself before it wears out.

When the protection mode kicks in, in response to a perceived threat, internal or external, growth processes screech to a halt. This is the mode that stress puts us in – and it's a completely natural reaction. When facing a hungry lion, you need every speck of your energy, attention and physical anticipation focused exclusively on the lion. Growth can wait. In response to hormones produced by

the pituitary and adrenal glands, cells retreat within themselves, stop exchanging with their environments, build up toxic wastes and stop dividing. If it goes on long enough, the cell dies.

But *running* from a lion doesn't take long. Our cells get over it. *Living* with lions, as we do in today's fast-paced, over-extended, over-committed world is a different story.

If we don't manage the stress in our lives, it can literally destroy us. We know that. But we also know that stress is a natural and inescapable part of life. So what's a person to do?

### **The Way Out of Stress**

If you go to your family physician with stress-related symptoms, it is likely your physician will prescribe a tranquilizer or an anti-depressant or some other pharmaceutical. Drug therapy has been effective for many people, especially those suffering the most severe symptoms. But pharmaceuticals all have side effects, both short and long-term. Some of them interact badly with other drugs. Some of them can be addictive. Some just cause collateral damage.

Strenuous exercise has also been shown to be effective in reducing stress and everyone should be encouraged to include a vigorous exercise regimen in their daily schedule. But, as everyone who's ever tried it knows, daily exercise programs take a lot of discipline, special clothes and equipment, maybe membership in a gym – and a more reliably routine life than most of us can manage. If you like to walk or run, weather can be a factor. No wonder most of us simply find it impractical to implement such a discipline on the daily basis required for optimal results.

Yoga, meditation, tai chi and other mind/body practices have also been shown to be effective in mitigating the effects of stress. But these practices also require a degree of discipline that many of us find daunting. Learning any of these practices requires instruction from a qualified teacher and takes an extended period of time. These practices are also, in their own ways, quite strenuous.

Listening to music and reading are the most often cited ways people say they try to reduce stress. But listening to music in the car or reading on the train won't reduce much stress. Of course, it also matters what you listen to or read. Each of us is different but certain musical frequencies have been shown to cause brain waves to be generated of a frequency that is very beneficial in reducing stress. And it is difficult to imagine that reading a book about prisoners of war being tortured, for example, would reduce more stress than a book about the joy of

being alive. To be effective at reducing stress, these practices must be done in a quiet, peaceful place that cultivates relaxation and healing.

That's what a sanctuary is.

## Chapter Three

### The Solution is Sanctuary

The dictionary defines sanctuary as “a sacred place; a place set apart as a refuge; a safe haven.” As we shall use the term, sanctuary is that and much more. Sanctuary is a place conducive to mental, physical and emotional renewal; a comfortably furnished space with soft light, soothing music, pleasing scents and a peaceful ambiance. It is a place designed for relaxing and refreshing both mind and body. And we shall also expand the term “sanctuary” to not only describe a place but the state of mind that place induces; a state of tranquil serenity, natural bliss and spiritual expansion.

The size of a sanctuary space is not important but how that space is appointed is of critical importance. An effective sanctuary features a number of elements, each of which contributes to the overall effect of the space in a different way.

**Furniture** – A Sanctuary space needs to have a place to sit, recline or lie down comfortably -- but not so comfortably that it encourages sleep. Sanctuary furniture should allow someone to remain comfortably quiet and still for a significant period of time. This can be a chair, a sofa or just a sitting cushion, depending on the needs and tastes of the user. Notice that I said “a” chair, sofa or cushion, as in “one.” We’ll look at why that’s important a little later.

**Lighting** – Human beings are very sensitive to light. The coming and going of daylight paces our lives. We have evolved to react to that. Recent studies<sup>3</sup> have indicated that incandescent light at low illumination levels enhances relaxation and daylight improves attention levels. Bright light treats jet lag by re-setting our internal clock to a new morning. Low-level lighting simulates the coming of evening, signaling our bodies that it’s time to wind down. Light the warm color of firelight enhances this effect.

**Candles** – Anyone who has ever spent time next to a campfire knows the mind-stilling effect of an open flame. As the captivated camper watches the fire burn and dance, the rest of the world and all its cares, literally and figuratively, disappear. Candlelight offers a very similar potential. The flickering of a single flame focuses the mind away from all the sources of stress that plague our consciousness on a daily basis. That’s a great start to purging stress completely.

**Salt Lamps** – Himalayan salt lamps are hollowed-out chunks of rock salt, either carved or left natural, with low-wattage light bulbs inside. The warm,

soft light that filters through the salt is both beautiful and beneficial. As the light bulbs heat the salt, it gives off negative chlorine ions that bond with dust, pollen, dander and other irritants in the air, weighing the particles down until gravity pulls them down. Approved for use in the treatment of allergies by the USDA, salt lamps clean the air, ease allergy symptoms and make relaxing that much easier.

**Music** – The effects of music on mental, emotional and physical well-being are perhaps more dramatic than any other element of sanctuary. Allowing patients to listen to music of their choice during medical procedures has been shown to reduce pain<sup>4</sup>, decrease anxiety levels<sup>5</sup> and lower sedation requirements<sup>6</sup>. In women undergoing mastectomies, women for whom music was played<sup>7</sup> throughout the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative periods experienced a greater decrease in MAP (*mean arterial pressure*), anxiety and pain, than a control group of women for whom no music was played. EEG studies have shown that music can decrease the bioelectrical activity in the brain from predominantly beta waves to alpha and theta waves, which have important consequences for the reduction of anxiety, tension and sleeplessness<sup>8</sup>. And the list goes on. The National Center for Biotechnology Information’s pubmed.gov website lists more than 14,000 peer-reviewed studies investigating the effects of music on the human mind and body. To induce the “sanctuary effect” of stress reduction, recovery and renewal, there are three basic types of music to consider:

***Soothing*** – The most important factor in selecting music that soothes and relaxes the listener is rhythm. The most calming pace lies in the range of 50 – 70 beats a minute, the rate of a healthy human heart. 60 – 80 beats per minutes is considered “uplifting” in its effects, and also appropriate for sanctuary. Music with faster rhythms induces too much energy for relaxation. Music with a rhythm below 50 beats a minute induces sleep.

Simplicity is important as well. Music is most relaxing when there are no lyrics to follow. And instrumentation should be limited. Complex orchestral music requires energetic listening. Soothing music includes music from the “meditation,” “easy listening,” “soft jazz” and “chamber music” genres, along with a great array of music that defies categorization.

***Inspirational*** – For many people, spending time in sanctuary is a spiritual experience. For these people, spiritual music may be the most effective genre for relieving stress. In this circumstance, simple devotional lyrics may be beneficial but instrumentation should still be limited and rhythms kept in the “soothing” range.



**Entraining** – Some music is designed to use the “frequency following” tendency of the human brain to generate brainwaves that mimic frequencies in the music. In a process known as “brainwave entrainment,” these frequencies cause the brain to generate alpha, theta and/or delta brainwaves. When our brains are generating alpha waves, we feel calm and alert. We think more clearly and make better decisions with better long-term results. We have emotional flexibility and a better command of our lives, health and moods.

When we generate theta brainwaves, we enter the deepest state of relaxation, mentally free and highly creative. It’s the state we enter as we fall asleep or gradually awaken. Frequencies that generate delta waves induce sleep.

To get the brain to generate these beneficial stress-beating brainwaves, binaural beats, monaural beats and isochronic tones of the proper frequencies are built into the music. Binaural beats are created when two tones close in frequency are played together and the brain “hears” a sub-audible beat equal to the frequency difference between the two. Monaural beats, which can be heard, are created when two tones of very similar amplitude are played together, producing a beat when the frequencies overlap. Isochronic beats are produced when a frequency is turned on and off in rapid succession. When these beats are timed properly, the brain generates alpha and theta waves that sync up with them.

Music that incorporates binaural, monaural and isochronic beats is sold as brainwave entrainment, meditation or relaxation music.

**Aroma** – Herbal aromas have been used for centuries to sooth and heal a wide variety of ailments and conditions. These aromas are produced by diffusing essential oils extracted from a variety of plants into the air, either through burning or evaporation. These oils consist of molecules small enough to pass easily across the blood-brain barrier that gives our brains more protection than the rest of the body gets against blood-borne bacteria, viruses and toxins; so they produce beneficial effects very quickly.

The list of herbs and plants used in aromatherapy is vast. Peppermint is used to treat headaches and digestive distress. Eucalyptus is used for coughs, colds, and other respiratory problems. Geranium helps balance female hormones and is sometimes used as an antidepressant. Tea Tree oil is a natural anti-fungal agent; Lemon and Rosemary are uplifting; Clary Sage is a natural painkiller.

But possibly the most frequent use of therapeutic aromas lies in the reduction of stress and treatment of the symptoms of stress. Sandalwood, Marjoram, Ylang Ylang and Lavender are commonly used to reduce anxiety, muscle tension and mental hyperactivity. Chamomile is relaxing to the point of being used as a sleep aid.

Scientific evidence of the effectiveness of aromatherapy abounds. Studies have shown aromatherapy to reduce stress levels in subjects as diverse as teenagers<sup>9</sup> and dementia patients<sup>10</sup>. In addition to reducing pain and muscular spasms, calming and assisting sleep, Lavender has been shown to reduce inflammation<sup>11</sup>. Sweet Orange has shown great promise in the treatment of anxiety disorders<sup>12</sup>. And a pilot study has shown aromatherapy to be effective even in the treatment of such difficult conditions as postpartum depression<sup>13</sup>. Therapeutic aromas are an essential element of sanctuary.

***Incense & Scented Candles*** – Incense is a time-honored method of putting beneficial aromas into the air. It has been used to create peaceful frames of mind since the Stone Age. The pungent fragrance of incense is so effective at inducing calmness of mind that, after a time, just the scent of it becomes a trigger for relaxation responses. Scented candles do much the same thing. Soy candles are the healthier choice as they burn cleaner than wax candles.

***Essential Oils*** – Essential oils are commonly used by sprinkling the oils onto the palms, rubbing the palms together, placing the palms close to the nose and inhaling deeply. But essential oils can be suffused into the entire atmosphere of a Sanctuary by evaporative diffusers that electrically heat the oils to accelerate their evaporation. Diffusers that use wicks to absorb and evaporate essential oils can also be effective, without using electricity. Essential oils include:

Allspice Berry	Clary Sage	Lemon	Pine
Amyris	Clove Bud	Lemon	Rose
Anise	Coriander	Eucalyptus	Rosemary
Basil	Seed	Lemongrass	Rosewood
Bay	Cypress	Lime	Sandalwood
Bergamot	Eucalyptus	Mandarin	Spearmint
Camphor	Fennel	Orange	Spruce
Cardamom	Frankincense	Marjoram	Sweet Orange
Seed	Geranium	Myrrh	Tangerine
Carrot Seed	Ginger	Myrtle	Tea Tree
Cassia Bark	Grapefruit	Neroli	Thyme

Cedar	Hyssop	Nutmeg	Vanilla
Chamomile	Jasmine	Oregano	Vetiver
Cinnamon	Juniper Berry	Palmarosa	Wintergreen
Bark	Lavandin	Patchouli	Ylang Ylang
Cinnamon	Lavender	Peppermint	
Leaf		Peru Balsam	
Citronella			

**Color** – The color of a sanctuary is just as important as the scent. The fact that color affects human wellbeing has been known for centuries<sup>14</sup>. In ancient Egypt and Greece color, in the form of colored garments, oils, plasters, ointments and salves, was used to treat disease by restoring natural balance. While they do not address the issue of natural balance, modern scientific studies have verified that colors do, indeed, have significant effects on human wellbeing.

It turns out that our physical reactions to various colors are closely related to how we feel about those colors – and how we feel about a color seems to be cued by what we associate that color with. In other words, we tend to like colors associated with things we like and dislike colors associated with things we dislike<sup>15</sup>. These associations tend to be hard-wired into our psyches by generations of experience.

For example, exposure to the color blue, the color of a clear sky or a body of life-giving water, has been shown to reduce blood pressure and slow respiration<sup>16</sup>. The color green, the color of the earth in its season of plenty, evokes positive emotions, relaxation and comfort. Green-yellow, on the other hand, tends to be associated with feelings of sickness and disgust<sup>17</sup>. There is considerable individual variation in color associations and preferences but, in general; blue, blue-green, green, red-purple, purple, and purple-blue tend to be seen as the most pleasant colors<sup>18</sup>.

Color also has effects on human perception and behavior. In one study, a test wine was perceived as being nearly one-and-a-half times sweeter in red light than in white or green light<sup>19</sup>. “Jailhouse pink,” also known as “tranquilizing pink” is a shade of pink that reduces aggressiveness by suppressing the secretion of aggression hormones. It has been successfully used to lower inmate aggression in criminal holding facilities all across the country.

Blue, the shortest wavelength in the spectrum of visible light, tends to recede from the eye, so blue surfaces tend to be perceived as further away than they really are, whereas longer-wavelength red surfaces tend to be perceived as closer. That means rooms painted in a color toward the blue end of the visible

light spectrum (violets, blues and greens) tend to be perceived as more spacious than rooms painted in a color toward the red end of the spectrum.

There are many different descriptions of the qualities and associations attached to various colors and most of them overlap to one degree or another. The list below contains some of the most common denominators:

**BLUE** – Blue has a soothing effect on human nerves, inducing peace and calm. It creates a comforting space with a feeling of “coolness,” brings tranquility and relieves stress. It is said to reduce inflammations, fever, high blood pressure, headaches, as well as strong emotions like anger, aggression or hysteria. It promotes peace and rest, a sense of order, logic and rational thinking.

**RED** – Red is associated with love, passion, ferocity and boldness. This color promotes energy, strength, willpower and brilliance, raises energy levels, creates excitement and stimulates conversation. It is used to treat low energy, fatigue and colds, warm the chilly and embolden the passive. It is said to energize heart and blood circulation, stimulate the organs and energize the senses and increase sexual desire.

**GREEN** – Green is associated with nature and has a calming effect on the mind and body. It nurtures refreshment, restoration and equilibrium. Used to treat stress and anxiety, the color creates a relaxed atmosphere and promotes a sense of prosperity and abundance. Said to bring psychological and emotional harmony, green is the color of balance, peace, rest, hope and comfort.

**ORANGE** – Orange is a warm, cheery, non-constricting color that has a freeing effect upon the body and mind. It stimulates creative thinking and enthusiasm, helps assimilate new ideas and moderates excessive sexual expression. Representing the warmth of the fire, orange is said to promote energy, celebration, abundance, comfort and enjoyment of the senses.

**PINK** – Pink symbolizes softness, sweetness, innocence, youthfulness and tenderness. It calms the agitated and gives rise to feelings of hope, physical tranquility, warmth and love. Pink is said to heal grief and sadness, restore youthfulness and put you in contact with your feelings. Pink is used to create an atmosphere of sophistication, health and strength.

**YELLOW** – Yellow is the color of the sun, vitality and energy. It stimulates optimism, wellbeing, self-esteem and emotional strength. The color is said to strengthen the nerves and the mind, awaken mental inspiration and stimulate higher mentality, promoting cheerfulness, curiosity, flexibility and learning.

Although yellow can give rise to negative emotions like fear and anxiety, it can also lift our spirits, generate new ideas and clarify thoughts.

**PURPLE** – Purple is a color of transformation, half red and half blue, and represents the unity of dualities. It is said to induce sleep and soothe mental and emotional stress. This color promotes contemplation and spiritual reflection. It is the color of dignity and extrasensory perception.

**BROWN** – Brown is a warm color, with some shades suggesting sophistication and elegance. It is a serious color: practical, reliable, sensible and wholesome. The color promotes a sense of emotional safety, household protection and material increase. It is said to increase decisiveness and attract help in financial crises.

**BLACK** – Black is a glamorous color that absorbs and consolidates all the others. It stands for timeless style. It is a serious color that represents breaking free from bad habits and addictions. Although associated with mourning and depression, black evokes emotions that can help people feel pure and open. It is said to open up deep unconscious thought processes.

**WHITE** - White is associated with simplicity, purity and cleanliness, perfect balance and harmony. It promotes feelings of protection, encouragement, order and efficiency. Considered to be the color of the Awakened Spirit and Divine Light, white is said to raise consciousness and bring harmony to all aspects of life.

**GOLD** – Gold is the color of wealth and prosperity. It is said to promote health, endurance and cheerfulness, abundance, wisdom and deep understanding. Gold promotes energy and inspiration and is said to be helpful in counteracting fear and hesitation.

**SILVER** – Silver is a color of prestige, dignity and practicality. It promotes modesty, persistence and reliability, evokes a sense of peace and calm and adds a sleek, cool atmosphere.

**Wall Color** – Sanctuaries are places of peace, relaxation and wellbeing. The colors that evoke those feelings best are the colors of the shorter wavelengths, the colors that remind us of blue skies and green meadows. In general, lighter shades are more relaxing than more saturated shades, sky blue more relaxing than royal blue, sea-foam green more relaxing than Kelly green. Short wavelength colors also recede from the eye, tend to be perceived as further away and make a room seem more spaciousness.

**Fabrics, Furnishings & Floor** – The fabrics, furnishings and floorcovering of a sanctuary should also be selected to enhance feelings of peace, relaxation and wellbeing. The floorcovering should be of a color that compliments the wall color and of a texture comfortable to bare feet. The color may be blended but prints or patterns should be avoided. Curtains and accent swags should be of light, free-flowing fabrics that evoke lightness of being. Natural fibers should be used in preference to synthetic fabrics whenever possible. Furniture, which should be kept sparse, should feature simple, elegant lines, comfortable padding, soft texture and a solid color harmonious with the walls and floorcovering. And all the furnishings should be arranged to foster the greatest possible perception of open simplicity.

**Nature** – There's nothing like a day in the country to ease the mind and lift the spirits. The therapeutic benefits of natural scenes and settings seem built into the human psyche. In a study that exposed subjects suffering from stress to the sight of either natural or urban environments, the subjects exposed to the natural environments recovered faster<sup>20</sup>. Another study showed that exposure to natural scenes caused subjects to generate more alpha waves than when shown urban scenes<sup>21</sup>. Surgery patients exposed to nature scenes experienced less pain and recovered more quickly .

For Sanctuaries, the most important information to be gained from the scientific studies is the fact that exposure to nature and representations of nature reduce stress<sup>23</sup>. A beautiful landscape outside a clean window is ideal -- but the soothing effects of nature can also be evoked through room accents, sights and sounds that trigger this “natural” stress reduction. Like furnishings, accent elements should be selected and placed with an eye toward simplicity and elegance. In Sanctuary, less is more.

**Flowers** – Fresh flowers trigger springtime emotional reactions, represented by feelings of hope and optimism. From a spray of color in a window box to a single bloom in a simple vase, fresh flowers bring the renewing energy of springtime to all who enter.

**Plants** – The presence of living plants has also been shown to reduce stress<sup>24</sup>. For Sanctuaries, the number and type of plants should be determined by the light available and placed with a priority on simple elegance. Once properly selected and carefully placed, a single plant is more effective than plants all around the room.

**Birdsong** – Birdsong heralds springtime and triggers springtime responses. Plants grow more vigorously when birdsongs are played. Humans relax and smile. Kept at a volume just loud enough to be heard in the background, whether from a CD or an environmental sound device, birdsong is a small accent that makes a big difference.

**Aquariums** – Aquariums require maintenance – but who among us has never been fascinated by one? The Neurobehavioral Research Laboratory and Clinic reports that as little as 5 minutes' contact with an aquarium can “significantly decrease stress, reduce anger and fear, and increase pleasant feelings.” The logistics of maintenance notwithstanding, aquariums are powerful stress reducers.

**Flowing Water** – The sound of flowing water is one of the most soothing sounds there is, a sound that washes away the noise of our chattering minds and overstuffed lives. It's a sound that takes us away from the chaos and strife of everyday living and transports us to a more peaceful place. The most effective source of flowing water-sounds is a strategically placed, electrically powered waterfall -- but recorded sounds can also be effective.

**Art** – Like all Sanctuary accents, artwork should be selected and placed according to the “less is more” principle. One or two paintings or photographs of natural landscapes is enough. Human figures in the artwork are not recommended. It's the perception and associations of nature that bring us stress relief.

**Journaling** – Journaling is a great way to gain access to your stress. There is something about writing worrisome thoughts and feelings down on paper that clarifies and objectifies them so that we can see them, acknowledge them, and put them in perspective. It's a way to process negative or traumatic emotions and let a more positive perspective emerge<sup>25</sup>, a way to reflect and analyze and find patterns in your life and resolve long-standing challenges.

Journaling on a regular basis has been shown to strengthen the immune system, ease the symptoms of asthma, arthritis and other conditions, improve cognitive function and counteract the effects of stress<sup>26</sup>. But, even on an occasional basis, journaling provides a way to express anger or frustration that is safe and non-confrontational. Writing involves both hemispheres of the brain, so journaling fully integrates what we write into our thought process.

Sanctuary is the perfect place for journaling; quiet, peaceful and mentally

relaxing. To accommodate journaling, a Sanctuary should have a writing surface, either a laptop or a small, simple desk, and a place to discreetly store writing materials. Although computers are generally discouraged at Sanctuary, journaling may be the one purpose for which they may be beneficial. Some of us just couldn't do it any other way.

**Inspiration** –For many, Sanctuary is a place for spiritual renewal; a place to pray, meditate or just contemplate the wonders of life. For these people, it is appropriate that a few select inspirational touchstones, such as books and/or icons, be included in Sanctuary.

**Books** - For most Americans, the inspirational book of choice is the Bible. For others it might be the Torah, the Koran, the Vedas or the Sutras. For those of more contemporary spirituality, it might be the works of philosophers, shamans or sages. The choices are unlimited -- and entirely individual. But there should be only a few. Less is more in Sanctuary.

**Icons** – Icons symbolize entire belief systems, like books expressed as sculpture. They can trigger long cascades of thought and inspiration, creating an atmosphere of reverence, a sense of higher purpose and an expectation that, in Sanctuary, stress will be transcended.



## **Chapter Four**

### **A Sanctuary of Your Own**

**Turning Space into Sanctuary** - In a world that is busy always doing, each of us needs a personal space where we can put our to-do list on hold and nurture our wellbeing. Whether you're in abundant health or challenged with a health conflict, surrounding yourself with beauty, relaxing music and nature is a precious gift, perhaps the most generous gift you can give yourself. It is the currency for peace of mind, love, compassion and forgiveness. Living with these qualities allows you to live in higher awareness.

The quality of life we create for ourselves makes us who we are. Peaceful surroundings promote peace of mind. Imagine yourself living in a relaxed, rejuvenated and truly peaceful frame of mind. In your Sanctuary your mind can be clear, your body relaxed and your spiritual essence renewed. In this space you are empowered to be the best possible you.

Once you have created your sacred space, you can enjoy a blissful sense of surrender and begin to truly appreciate your life. There is so much to be grateful for, no matter what your situation happens to be. Sanctuary allows you the time and space to experience that gratitude. It is a safe place to feel present in your own life; a place where you can feel the heartbeat of the Universe beating in your own chest; a place of peace, tranquility and comfort at all levels – heaven on earth.

### **Ten Steps to Creating Your Own Sanctuary**

**Step One: Claim Your Space** – Sanctuary does not have to occupy a large amount of space. A spare bedroom is wonderful but a utility room, storage space, converted garage, a partitioned-off portion in a larger room or even an outdoor space can be just as effective.

It is important, however, that you create your sanctuary in a place that's quiet, or can be made quiet, and has a temperate airflow. Once you've identified your sanctuary space, claim it by making a commitment to use it exclusively for the enhancement of your wellbeing. It is important that each time you go into your sanctuary, you enter with a Sanctuary mind-set that lets go of stress and embraces tranquility. Each time you enter your sanctuary with this mind-set, it reinforces your expectations of wellbeing and enhances your sanctuary's effectiveness. Using your sanctuary space for any other purpose dilutes this effect and works at cross-purposes to the process of Sanctuary.

**Step Two: Take a “Before” Picture** – The benefits of this step come under the heading of self-reward. It’s a two-step process whose pay-off doesn’t kick in until Step Nine but don’t neglect this step. It’s impact on you and your mind-set can be delightful!

**Step Three: Clear Your Slate** – The first physical task in turning a space into a sanctuary is to clear the space out completely. While you’re at it, take a close look at everything you’re clearing out. Is it stuff you really need? Have you touched it in the last two years? The last five? Or is it just clutter? If it’s clutter, put it in a special pile and we’ll talk more about that later. The important thing for now is to empty out your sanctuary space so that you can start with a clean slate, both physically and mentally.

**Step Four: Set Your Intentions** - Once your space is empty, go in, still yourself, and set your intentions for the space. Envision what your Sanctuary will look like when it’s finished. Take your time. Envision what you will do for your Sanctuary experience, how you will do it, the space and furnishings it will require. Give some thought to colors, fabrics, art and other aspects of the visual environment. Think about placement of lighting and sound systems. Then draw your vision out as a floor plan and hold the image of your finished sanctuary in your mind as you go about making it happen.

**Step Five: Paint Your Sanctuary** – Paint your sanctuary with love. The color scheme you select is up to you. The psychological effects of various colors were discussed in the previous chapter. Choose a color and shade that you find relaxing, one that makes you feel calm and quiet, then prepare your surfaces and apply the paint with the same care and attention to detail you would apply to a work of art. It’s all about your intentions. The more care you take, the more you will appreciate your sanctuary – and yourself -- every time you enter.

**Step Six: Select Your Furnishings** – Select your Sanctuary furnishings with the awareness that less is more. Select only what you need, whether that’s a bookcase and reading chair, a writing desk or just a meditation cushion. Choose flooring and furnishings of colors that are of compatible with the color of the walls. Make sure your seating is comfortable enough for extended use but not so comfortable that you fall asleep – unless napping is part of your intentions!

Indirect lighting is preferable to direct lighting except for reading light. If there are unwanted sounds coming in from outside, choose a natural sound generator that supplants those sounds with a white noise effect, such as surf or flowing water. And find a silent fan to keep the air moving without distraction.

**Step Seven: Place Your Furnishings** – Place your furnishings as though you were positioning the elements of an art exhibit. Use your floor plan as a guide but remain flexible. If an alternative placement feels better in the finished-out room, give it a try. If you've followed the principle of less is more, it won't be hard to try several configurations and find the arrangement that feels best to you.

**Step Eight: Fine Tune Your Environment** – Once you have everything in place, give your sanctuary a test run. Leave the space and close the door or curtain or screen and then enter the space from outside. How does it feel when you step in? Do you feel like exhaling? Do the muscles in your shoulders relax? Then try it out. Perform your practice: read, pray, stretch or just sit. Does the space function the way you want it to? Do you feel differently after you've been there for a while; calmer, less stressed? If you do, you're there; if not, make adjustments – to the sounds, the music, the placement of art or any of the other elements until tranquility ensues.

**Step Nine: Take an “After” Picture** – Here's where Step Two pays off and you receive your reward. Take a picture of your finished sanctuary and compare it to the picture you took earlier. As you delight in the transformation, know that it is symbolic of the transformation that is already taking place within you, as you begin living the Sanctuary lifestyle. Take it as a measure of what you can do, on your own initiative, to enhance and maintain your wellbeing.

**Step Ten: Issue Yourself a Passport of Permission** - The single greatest barrier to personal healing is often your own mindset. Most of us have a guilty aversion to indulging ourselves in personal pleasure, even if that pleasure is therapeutic. The key to healing is therefore often your own ability to simply give yourself permission to feel good. For many, it represents a more positive – and radically new -- outlook on life. Giving yourself a Passport of Permission acts as a tangible symbol that you can use to bypass your own natural resistance to change.

## Chapter Five

### Living in Sanctuary

**A Sanctuary Makeover** - The environment you're in affects your state of mind you're in. That's a basic principle of Sanctuary – and it can not only be applied to an exclusively dedicated space, but to every room in your home. I'm not suggesting that every room can or should be converted into Sanctuary. You still have to have a place to pay your bills, wash your clothes and eat your dinner. But the effects of colors, aromas and the other elements of Sanctuary can be used to make any space less stressful, more relaxing and more nurturing. By applying the principles of Sanctuary to your whole home, you can expand Sanctuary from a space into a lifestyle.

**Clutter** - Start by taking a look around. If you're like most of us, what you see will not be in perfect order. Whether it's a little or a lot, there will be clutter. There will be stuff piled on a table, stacked on a credenza, overflowing a bookcase or even strewn on the floor. Though it may have been placed there only on a temporary basis, the visual pollution clutter creates is current and ongoing. Continually seeing items in need of being put away, organized, tidied up or cleaned can be psychologically overwhelming and lead to chronic feelings of fatigue, anxiety and depression -- like living with a great big "to-do" list in front of you wherever you look.

Taking on your clutter, especially if it's been accumulating for some time, may be something you've put off more than once. But that only makes things worse, doesn't it? Because now you have feelings of guilt to add to the mix, right? So here are some tips for making the task less daunting:

**Time It** – Clear your clutter for a designated period of time each day. Whether it's 15 minutes or an hour a day, one step at a time will take you a thousand miles. When you know going in that you'll only be doing this for a specific amount of time each day makes the task much more approachable.

**Limit It** – Deal with your stuff one room at a time. Just like a time limit, a space limit gives you goals that you can clearly see and accomplish without feeling overwhelmed.

**Dance It** – Have fun with your process. Put on some music while you clear and clean. You'll be amazed how much easier and more enjoyable your work becomes. Get into the rhythm of it; make your movements into

a dance and use the energy of the music to augment your own. You may not want to stop but don't overdo it. Creating your Sanctuary is a process that should be enjoyable.

**Multi-task It** – Whenever you get a couple of minutes to spare – waiting on hold, listening to an endless phone menu, talking to a friend or whatever – clear, organize or clean a small space, maybe just an end table or a counter top. You will be amazed at how much you can get done in the course of a day this way.

Once you've decided how you will approach clearing your clutter, you'll need to decide what to do with it as you clear it. Putting it all into the attic or a storage unit is not a good solution because, although out of sight, your stuff may not be out of mind. Just knowing that it's still there, still awaiting a final resolution, can still be a source of anxiety. What I recommend instead is taking a hard look at your stuff as you clear it and making the hard decision, piece by piece, what to do with it on a permanent basis. For that, you'll need three boxes and a lot of determination.

**Put it Away** – Put things you use and things you love in this box(es). Then put it away -- in a closet, garage, attic or storage space – clearly labeled and easily accessible. It is also a good idea to put a date on your box label(s). That way, if you find you haven't touched a box in two years (or five years or ten years), you can rationally consider reclassifying what's inside.

**Give It Away** – Those things that you no longer want but are still useful, you may want to give away. This is a noble intention but it requires follow through. Don't wait for friends or relatives to come get things they may want. Take it or ship it to them immediately. The same goes for donations to charity. Get it done. Every day it sits around waiting to be delivered makes it easier for it to still be there the next day.

**Throw It Away** – A lot of your clutter may be stuff that, when you are honest with yourself, you have to admit nobody wants. A beeper is about as useful today as a buggy whip, even if it still works perfectly, and videocassettes will not be coming back. And you will never look at those back issues of your favorite magazine ever again. Let them go. You'll find it liberating.

**Keep It Away** – This is not a box; it's a commitment to maintain the visual harmony of your Sanctuary. It's a commitment to put things away rather

than just putting them down, not let things accumulate, and clean as you go. A rule many people use to maintain an uncluttered environment is to not bring in anything new unless something old goes out. Do this deliberately for a time and it will become a habit; embrace the habit and it will become a lifestyle.

**Color** – Now take a look at the colors of your home. Referring to the colors listed in Chapter Three, what states of mind are the colors of your home inducing? Are these the states of mind that you want to induce? If not, consider repainting. It's a great way to make a fresh start and make a new commitment to Sanctuary living. Ideally, the colors of room furnishings should compliment the wall colors, avoiding clashing shades and conflicting hues. Consider saturated colors for furnishings and muted colors for the walls. Avoid chromatic busy-ness; one primary color complimented by no more than two accent colors is always pleasing.

**Cleanliness** – A clean environment cultivates a clear mind. There is just something about a place for everything and everything in its place that is inherently satisfying. It says to the mind, "All is well and as it should be. You can relax. Be at peace." If you've painted, you've already done the hardest part of cleaning up -- you moved the furniture! Keeping your environment clean is much easier – but only if you clean as you go.

Try the 30-second rule: If it takes less than 30 seconds to clean up after a given activity, do it now. If it takes longer than that, like washing the kitchen floor or cleaning the bathtub, do it on a schedule. Knowing that you will vacuum the carpet on Saturday will bring you peace of mind throughout the week – and peace of mind is what Sanctuary is all about. It may be challenging to get on a schedule if you haven't tried that before but after a while it will become routine, then a comfortable lifestyle.

**Music** – As discussed earlier, music has a profound effect on your state of mind. It not only makes your work easier, it also enhances your relaxation. Try music with dinner instead of TV. Use it to set the mood when you have guests. If you have the electronics, program your system to come on just before you get home. You'll be amazed at how much that can enhance the feelings of warmth, refuge and belonging you get when you enter your home.

Music is a great way to end your day. Listening to soothing music at bedtime helps you relax your mind and improves your sleep. Programming energetic music to wake you up gets you up-and-going with a spring in your step and gives you a positive outlook on the day. Try listening to music as you cook your meals,

tend your garden or wash the dog. No task is tedious or boring or distasteful when you're living in Sanctuary.

**Smells** – Smells are a powerful part of our environment, for good or ill. They come in two varieties: odors and aromas. Odors, like the smell of rotting garbage, dirty clothes, wet puppies or sweaty humans, bring stress. Those smells are instinctively unwholesome and we feel an urge to move away from them. Trying to counteract or cover up odors doesn't work. They must be eliminated. Seal up whatever is stinking, throw it out or wash it. In this endeavor, the disciplines of cleanliness just discussed are your greatest allies.

Aromas, on the other hand, are smells that enhance your quality of life by relaxing, invigorating or just pleasing you, as you choose. The use of candles, incense and aromatic oils as discussed in Chapter Three are basic to a Sanctuary lifestyle – but here are a few advanced tips: Put a cotton ball soaked in the aromatic oil of your choice in your vacuum cleaner bag and spread the aroma as you clean your carpet! At bedtime, put a little lavender in an evaporator to help you drop off to sleep. Put a drop of peppermint oil in it when you wake up to open your eyes and energize for the day! (Never touch your eyes after handling peppermint oil.)

## Chapter Six

### Sanctuary as a Spiritual Space

For many, myself included, Sanctuary is more than a way to reduce stress and promote wellbeing; it is a spiritual experience. The link between physical and mental wellbeing and a sense of spiritual wellbeing is well established. A study at the University of Toronto found that religious conviction acts as a buffer against anxiety. Another study found that “Spiritual well-being may be cardio protective.” A study at the University of Missouri found that “spiritual belief in a loving, higher power, and a positive worldview are associated with better health, consistent with psychoneuroimmunological models of health.” And there are many others.

It seems that seeing the world through the lens of spiritual belief can go a long way toward promoting wellbeing. In other words, what you think has a profound influence on how you experience life. In the Bible, we find this advice:

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

Philippians 4:8

So spending time thinking about the higher, more spiritual aspects of life can enhance your experience of reality and thus your wellbeing. And Sanctuary is the perfect place to practice and embrace spiritual thinking. Spiritual activities that have been practiced in Sanctuary include:

**Prayer** – Through prayer, we experience the emotional exhilaration of union with a higher power and the sense of security and protection that union brings. We express gratitude, feel at ease with the way things are and let go of anxieties. We pray for the people and things we need and want in our lives, forming positive affirmations that lead us to act in ways that manifest our prayers. We ask for healing and support for those who are suffering and gain the inner peace of an open heart. We surrender our egos, our pride and self-righteousness -- along with our fears, insecurities and anxieties -- and experience mental, physical and spiritual peace. Daily prayer can be one of the most positive habits you could adopt for a healthier and happier life.

**Meditation** – It is said that prayer is talking to God and meditation is listening. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine reports that regular meditation can reduce chronic pain, anxiety, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and the use of health care services. Mindfulness Meditation stills the mind, dissolves illusions and allows us to



see things as they really are. It works by enabling a person to have better control over brain processing of pain and emotions by teaching the practitioner to recognize, acknowledge and let go of negative emotions without reacting to them. In Transcendental Meditation, the ordinary thinking process is “transcended” and replaced by a state of pure consciousness characterized by mental stillness, rest, stability, order, and a complete absence of boundaries. Both forms hold potential for the direct, non-verbal experience of the infinite.

**Yoga** – Yoga is a Sanskrit word variously translated as "connection," "contact," "method," "application," "addition" and "performance" as well as "exertion," "endeavor," "zeal" and "diligence." Sometimes described as meditation in motion, yoga helps us transcend conceptual knowledge and experience oneness with the divine experientially. It is a physical, mental, and spiritual discipline whose goal is the liberation of the practitioner from “samsara,” the cycle of life and death. In addition to spiritual goals, yoga is also an effective exercise and physical therapy program. It is used to reduce stress and improve musculoskeletal and mental health.

**Spiritual Contemplation** – Spiritual contemplation is usually practiced in conjunction with the reading of scriptures, sacred texts or other spiritually inspirational works. Bible study is one of the most common form of spiritual contemplation. As we read and think about what we read, we begin to look at the world from the perspective the Bible presents. We begin to see life as much bigger than ourselves; we reach an understanding of our place in the universe and realize the profound inner peace that comes from a sense of belonging.

**Spiritual Journaling** – You never really know what you think about something until you write it down. Then reading what you’ve written allows you to look at your thoughts and emotions from a whole new perspective. This is especially valuable in regard to spiritual thoughts and emotions. It allows you to express your innermost beliefs, longings and doubts and get them out into the open where you can deal directly with them. It lets you get in touch with your feelings like nothing else, off-load negative emotions and gain clarity of mind in regard to your spiritual experience. Journaling helps you reinforce important lessons, confront important questions and solve difficult challenges. It allows you to monitor and verify your spiritual progress. And it provides direct evidence that you are a living, growing, spiritual being.

Sanctuary provides the ideal environment for spiritual renewal and awakening on many levels.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Sanctuary as a Sacred Service**

The visions and revelations I experienced during my journey to the dimension between life and death have never stopped. I receive instructions from the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, telling me how to help others, how to protect myself and how to live my life. I know what people need, person by person; one needs to be touched; one needs a better energy flow; one has blocked emotions; each one with their own individual needs. I am a conduit for the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is their love and understanding flowing through me that senses the needs of others.

For most of my life, I have hidden these gifts for fear of being laughed at or shamed. But I know God has given me a gift and that I am to share that gift with others. It's the gift of compassion, guided by a "knowing" from the Holy Spirit. It's the gift of personal sanctuary, the gift of seeing the best in people and bringing out their inner beauty. Because of the fear, mistreatment and isolation I have been through, I can sense when a person needs nurturing, attention or affection. Sometimes they just need a hug. Sometimes they need Sanctuary For Life™.

Sanctuary For Life is the non-profit organization I founded in response to my calling. It's a network of educators, leaders, doctors, scientists, researchers, humanitarians and philanthropists dedicated to helping people take responsibility for their own wellbeing by integrating mind, body and spirit. We offer educational programs for wellness, health-oriented technologies, personal transformation and spiritual growth. Through this network, our clients receive nurturing, awakening and renewal. In a world unbalanced by stress, we help people find health and balance in their lives, discover purpose and spiritual awareness, overcome obstacles, discard old burdens and embrace their own dynamic individuality.

Sanctuary For Life is a way of life and a vortex of inspiration, purpose and actions that generate profound changes in personal and community life. We provide loving kindness, great awakenings and life-changing collaborations. We honor people who practice the art of compassion, people who gracefully impact humanity and those who bring healing to a world in transformation. Elegance, energetic design principles, gourmet health-food and personal nurturing all have their roles to play in our programs of rejuvenation and self-discovery.

I would not care to re-live my near-death experience nor would I wish them on anyone else -- yet I cannot deny the sense of purpose they brought me nor regret any step along the path that has led me to where I am today. I have received miracles. I have lived miracles. And, today, miracles are what Sanctuary For Life is all about. It's about miracles in health and wellbeing, energy and growth, personal development and life fulfillment. It's about the transformational healing of emotional and spiritual wounds. It's part of a new world paradigm of peace, justice and cooperation, and the embodiment of what I learned during my near-death experience. It is what I was told to create and nurture.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Sanctuary Wherever You Are**

Once you become accustomed to the Sanctuary lifestyle, you won't want to leave it behind when you travel. And you'll be amazed at how little it takes to completely transform a hotel room into Sanctuary. Just be sure to pack some incense or aromatic oils, small speakers that attach to your computer or other electronic device, a few votive candles and some swags of flowing fabric to drape wherever the spirit moves you. Having all the accouterments of Sanctuary cannot benefit you if you don't actually use them. It will only take a few moments to set up your room and, when you do, you may find the fatigue and stress of travel melt away, replaced by familiar feelings of ease and comfort.

Try it. That's all it will take to convince you of its value. Take Sanctuary with you, in your bag and in your heart. Show yourself love and others will find you loveable. Live it and the whole world becomes your Sanctuary.

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