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SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

Transformations Your Gateway to the Future.

I love to walk and try to do so almost every day. I enjoy moving my body, connecting with the earth and taking in the moist air and beautiful scenery offered by Mother Nature. But I'm also deeply curious about the entrances to people's homes. The gateways, fences and facades intrigue me. There's so much mystery in the approach to things, and it says something about the people who live inside these dwellings.

Our approach to much of life can be influenced by what we see and feel on a daily basis and our surroundings are the best place to take notice of our relationship to ourselves and how we interact with the world around us. In fact, in Chinese Feng Shui, it is the "entrance" to the home that will determine the overall health, harmony and well-being of the people who live there.

Where I walk there are a variety of hillside homes -- each with its own unique approach to the much welcomed front door where one

can exclaim, "Luuu-ceed! I'm home!" One house has an ornate teak wood fence with a hint of Asian flair that leads down a path to a meditative container garden -- Zen-like in it's overall effect. Another home has a weathered iron gate that leads to moss covered steps climbing up as far as the eye can see. Beyond another gateway is a wild overgrown garden adorned with colorful trinkets like enchanting wind chimes, hanging crystals to catch the sun's rays, and words of inspiration engraved in that stones that line the pathway to the raised front porch. A home right next door is so cluttered and unkempt I wonder if anyone even lives there -- but then I see a car in the driveway and so I assume they do.

As I walk, my curiosity grows about the beings that occupy each home. I wonder what the people are like who have twin rattan rockers with striped cushions perched prettily on a porch that runs the length of the home and overlooks the valley to the West. I try to imagine these distant

neighbors of mine lingering here on a hot summer day with a good book and glass of ice cold lemonade.

Another home helps me to appreciate the elements of design. Each thoughtful corner meets an earthly plane, creating perfect harmony between hillside and home. This home has me guessing it is that of an architect who merged his proud creation with that of a higher source -- quietly but distinctively staking his claim.

Yet another house down the hill has an interactive poetry fence where passersby can leave their inspired genius for all the world to see. "What brilliant person created this?" I wonder as I arrange the wood blocks to my hearts content -- "grazed-grass-inspired-thought-gardens-hidden-delight." How beautiful to come home each day and see your words transformed into an expression.

As I walk, I think about "Gateways" as a metaphor to so many of life's curious choices and transitions. I recognize within myself a propensity to see and to know that which is not easily or ob-

viously seen. When I travel, it is always the temple high upon the mountain or the one across the river that I am most eager to discover. When I ponder the nature of this behavior, I understand that it is the journeying toward the treasure that is more precious to me than the actual treasure itself -- and in this, I know I am not alone.

So I ask you to consider "Gateways" and what they mean to you. Have you placed your well-being at the mercy of happenstance? Or are you a deliberate creator in the gateways that surround you? Your home. Your work. Your mind. Do you feel powerful, confident, curious and intrigued as you approach your place in life? Or do you feel doubtful as if your desires or creations don't really matter? I assure you, they DO! And with a little tidying up you'll feel and see your path more clearly.

Using "Gateways" as a metaphor, here are some questions to help lead you to your chosen path. Apply these questions to all elements of your life -- your home, your work, your mind, your being -- and see how you might shift

your perspective or your energy to enhance your overall well-being.

1) Does your Gateway speak to who you are? What does it say about you?

2) Are you continually inspired as you approach your Gateway?

3) Are others inspired as they approach your Gateway? Are they curious and wanting to know more?

4) Is your Gateway inviting? Welcoming? Illuminated? Mysterious? Wild? Orderly? Peaceful?

5) Is there a good energy flow in and around your Gateway? Is your Gateway blocked and if so, by what?

6) What Gateways need to be closed in order for you to step through new Gateways?

7) What's behind your new Gateway? What opportunities await your attention? Do they excite you?

8) What three things could you do right now to alter, enhance or improve your Gateway?

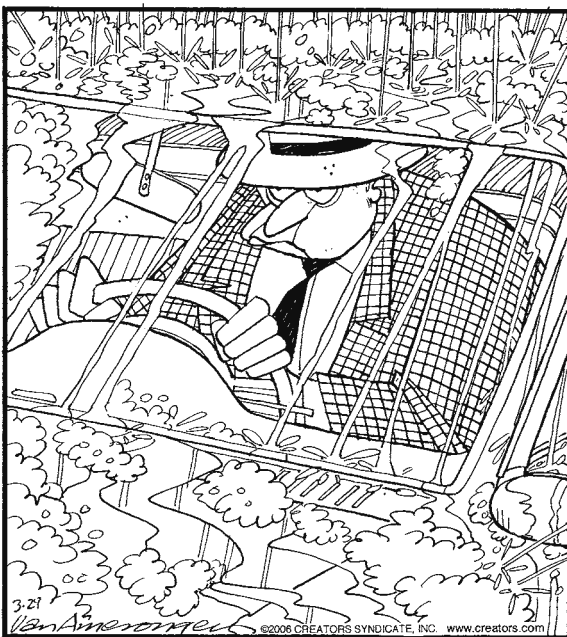
9) When will you make these desired changes and how will your Gateway look and feel then?

10) Finally, who will you tell about your plans to improve your Gateway? How can they help you stay on your path?

An exercise from the Book of Runes:

Visualize yourself standing before a gateway on a hilltop. Your entire life lies behind you and below. Before you step through, pause and review the past -- the learning and the joys, the victories and the sorrows, everything it took to bring you here. Observe it all. Bless it all. Release it all. In letting go of the past you reclaim your power. Step through the gateway now.

BALLARD STREET by Jerry Van Amerongen



Ben goes to the car wash hoping he himself might get a fresh start.

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