

Perspective

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Eastern Light in Western Eyes

Alchemy of Light



Home Office-Temple

— Toni Gilbert

Downsizing pulled the plug on the traditional part of my psychiatric nursing career, which had become task-oriented and barren of quality time with the patients. Fortunately, I had a dual career and could afford to leave nursing behind.

Instead, I put my efforts into the woodworking business that my husband Lewis and I owned.

With my artistic side, I designed the furniture, and he handcrafted the heirloom furnishings. After I quit nursing, we also decided to add a gallery to the business to showcase our own and others' fine woodworking as well as fine arts and quality crafts. More importantly, retirement from nursing afforded me time to go back to school.

In 1991, at 40 years old, I had the freedom to follow my ideals and my heart with my education. I diligently worked toward a bachelor's degree in art and psychology, including graduate classes in art therapy. Near the end of this wonderful experience, I took a

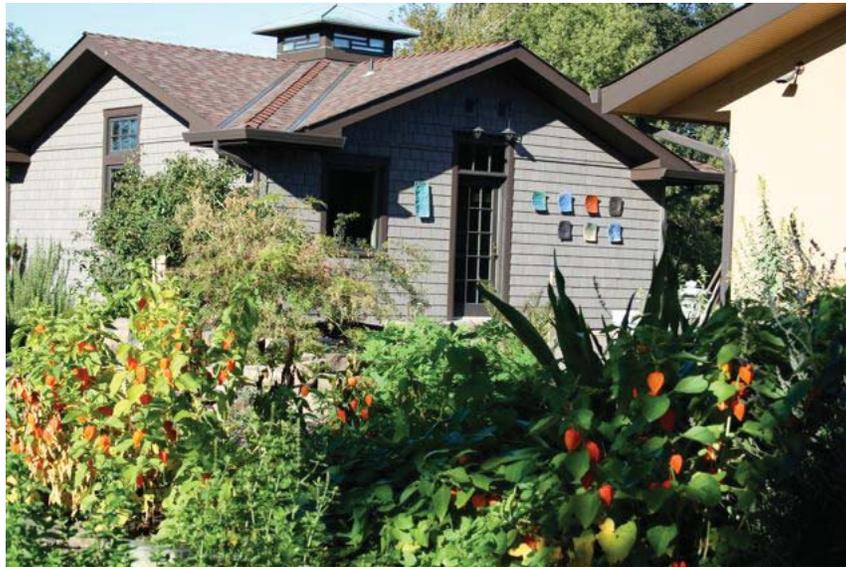
weekend course in guided imagery. After the first demonstration, I was completely smitten with the idea that the dream images of the mind could be used to facilitate healing

after the guided imagery workshop, my teenage daughter was severely injured in a car accident. In the months that followed, I used my new skills to facilitate her healing.

By the end of her convalescence, I was convinced that I wanted to work with this new concept in healing—whatever it was called.

Next, I took a weekend workshop with research psychologist Jeanne Achterberg, whose teachings further cemented my orientation to this path. Later, I found my way to the Institute of

Transpersonal Psychology, where Jeanne and her husband Frank Lawlis taught. While working on a master's of arts degree, I received a certification in Wellness Counseling and Mind Body Consciousness as well as an education in transpersonal studies. Mentored by two transpersonal psychologists, I took courses in religion, psychology, and philosophy. During these two years of Jungian-type therapy with my mentors, I was in heaven.



GARDEN AND OFFICE-TEMPLE

in the body. That fateful weekend I learned about the body-mind, and my career turned toward the healing arts once again.

As fate would have it, two months



GARDEN WALKWAY

HOME OFFICE TEMPLE

After graduation, I took a year-long course called "Imagery in Medicine" with Drs. Achterberg and Lawlis. At the end of the course, Dr.

Achterberg thought that I should return to nursing and suggested that I look into the American Holistic Nurses Association, with which her friend, Barbie Dossey, was affiliated.

About this time, Lewis and I began restoring an historic home with a storefront on the main street of our town. I eventually started my alternative nursing practice in this fully restored building, which I named the Centre of Main St.

One thing led to another, and soon I had other practitioners using the building and renting office space. Five years later and approaching 55, I began to slow down. We sold the house and moved my office to our home in the countryside, where I can relax, work my own hours, and (the best part) not drive to work.

After the move, we soon realized that the house library was barely big enough. Eventually Lewis and I started a new project: building

a small 24' x 24' office building behind our house. The new building serves two purposes: (1) it is where I do my writing, yoga, and other meditational activities, and (2) it is where my clients come that is

also have an organic garden on the east side and flower gardens on the west side. Garden paths and lighting draw it all together to create a monastery-like ambiance that facilitates client healing as well as family harmony.

The best thing about my arrangement is my availability to my family: my most fundamental and important work. I believe that who we are at home affects our family, which in turn affects our community and then our society and eventually the world. Without a doubt, our conduct and intentions continue to reverberate down through the generations. I have found that my simple private nursing and writing practice at home is a pleasant way to contribute to my world and make a difference.

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BILLIE JUDY

TONI AND BUDDHA IN HOME LIVING ROOM

totally separate from the house and its possible intrusions.

My home office-temple offers needed privacy for important work.



TONI INSIDE THE OFFICE

Yet if I want to move sessions outdoors, we have several patios and places to sit and talk surrounded by nature. During the summer, we