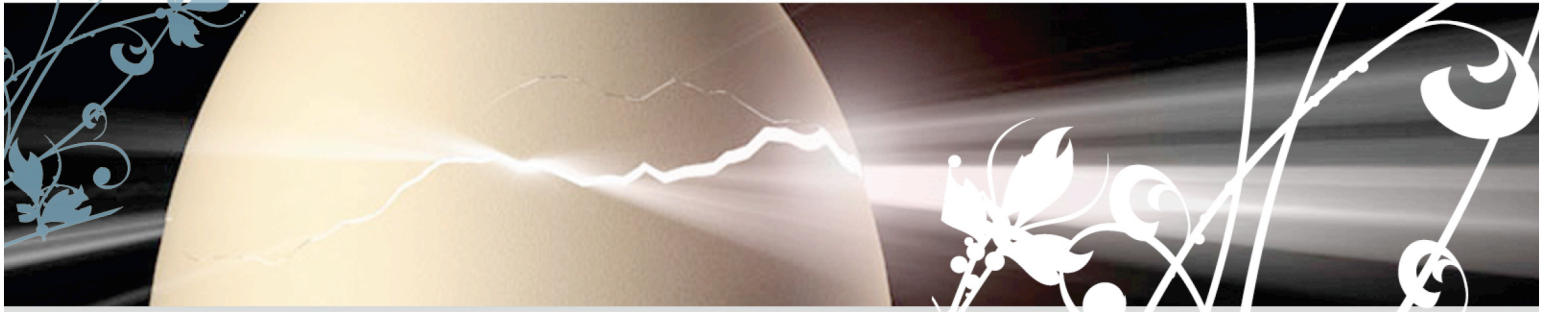


DR. LAUREN NAPPEN

*ah-h-h-justing to life*



## INSPIRED THINKING

*Surrender. Soften. Receive.*

As an observer and participant, this summer was particularly challenging. The slowness of life reverberated on every level. The heat boiled and simmered my interior world. School was in session. I began a most intimate relationship with crabgrass. It highlighted just how crabby I could get. I received the Clinical Excellence Award for my cleverness in projecting my intolerance for heat and forced stillness onto innocent green leaves. They seemed to sprout everywhere as did my mood. Yes, I know, the plant can be killed. The lessons however, cannot.

At minimum, I am glad for a change in temperature. Challenge surrounds us. Change is upon us. Really nothing is new...or not.

*Surrender. Soften. Receive.*

As autumn comes into view there is a beautiful awareness of vitality as life steps up her pace. We've been living this rhythm since the beginning of time. It anchors us culturally and biologically. Whether it's gathering food for winter or knowledge for our futures, we get back to business and busy-ness. Yet underneath that awareness is a sense of uncertainty, of stepping on a foundation that no longer feels so solid. This new energy was anchored on 9/11/2001 and it has become part of our internal heritage and our history. I watched it come and go this year. Like it or not, its memory pales in comparison to current events that shake our sense of security. Its lessons don't.

*God Dialed Direct (a worthy reprint)*

Tragedy struck on Sept. 11, 2001. As uncomfortable as this feels, it is a wondrous reflection of the utter perfection and impermanence of a living universe. Life has a habit of changing as quickly as a breeze blows past. While there never seems to be enough words to give solace, there is deeper meaning to be garnished from these horrific events. I do believe that *God Dialed Us Direct*. In the ultimate act of a perceived spiritual emergency, the wisdom of the universe called us on an emergency number we all understand: 9-1-1. The experience shook our egos, rattled our consciousness and woke us from our spiritual slumber.

9/11 and 9-1-1 seem to go hand in hand. Coincidental? Maybe. A desperate search for meaning? Maybe. Spiritual food for thought? Absolutely.

In an instant this phone call reminded us how intricate the web of life is. The delicate balance of fragility and strength becomes the bed on which all aspects of life rest. The brilliant colors of a garden balance the death of a forest. The birth of a baby balances the transition of another. Letting go of disappointment creates the space for the next adventure. On either end of the spectrum we are awakened to beauty beyond words or paralyzed into silence by unexpected tragedy. Everything is contained in this living universe. We cannot escape its joys or its sorrows. We are forced to feel with all of our senses and trust what our senses reveal. Trust, especially during times of uncertainty, is our best friend.

This was a trial of epic proportions. The lessons of this season won't be about how many memorial funds were created or how many pints of blood were donated. These acts remind us that we know how to respond to crisis. They were short-term, vital gifts. The long-term gifts will come over time, with reflection. What we have in common far outweighs that which separates us. We are reminded that we are part of a larger family called humanity. Love, laughter, empathy, and tears: they unite us all. Hopefully, as we move farther away from the experience, the colors of caring and concern we bestowed upon one another during this time will become the norm rather than the exception. The souls of the earth are crying for kindness.

*Surrender. Soften. Receive.*



# DR. LAUREN NAPPEN

*ah-h-h-justing to life*

## The Lessons Are Abundant

9-1-1 conversations surround us. Economic hardships, the polarity of choosing new leadership, the challenge of becoming our own leader, relationships that don't live up to our expectations, and belief systems crumbling under their own weight. Even Mother Nature is yearning to be part of the dialogue with storms, floods, *raging* waters, and drought. You can shake her hand, her presence is so palpable. The rhythm of life as we know it is gone. It's a good thing. Underneath perceived loss is a reservoir of creative energy waiting to be discovered and channeled.

Humanity's history is rich with stories of awakening to changing times. Birth, rebirth, being cracked wide open; it happens constantly within a life, the only variation is the intensity, duration and our judgment of the experience. This process highlights the struggle between innocence and our inner sense that life happens with or without our control. We all have moments of sleep walking in everyday life. Whether you are looking for it or not, or it's looking for you, crisis seems to be the common denominator in the awakening process. All of us have experienced them. They force us to make peace with desperation. Desperate times call for desperate action, or chocolate, or more appropriately, heroic choices. They inspire a willingness to step up and out of comfort zones, out of the familiar. They egg us on to move from living life as a checklist to living life through intentional wholeness. Fear walks beside us rather than in front of us.

Mindful introspection is a must when calls like this are received even during the dog days of summer. As we are beckoned to heed the call and heal ourselves forward, new ideas of living must surface. **Ahhhjustments** in body and soul are vital. Wealth is nothing without **Wellth**. Strength of spirit and body must be the new foundation for building anything... new careers, relationships, living space, and inner space.

As participants in this exquisite living universe we must become a testament to honesty and authenticity, to listening and loving. These are the gifts that can be passed from person to person, generation to generation. This is the long-term gift, the stuff that life's made of. For humanity's sake, one hopes that the lessons travel with us as we move further away from the initial event; that in that moment of recognition, we are changed for the better.

Challenge surrounds us. Change is upon us. Really nothing is new...or not.

Surrender. Soften. Receive. Good things are everywhere.

Always live in the direction of your joy,