



Letters

to Dr Maureen Roberts [Shared with Permission]

Prologue:

As Martin Luther King said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' An important facet of my work is to be a voice for those who - because they have been disempowered by being labelled as either 'mentally ill' or mental health 'consumers' - find it hard to be heard, or taken seriously. I can only be a voice for these voices, however, by respectfully allowing these folk to speak for themselves.

Far more than squabbles between rival 'expert' camps, coldly statistical reports, drug company propaganda, or Government 'mental health reform' rhetoric, the heroic, often tragic, always heart-warming tales which many folk share with me dramatize, earth and humanize what the urgent need for 'mental health reform' comes down to in the end: real people, real pain, widespread injustice, understandable fears, fragile hopes, urgent needs. I feel privileged to be the recipient of these sometimes anguished people's trust and personal stories and am constantly inspired by their courage, passion, wisdom, honesty, love - and good ole common sense. I hope these letters will inspire you to add your voice to mine, my supportive colleagues', and theirs . . .

[Most of the letters are edited to preserve anonymity, since the writers are often afraid for themselves, or for relatives, or patients who are unwillingly in the hands of the Mental Health System. I have also italicized key comments which might help the reader understand the experience of psychosis - as an acute spiritual crisis - from the inside.]

My name is Matthew Daly from Ireland. I belong to an advocacy group seeking reform in psychiatry. I am also a recently qualified psychotherapist, dealing mainly with addiction. My wife Eileen is in hospital and is being treated for 'neuroleptic malignant syndrome', resulting from use of the antipsychotic drugs melleril and largactil. She was diagnosed years ago with manic depressive psychosis. She speaks a lot about childhood sexual and physical abuse, especially before she becomes ill. The psychiatrists don't take any notice, of course. I hope we can keep in contact.

Yours sincerely, Matthew Daly

I am 27 years old, the only child of a single mother. My mother has experienced symptoms of schizophrenia (specifically hearing voices) since I was 13 years old. I have never really sought help in treating her illness, but instead have allowed other members of my family to make most of the decisions. I've generally felt helpless, and so I have simply remained as supportive and unbiased as possible. I hope that you can find the time to read my story and hopefully point me in the right direction to find help in my area.

My mother's symptoms originally began after she made the very difficult decision to have an abortion of a Down Syndrome baby. Due to her strong religious (Catholic) beliefs, the experience was extremely traumatic for her, triggering intense guilt, and leading to the experience of hearing voices. Since that time, she has grown more and more intensely religious, obviously as a way to try to come to terms with her guilt. She believes that God, various saints, and her unborn daughter all communicate with her in the form of voices. Her religious devotion culminated when, just over 3 years ago, she decided to join a bizarre sect of Christianity. She believes that her experience with this sect caused serious harm to her soul, and she complains that the leader invades her spirit on a daily basis. This often causes her to stay up all night, sometimes screaming to try to get the leader out of her.

She often talks with me about what she is being 'told' by God. If you can recommend any respected Jungian/Depth psychotherapists in Southern California who share your practices and methods, I would be more than grateful.

Thank you very much for listening. Best regards and holiday wishes, Seth Horvitz Irvine, CA 92714

I am a Lifeline counsellor and I volunteer to work all night and daily shifts. My favourite callers are schizophrenic folk. They are such talented human beings who wish only to talk

and feel 'normal'. Many of the callers I receive talk of the difficult choice they wish to make - going off medication. To address their fears and anxieties, they only need someone to talk to and support what they feel is right for them, rather than put up with droll, prescribing, non-supportive visits to a psychiatrist. I thought I would let you know that I understand your passion for securing a service that undoubtedly will be a godsend to all those sufferers who feel lost and have nowhere to turn. My callers are so thankful for the 'visualizations' (within Lifeline's code of ethics) that they can put to practical use with their own situations. I love talking to them.

Regards, Ken Abrahams

To a mainstream psychiatric practitioner:

After a productive seven-year struggle to heal from dissociative personality disorder (following 12 fruitless years of therapy and medication), I am in the process of integrating my final known sub-personality through a combination of meditation, shamanic journeying and psychospiritual work, without medication.

Much as I respect your work, I must express my experience that if I allow myself to identify with your approach, it simply places me back in my old helpless and victim-like mindset. Your efforts to debunk the "myth" that the soul cannot be freed from the babble of inner voices without drugs, simply do not mesh with my experience.

There are other alternatives. Recently I sent you information put out by Dr Maureen Roberts, an Australian psychotherapist using Jungian and shamanic techniques to help people with schizophrenia. Please take the time to look at these resources, and to consider that perhaps the deep desire of those saddled with these disorders to heal from the inside out, rather than by ingesting chemicals, might possibly be their own body/mind wisdom. It is indeed possible.

Sincerely
Philomena

Dear Maureen

I visit Anna De Jonge regularly and was so thrilled to read the information she gave me about your Centre. This is what we desperately need in NZ. I have spoken to people whose main problem is not having a venue and appropriate support for coming off medication. I have known of Loren Mosher, Peter Breggin, Abram Hoffer etc. and all the other "greats" for years through my internet probing and have boxes of information. My son (39) has been pumped with drugs for nearly 15 years now and is only just alive. He was a mild-mannered kind, loving and very spiritual person who has lost two wives, a house, job and friends. He has wanted to die on and off for years and has made several attempts. His

family and friends are anguished by the whole thing.

I have tried the orthomolecular approach through Dr Chris Reading and his representative here, Heather White, but he ended up in hospital again after 6 months because of lack of support when the going got tough (there was only me), so back to square one. He is flatting (unsuccessfully) and still on four drugs.

I dream of having somewhere to take him and others, but there is nowhere in NZ. I would love to pack up my son and come over to your Centre, but it would be more sensible to be involved in starting something up here. Anna agrees that what is needed is backing, premises and professional support, all difficult to come by. What would it take in practical terms, Maureen? I have tons of motivation but don't know what to do with it. I have had years of trying to negotiate with psychiatrists re treatment and have toyed with the idea of chaining myself at the steps of Parliament in frustration to make them listen (but I am only a typist and mother).

I would love to know how things are progressing for you. I do admire what you are doing. There is such a great an urgent need out there.

Kind regards
Grace [Hamilton, NZ]

I was doing a search on biologics and schizophrenia and your site came up. I am upset and excited and hopeful. My son, who seemed to be depressed for about 16 months starting at the age of 19, *had an acute psychotic episode, where he went manic and thought God was talking to him and telling him to convert the world. He was kissing everyone and saying I love you and it was a gift from God. He was hospitalized and given risperdol. He is still there, having had one more episode where he thought God was telling him to hurt himself and so he punched himself in the nose and bit his lip.* They upped his drug to a hefty dose. He came home last weekend and walked like a drug addict and I could tell his vision was blurred. He is lucid again and says he ignores his voices and doesn't hear them very often. He is a very religious boy, as we are a devout Catholic family who have always gone to church and said prayers together. He was very involved in World Youth Day 2000 and went to Rome. He drew a picture of Jesus and a rainbow and they think he is still delusional and want me to keep him away from religious things and church. He is much better since they gave him cogentin to manage the side effects of the drug, but they won't leave him home until this "religious stuff" stops. I cannot stand the thought of him having these drugs for life. Is there anything I can do for him in Canada? Please help.

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Do you have any reliable contacts, therapists, support, in Brisbane? What happens to the patient who is regulated and running from the Police because he is TERRIFIED of the forced injection side effects if he is caught - which makes him live on the streets and is face becoming psychotic just from the fear of the Doctor, the drugs, the whole system? Forced to sleep in refuges every night for the rest of his life unless someone catches him and takes him back to "the Unit"? The only answer he can see is suicide. Who can he see who could help him without "dobbing him in"? This system stinks. He is now a criminal, wanted by the very people who are supposed to help him, unable to tolerate even a TINY dose of their medication. Even I do not know where he is right now. Can you offer any help, please? Am so glad I stumbled across your website. Thank you.

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Thank you for accepting my call without notice and making yourself available for a generous period of time. How refreshing and reassuring to know I am indeed "not alone" but on the contrary, very much in trusted company through my journey. I have always known with total certainty that whatever I need will come to me. How and when is not so relevant; the fact that it does reinforces my deep belief in a universal whole.

Close to two years ago, I reclaimed my birth names - being the first names of both my grandmothers - both healers. They're not just pretty names which I had a nostalgic impulse to re-establish; both names are linked in to my ancestors - incredibly gifted women who were born way before their time and left their mark by their deep capacity to give and heal.

I cannot imagine sitting in time and space waiting to die. I, too, was born at this time to do what my grandmothers before me did, to heal and comfort by recognizing the uniqueness of each individual soul. It's been a long journey and I am enjoying the return home. Bless you, Maureen. Thank you for caring for our youth, for my child and for all the children who are waiting to blossom into adulthood.

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I have always been a seeker and have explored many different spiritual paths. During the last ten years I have struggled to come to terms with my identity, and I have searched through many different paradigms to find that 'golden fleece'.

On my journey I studied psychology at university and completed my degree with some difficulty, for as I progressed I began to realize that many of the ideas that were being promulgated did not sit well with me. I read the work of Szasz, Laing, Jung and Breggin and found solace in their teachings, but in the mainstream of these disciplines such people are often viewed with scepticism. During this time I struggled to survive at times, but I did and in the past few years I have worked as an employment consultant. I resisted traditional psychiatric medication but instead treated myself with nutrition, exercise, meditation,

counseling and sheer determination and through the application of these processes I recovered. In the last twelve months I have been working for an agency which focuses on providing employment placement, vocational guidance and support to people with mental health problems.

In this role I have enjoyed my work, but have frequently felt frustrated when confronted with the rigid pedagogy of the psychiatric mainstream. I have for some time been searching the internet for alternative approaches and have found many sites in the USA which have given me hope. But it was only just today that I found your site and was absolutely relieved to have finally found someone in this country pursuing a path that I believe in. Your site is excellent and I must commend you on the superb quality of the information contained within.

I have reached a point now in my life where I feel that I can no longer be part of a system that is so dehumanizing. For although I love the work I do, and feel that work is crucial to recovery, I also feel constrained by the fact that virtually all my clients are on medication and are under the supervision of psychiatrists who are enamoured with the 'medical model' and all its baggage.

I would describe myself as an artist, musician and spiritual seeker who yearns for a better way. I am determined to see that more people are freed from the tyranny of psychiatric oppression. I will establish a centre here, but I will need to gather assistance and advice. Any advice that you would have on this subject would be absolutely invaluable. I am sure that you would have much to teach me and would relish the opportunity to learn from you. Furthermore, I would love to come to Adelaide to meet you and to see if we might collaborate on this project.

Once again thank you so much for bringing a glimmer of hope and for sharing your time with me today.

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To the members of the Tribunal Panel:

My son's medical report further substantiates my well researched claim that Schizophrenia is not a biological/organic illness such as Alzheimers, MS, Parkinsons. The neurological tests conducted on James such as CT scan, ECG, CXR and MRI confirm the above. When Dr T has isolated a schizoid gene from my son's genome, then and only then can he refer to him as Schizophrenic.

Psychiatrists, blinded by their 'medical' bias, fraudulently pathologize and label people's serious life or existential crises as "symptoms" of "mental illness" or "mental disorder" and "personality disorder". It appears that since Dr X diagnosed, labelled and treated my son for Paranoid Schizophrenia before his 18th birthday (unknown to the family), that subsequent doctors have followed suit.

I strongly object to Dr Y's diagnosis (refer to the medical report). He further goes on to profile my son as a criminal, down to the medical tests that were conducted. His main agenda is to push for Clozapine trial treatment. However, Dr Z recommends further tests prior to Clozapine and ECT as listed in the medical report. He is totally disregarding the other medical report findings, such as Prolactin levels elevated, red cell folate elevated, Zinc Umol elevated as well as a neurologist's report indicating certain abnormalities of movements are most likely medication induced.

As for the clinical psychologist's report, she should well know that such tests should not be conducted while he was still under the influence of Olanzapine and Diazapine.

The various psychiatric medications that my son has endured for the last 4 years have produced the following side effects: Akathisia, Toxic Psychosis, Drug induced OCD, Tardive Dyskinesia and Parkinsonism. If this treatment is allowed to continue even without Clozapine and ECT, he runs the risk of developing drug induced diabetes, memory loss, Dementia and last but not least, an extremely serious life threatening condition (NMS).

The psychiatric profession is not about practicing medicine, it is about being agents of social control (the likes of the Spanish Inquisition) via the Mental Health Tribunals and the Mental Health Act.

"The official process that led to the manufacture of late medievil witches started with the publication *Malleus Meleficarum* in 1486. The *Meleficarum* was a precise diagnostic manual for witch hunters, and it was published specifically to implement a Papal Bull empowering inquisitors 'to precede to the just correction, imprison and punishment' of heretics who corrupt the Catholic faith by conversing with the devils. After the publication 'there soon followed an epidemic of witchcraft' and people manifesting the malignant signs were discovered everywhere". [Quoted from Dr Richard Gosden's book, *Punishing the Patient*.]

The psychiatric bible - or shall we call it the new *Malleus Maleficarum* , namely the DSM-IV - is the equivalent thereof. In it, sleeping disorders, even Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, as well as 200 odd 'disorders' are now, according to DSM-IV, labelled as mental illness. Is anyone going to remain sane or safe with all this in mind?

In the words of one medical scientist: "Physics is the only exact science - everything else is stamp collecting".

SANE-MD

(Schizophrenics Against Neuroleptic Experimentation - Medical Detective)

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Although I am familiar with quite a bit of 'antipsychiatric' writings, I must say that I found this [Australia's Invisible Religion] so powerful and loving, that I really savoured the reading of it.

Thank you for all the eloquent, meaningful effort you have put into speaking out about this terrible thing which is going on to members of our community. As we know, many of these people have absolutely no rights, and the fact people like yourself ARE speaking up for them is real love.

Although all of what I read was wholly significant, I noted this bit: "the only difference between the two 'priest-hoods' is that the biologic mock-religion is based on materialism instead of spirituality . . ."

I would like to add the insight from this, which I am sure you are aware. The definition of 'spirituality' by the corrupt Christian religion was one in which 'matter' was demonized. The Earth was thought of as the "Devil's shit", thus Nature, woman, sexuality (especially for ecstatic reasons) was thought of as evil and their "Devil" was placed right in the centre of matter! So one can see a complete duality here and thus this fear they projected onto their victims.

On the other hand, the biologic dogma is exactly the inverse, here we have spirit/soul not recognized at all. And if it is recognized- i.e. its manifestations, negative or positive - it is seen as being a "mental illness" of "matter". God bless you.

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I had some overwhelming experiences over the last week which triggered my hyper-awareness. It's been many years since I've had such an episode, but of course when it happens it does not seem foreign, but pervasive and eternal. Anyhow, after delving into your site and practicing some intense Yoga, a rather huge weight was lifted over the night and I am rather substantially grounded at the moment. It comes with both relief and disappointment, since the heightened awareness of borderline psychosis grants poignant

insight into human nature and the world around me . . . trouble is that the 'gods' don't seem concerned with the fact that I have bills to pay.

At least I know it's there, and in a safe enough environment heightened awareness and the darker sides of reality can be explored, and potentially integrated. Now the real work begins.

Fundamentally a person in the midst of psychosis requires non-judgmental, human validation of the reality of their experience, since generally the cause of the condition is a result of extreme loss of trust and faith in people and the world around them. Keep up the good work.

Thank you, Jesse Moore

From: Maureen B. Roberts

Hi Jesse

Thanks for your encouraging feedback - it's always reassuring to know that my hat-dipped-in-the ocean offerings are helping to uplift and re-empower sufferers - instead of further empowering those who have power over sufferers. Tragic that Jung has been almost totally ignored - when he had so much healing and wisdom to offer to our ailing culture. Jung Circle was a shared labour of love - glad it brings some warmth and comfort to those who seek reassurance that 'soul' is alive and thriving in the midst of the arid deserts of Western materialism. Good to hear from someone who understands 'the reality of the psyche'.

Kind wishes & safe journeys

Maureen R.

Jesse:

In breaks at work, I have been perusing your site more deeply and I am completely blown away. It is almost impossible for me to believe that such a thing exists. Part of my psychosis was that all of reality was 100% subjective, and therefore any semblance of hope was just a manifestation of my grasping (as well as mocking my predicament). As I said, it's hard for me to accept, but over the years, with the help of good people, I have gathered enough experiences to know the 'other' exists, enough to trust human connection under the right circumstances. Please allow me to say: Thank You!

I'm still trying to come to terms with the fact that someone out there has actually bothered to give issues such as schizophrenia, Jungian psychology, synchronicity and mysticism such earnest and authentic attention - and that you have actually chosen to do something about it. It is a shame (for me) that you are located in Australia, otherwise I would have already

booked an appointment.
Gratefully yours, Jesse Moore

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Hope you are feeling well again. Sam is still on the run and I need to know if there is anyone in NSW that you know of who could help him? His main concern is to find a way out of the corner he's been backed into and wants me to contact lawyers, etc., to have his status changed. Are there any of your therapists in NSW? Also, do you have ANY idea of people I can contact who could grant him 'asylum'? I know the answer will probably be 'no', but I have to start somewhere.

He has exhausted the list of people like Government, patient Health Care Complaints, everyone he can think of and now he has gone and blames me for the whole mess he's in. He classes his treatment as 'rape' and I agree that it is. He has taken my car, also, but the police were practically at the door. We have no public transport out here! But I'd still rather rely on taxis than have him fall into their hands again. First, I am going to try the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and go on from there. I will sit at this computer until I find SOMEONE. Thanks, Anne.

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I stumbled across your site while searching for links on schizophrenia and synchronicity, and it was by far the most welcoming.

I think I am realizing that I have a somewhat mild version of the disease, although I really hate to call it that; it's more of a way of seeing things. While I did have several psychotic breaks in my teenage years and a number of speed-bumps since then, at 28, I am leading a productive life. That said, my experiences still loom over me like a spectre and are too valid to discount. I fear that if I deliberately abandon them, they will come back when I least expect it and cause all sorts of trouble - and my fear is not unfounded.

Anyhow, I'm not really sure why I am writing. Well, maybe that's not necessarily true. I'm looking for help - and I want to help as well.

Your sentiments about prescription drug therapy and detached analysis are uncanny reflections of my sentiments, but unfortunately it is difficult for someone who says 'I think I might be schizophrenic' to find much else. I really haven't told anyone, although I did say so to my current therapist and she asked me why I thought so. I think she might have been a tad frightened of the notion. Anyhow, I have consciously camouflaged my abnormal perceptions, thoughts, etc. so well, that I can convince any psychiatrist that I am perfectly

centred and grounded - but that is honestly not the case. You seem to understand the extreme levels of perception that schizophrenics possess, so you will understand that I don't wholly trust the 'system' to help me much.

So, I write to you, I'm not quite sure why, but maybe it will turn into something that produces something bigger than I imagine, or maybe not. I have recently been having multiple experiences of synchronicity, so I wouldn't be surprised if some hidden wheels are being set in motion. I live in San Francisco. I realize that you live in Australia, so we can safely write sessions off, but maybe you know of some quality individuals, groups or organizations in the SF Bay Area that I might be able to explore?

I have been told that I am highly intelligent, but I have difficulty believing that, or claiming it, since most of my mental development has come from constantly trying to deliberate through 'delusions' and is slightly bound to it. I can shift between light psychosis and normal perception almost at will (not something I like to do, but it can come in handy) and have a moderately developed spiritual practice in the form of Yoga and some Meditation. I am beginning to feel that my career will not fulfill me for much longer, and I have frequently given thought to going back to school. I would like to give back, if only I can integrate that which I've been given.

I hope I have not overwhelmed you with information. I've only just started to write about my 'delusions' and I'm finding it far too easy to do - I've been walking the razor's edge for far too long. I give you salutations, and kudos for your willingness to listen to people who have never felt as though they could be heard.

[The following, deeply moving letter is a beautiful example of the true medicine practised by the heart-centred 'wounded healer', who has gone through the equivalent of a shamanic death and rebirth initiation . . .]

I was given your name by R, with whom I have shared some improvised theatre and shamanic experiences in Sydney over the past couple of years. My particular quest at present is to explore working with a young man diagnosed with schizophrenia 4 or 5 years ago.

My own background is as follows: 30 years ago I graduated as a medical doctor, worked in hospitals for 3 years, then trained in women's health and worked in that area whilst attending full-time Art school for the next 3 years. With the birth of my first child, I descended into my own "underworld" with the onset of severe Chronic Fatigue Syndrome lasting about 5 years. While receiving psychoanalytic therapy, I began my own training in child psychoanalytic psychotherapy based on the training at the Tavistock Institute in London (Freud, Winnicott, Klein etc.) This lasted 7 years, at the end of which I began my own practice in this model. The birth of a second child brought joy and the onset of the second serious assault on my health: breast cancer. This was a pivotal experience for me, as a completely new reality opened up: dolphins literally came to me when I called for help

and direct communication between us happened at a crucial time. That was now 7 years ago and I am still alive and much enriched although the journey has taken me to hell many times.

My work as a therapist took on completely new dimensions and outcomes. Very often I was working with very unwell people and I myself did not know how I managed to access the skills that appeared when I needed them, usually when the situation seemed hopeless, beyond my previous knowing. People blossomed in front of my eyes in a magical way. However, soon my own health was again problematic, with the loss of my voice, then my hearing and onset of intense body pain. Finally 2 years ago I stopped the work and then descended even further into a prolonged dying - excruciating body and mind pain often culminating in 'dissociation'. This was a very horizontal time for me, as *I spent most of the year in bed sequestered away from the world, including my own family. As I emerged periodically into the light of day, I came across a form of somatic work called 'Hakomi' which gave me great hope. I then began to religiously 'track' my body sensations as a way of preventing the dissociative symptoms which were so distressing.*

Throughout all this time, the animal kingdom brought me great support in terms of real physical visits as well as 'visitations' in altered states of consciousness. And now here I am at last feeling well enough to begin living more normally: I have set up my lounge-room as a studio and am doing what my heart has ached to do all my life - painting and drawing. The journey is still often painful but I am no longer 'dying'. There are moments of exquisite joy and new wisdom and hope.

And now into my life steps a 18 year old boy with schizophrenia. I actually went to paint a portrait of his mother, who is a famous composer, but my heart was captivated by her son, whom she harangues badly and who suffers intensely. He had a psychotic breakdown 5 years ago. He is heavily medicated (3 drugs) so talks and moves slowly but in his eyes and soul I see great beauty and potential for health. I would like to help him, however, would appreciate help from anyone who has worked in this field and from a perspective which includes the transpersonal or any other field that may be useful. Hence I write to you and include my own life story in a nutshell so that you may have some sense of me. I would love to hear from you and to hear any thoughts that you may have on any of the above.

Warm regards - Ewa Henner

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My 22 year-old daughter has recently been diagnosed with schizophrenia. In the space of weeks, we have been bombarded with a Mental Health System that is totally centred on the use of heavy anti-psychotic drugs, with Magistrate hearings and court orders to enforce their use. It has been one of the most terrifying experiences because, as far as this system is concerned, there is absolutely no other way. At the moment she is on Olanzapine and is suffering from the huge metabolic changes in her body. She has gained so much weight and

appears to be suffering from blood sugar imbalances. All of the doctors we have seen are determined to place her on these newer 'atypical' anti-psychotics. In the space of weeks I have discovered so much material against their use - class actions etc. and warnings about the use of Olanzapine from bodies such as the British Medical Journal and the Japanese government. The doctors and the nursing staff we are dealing with don't want to hear my concerns.

When I read through your article it was an amazing relief - that there are people in Australia who are looking at alternatives. I am well aware of Jungian approaches and shamanistic material. In fact, some of the things my daughter is saying, when in a delusional state, such as experiencing the sense that her internal organs have been cut up, etc. seem to be closely linked to shamanic initiation processes. She has been 'unwell' for some time and, according to one psychologist, has been 'self-medicating' in her use of marijuana. But my perspective has always been that this is part of her spiritual journey, a very difficult and painful one but nevertheless, very powerful. She has forced me to confront many aspects of my own life by her 'challenging' behaviour. It is only in the last couple of months that she agreed to getting some help and we went to a psychiatrist. Then, all of a sudden we became caught up in this terrible system that can only be described as legalized drug-pushing, with the corporate drug companies calling the shots at every level.

So at the moment we are desperate to find healers who are on the same wave-length. Can you suggest anyone who has a similar attitude to your own? Also, would you mind if I continued to email you, since we need all the support we can get in this time of incredible pressure from the psychiatric profession.

Later: We have seen another psychiatrist (I'm afraid we have to do this to get C. away from the other psychiatrists at the hospital). He does take a different approach to those in the hospital. He doesn't seem to think C. has schizophrenia, which is a great relief, but that it is a combination of a genetic weakness and the drugs. He feels that she can be weaned steadily off the medication, starting with the Olanzapine, over about the next six to nine months. It all depends on C. co-operating and completely stopping the marihuana and the alcohol. She seems pretty determined at this stage and pretty scared by the prospect of doing any more damage, which is good.

He doesn't pull any punches, and will be quite tough with her, especially if she doesn't co-operate, but I feel he actually has a conscience, which is something you can pick up in the first meeting with any of these guys. He is also a child and family therapist, which means that he goes for gentler treatment methods, as opposed to the heavy-handed use of the drugs. The ones at the hospital seemed to be running things more for expedience sake, as opposed to really wanting to investigate the individual's needs.

I think it's about as good as we can get at the moment, and while I myself would run a mile from a drug-based approach, given that C. has created a lot of this with drugs, she may need

this for a little while to wean her back to life without any chemicals. Maybe, as we work through the chemical cleansing we can be looking at the spiritual side as well. She does get upset with me, though, if I mention anything about our family's incest problem to a doctor. She's really not ready to deal with that yet.

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My son is in the throes of a psychotic breakdown. He is 28 years old, quite brilliant, a musician and artist, and adamantly against taking any medication. We still have not received a firm diagnosis, but in the past week has hallucinated, been paranoid, had delusions. He is opening up for the first time in his life and is talking a lot about all the pain and isolation, etc., that he has been suffering. He is realizing that he must look at the problems we have had in the family, which he has tried to avoid for years.

He is currently hospitalized and is beginning to calm down - less manic, as it was described to me. The hospital is ready to have him involuntarily committed if he does not begin medication. He is firmly opposed, though he knows that he must change his lifestyle and get help. My husband and I see that he is not ready yet to be able to function on his own, but want to support him in the best way possible.

What kinds of resources are available in the US? We live near Washington, DC. Thank you.

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I would very much like to receive further info. - I am deeply concerned about our client's need to 'comply' or be refused medical services, to be forced into the medical model against their will, to be handcuffed and taken away in a police divisional van - blah blah blah and so forth - it is a saddening refrain. You may or may not have seen an article in the Psychiatric Journal (Boston University), where comparisons were made between psychosocial rehabilitation in India and in the US and UK. It was noticed that although prevalence of illness was seen to be similar, rehabilitation was far more successful in India, with less medication. The relevant difference was that India provided more familial support due to cultural expectations and also, due to the agrarian nature of the society; people were expected to and did return to work more successfully. It is to be hoped that such societies don't work hard to "upgrade" their services to those of western countries and deny positive opportunities for such individuals.

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I recently experienced a first-time psychotic episode in reaction to stresses which had been building up for some time and which came to a head this year after I broke up with my

girlfriend, was fired from a job, etc. Starting in August I had several real-life experiences (not hallucinations) related to the idea of rebirth, and on Oct 7 a particularly stressful public performance (I am a musician) led to an intense week-long delusion, probably involving hallucination, during which I believed I was to die in order to save the world. I was hospitalized for four days during which I agreed to take Zyprexa for three weeks in order to avoid involuntary commitment. (I have always thought it wrong to prescribe medication for psychological disorders.)

My parents have been incredibly supportive throughout my hospitalization and nascent recovery, and my mother communicated with you via email. I read your keynote address from the Temenos conference and was struck by the many similarities between what you describe there and what I experienced. *In addition to having several real-life experiences before my delusion involving imagery associated with rebirth - which I interpreted as signs of my own spiritual rebirth - I also made several conscious links between my "prophecy of doom" and mankind's failure to unite rational and irrational ways of thought. (I was trained as a physicist before choosing to become a professional musician.)*

My purpose in writing is to ask if you can refer me to any psychologists, psychiatrists or other counselors in New York City who may be able to help me understand this startling episode in my life. (I have never before been diagnosed with any sort of mental illness.) Thank you for your time.

[My reply included a semi-humorous suggestion that since training in psychiatry, psychology and counseling usually does not involve a deep understanding, or direct personal experience of the psyche and spiritual crises, one may as well ask if there are any friendly NY plumbers, or hairdressers who might be of help . . . You can't guide someone where you ain't been yerself.]

To Whom It May Concern:

Having found your website while searching the Internet, I was immediately drawn to the drug-free approach to treating "mental illness". I am currently 24 years old and have been prescribed clozapine for almost three years. I am on a dosage of 100mg at the moment, but I find myself increasingly concerned at the "spiritually dead" feeling that accompanies the taking of the drug. The side effects include tiredness, and a mental dullness that permeates most days. I am hesitant to discuss ending my clozapine treatment with the psychiatrist, as I am afraid he will see it as a lack of "insight" and have me committed again, despite there being no indications or "symptoms" that I am unwell. At present I am not on a community treatment order, and have not had an admission to hospital for close to three years.

I do not want to spend the rest of my life taking medication that is probably doing more harm than good and I am writing you to ask what the best options are for me at this stage, in terms of drug-free treatment.

I have the right to stop taking these medicines if I want to. It pisses me off that my psychiatrist forced me to take clozaril for a year- despite it being ILLEGAL to force me to take it. This medicine is making my body age, dramatically. People who see me say I look forty. Old friends are so surprised at how bad I look. Genetically, I was given the gift of longevity. Thanks to clozaril, I will probably die at fifty or sixty. And my dad is so brainwashed by the psychiatrists that I need this medicine. How can you help me fix my schizophrenia without drugs?

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Thank you indeed for your email reply. I would like to tell you a little about myself. I completed my Higher School Certificate in 1999 with a University Admissions Index of 74.40 and the following year I studied a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics at University and enjoyed studying. However, in September 2000 I made an appointment to see a academic psychologist and I told him about my experience at university and he came to the impression that I had onset schizophrenia. At the time, I thought the problem was minor and I was asked not to attend any further lectures or tutorials for the rest of semester. I attended and attempted 2 exams at the end of that year and the following year I left my studies for a long year break. However, worse was yet to come! In January 2001, I went to my GP, who prescribed me Stelazine and Lovan. I had only taken these drugs for a few weeks before totally withdrawing against the GP's advise that I should stay on. I was then referred to a psychiatrist who then presribed me Zyprexa (Olanzapine) and I took it for about 4 months.

In April, 2001 I went to hospital complaining of suicidal thoughts. I continued with Zyprexa and then I was administered Cipramil. I was in hospital for 2 weeks before coming home. I felt better but I couldn't believe that I was walking in the hospital ward like a zombie', sleeping for most of the day. Upon leaving the hospital, I was then referred to the Mental Health Service and even worse came. I was encouraged to see a psychologist and psychiatric nurse for at least 7 months and I couldn't believe these people. The psychologist did a neuro-psychological test and said that I was of average intelligence and I was absolutely appalled, but he smiled. I was shocked and disgusted. In the meantime, the psychiatric nurse continually encouraged me to take my medication and a psychiatrist now changed my medication from zyprexa to risperdal. The results of taking the drugs were: sleepiness, dizziness, narcolepsy, depression, inability to do even basic work such as washing dishes, etc. I stopped seeing the psychiatric nurse and psychologist at the end of December 2001 and I was then referred to another psychiatrist, who encouraged me to take my medication but then forced me onto Seroquel, beginning with a slow dose and gradually increasing.

The effects were devastating. I was sleeping all day and I became overweight, weighing 90kg. I went back to studying in 2002, but only after 10 weeks I withdrew from my studies due to stress. I was very disappointed. I was still taking medication during this time and voluntarily helped at my mum's restaurant after withdrawing from studies on an occasional

basis. I did not consider finding a job because of my mental state, my ill health, the mysterious mental condition that these inhuman people like to label as 'Chronic Schizophrenia'. Help did not come until August 2002 when a friend of my mother's introduced me to a very experienced acupuncturist who withdrew me from medication under quick and easy conditions. I attended his home based practice for 15 days and I exercised a lot. The result, I weigh 75kg. after a lot of exercise, with no taking of psychiatric medication whatsoever. I am able to walk and go out.

My acupuncturist couldn't believe the amount of damage done by the use of antipsychotics and antidepressants over a short period of only 1.5 years. He was appalled. I haven't been taking any psychiatric drugs since August 2002 and I am glad to say that I am well, but far from happy. I have developed a condition now called 'tardive dyskinesia' and my acupuncturist is continually trying to treat as many symptoms as possible. I have recently had serious symptoms as a result of taking psychiatric drugs, including: poor memory, concentration, impaired cognitive function, speech impairment (I talk like a 3 year old!), suicidal thoughts, narcolepsy, social withdrawal and many other symptoms including losing contact with reality. I call this man "The living Buddha" for saving my life. He says serious nervous system damage has resulted, but he is trying his best to treat my problem. If I am forced to see a psychiatrist in future, I will definitely refuse, or cheat them. At the moment, I am trying to get a CT scan from this psychiatrist and giving the result to my acupuncturist. I will definitely lie and make up a story when I see the psychiatrist and then I will say NO TO PSYCHIATRY. Psychiatric drugs work by destroying or disabling the brain, mind, heart and spirit of a person - my own comment from experience.

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I would appreciate any most up to date evidence and information that you may have available; showing scientific proof of the harmful effects of antipsychotic medication. I am on a carer's pension - how would I get access to the possible option of orthomolecular treatment when Darwin does not provide it? How do I get it if I don't go through Government? How do I create a clinic here? I have downloaded from the net Dr Peter Breggin's psychiatric drug facts and some of his legal victories. Could there be through all of this a legal victory for John and myself? John was received into hospital on the 4th August 2000. He was initially managed in a closed ward with observations of his mood, behaviour, appetite and sleep. Following review by a Consultant Psychiatrist, he was admitted as an involuntary patient. Collateral history was sought from his family and inner city clinic. John commenced his medication on the 4th August and was discharged on 2nd January the next year.

My son by now had disappeared and I had a person dealing with severe side-effects to the antipsychotic medication, even at low doses. The doctor told me these side-effects were symptoms of schizophrenia. I argued the point. Then John lived with me until I left Perth. I arrived in Darwin burnt out; frustrated, angry, confused, without direction, totally

overwhelmed by the illness and the handling of it by Mental Health Services. I saw a doctor who put me on a course of Zoloft and remained on these for several months. John continues to be an involuntary taker of these antipsychotic medications that are enforced down him or via injection, through a court of law, and if he does not, then he goes back to hospital via police wagon. Maureen, how do I get my wish come true for all the sufferers of psychotic illnesses here in Darwin NT? I am but yet a grain of sand; however, I still have endurance and determination, I am just waiting for someone to jump on this wagon with me. After reading Breggin's *Toxic Psychiatry*, then writing many letters and confronting psychiatrists, with all my evidence and findings, I have been sent on this epic journey.

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I do need to speak to you very urgently. My son has been an involuntary patient at a psychiatric hospital for well over 12 months now. The psychiatrists are killing him with neuroleptic drugs. So far they have experimented with 9 different psychotropic drugs that we are aware of and they are hell-bent on putting him on Clozapine and ECT, which I have been fighting against for some time, but it is now getting to the stage that they will push ahead with this without our permission. As it is, he is on the maximum dosage of Zypreza and 10mg Valium 6 hourly.

I am extremely desperate for help and any information and assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated. For your perusal I enclose a copy of an e-mail I have sent to a journalist and some members of Parliament:

It is evident to everyone that the Mental Health Act has to be amended if not abolished altogether. Knowingly or otherwise, the legislators have created a monster. The monster that I am referring to is a so-called branch of medical science, namely: the psychiatric profession; more specifically, the mainstream kind that operates in public institutions. They are given so much power, which is alarming, immoral and should be illegal. While you and I are aware of this, unfortunately, everyday citizens are not. The reasons for this are many and complex, nevertheless I would like to name a few.

As it has been in the past, it is socially if not politically acceptable to treat the 'mentally ill' with contempt. Add to this the fact that the psychiatric profession is propagating a myth in relation to mental illness, thus preying on fear and ignorance among the general population. Further adding to this is the backing of the powerful multinational drug companies, who appear to have a major influence on the politicians as well as the media, etc.

Did you know that our sons and daughters are potential victims of "EPPIC proportions"?

EPPIC - Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre

PACE - Personal Assistance and Crisis Evaluation

NEPP - National Early Psychosis Project

YIPPIE - Young Peoples Prevention and Early Intervention

Unsuspecting, emotionally disturbed young people, or those experiencing drug-induced psychosis are deemed 'mentally ill' and treated with psychiatric drugs, instead of being given counseling and rehabilitative treatment. They are locked in mental institutions and without consent, exposed to chemical lobotomy or ECG, as well as denied other basic human rights. The general public is not aware of these experiments. One has to wonder about the high rate of suicide amongst our youth. Shame, Shame, Shame!

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Thank you for today's letter of encouragement. Yes, I am well familiar with Jung's work, as I have read as many as many as a mother of 5 who is also studying can manage, including his biography.

Even though the shrinks have had my family emotionally, physically and financially all but bankrupted, they haven't got me yet psychologically. I guess, like yourself and others like us, it is because we know what they are on about. More importantly, we are dedicated to stopping them. I remain resolute as long as there is a living breath left in me. So now I can get busy and copy the material you have sent to me previously. Also, I will do my best to support you by way of promoting consultations, the Conference and publications etc.

I'm sending you copies of the last 2 letters I sent to The Director of Operations and Strategy at the hospital where my son is currently "imprisoned".

"We feel that our son's condition is a creation of the psychiatric profession, meaning that he suffers toxic psychoses and other side effects from neuroleptic drugging. The more you try to 'break' us psychologically (and your staff has already done so physically, emotionally and financially), the more we won't go away quietly.

By the way, do you play chess? Seriously, do you? My son does, well he did before your doctors lobotomized him after the Tribunal (with neuroleptics). I don't have to be inside his head to know what Zyprexa does to patients/victims. Here is just a small sample for you, written by a young man in his twenties from the other side of the globe:

Quote: " I had taken it for only 20 days and I had all the symptoms, very big headache, bad mood, extremely irritable, could not interact with others, I felt very badly, hallucinations etc." This, after less than 3 weeks. By the way, does part of your latest strategy involve that your reply to every e-mail we send you recently, is a simple laconic one or no comment at all?

I've noticed with the shrinks (shrink the free thought as well as freedom of speech), that when cornered, they either stonewall, or change the subject. If you are gaining more ground it is not because of your insidious approach, but rather because the current legislation

(MHA) leaves you enough room to manoeuvre. I remain undaunted as an optimist and know that the current "treatment" of patients will not last beyond this decade.

This is how it went with my son: the shrink here - Mental Health Centre - decided to punish him (4 years ago) for having a marijuana addiction and other normal teenage behaviour, by putting him on various psychiatric drugs - thus rendering him addicted to both. And for what, I ask you? For the purpose of social control, that is to say, so that he behaves himself and is more easy to manage. Now you and your staff are just following suit. I am also aware that my e-mail to you is being examined by your shrinks for "profiling purposes".

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Thank you for your return email. I used to read a lot of Jungian books and believe I may still have some around. Would it help to get him a Jungian analyst? My previous spiritual director was a Jungian person and it was awesome for me. I am afraid if N goes suddenly off his meds that he will flip into another manic psychotic state where he may hurt himself again. He has gotten used to the drug, but it still breaks my heart to see him so quiet and sedated. I don't understand what the spiritual crisis is - is he searching for God - for himself? N told me that the voices have been quiet the last few days but I am afraid if he goes off he will start to hear them again and not be able to ignore them. I am going to have him read this email from you and if he wants to phone, or maybe I will. You are more than welcome to quote me in your book. I agree with you that very few psychiatrists understand the need to integrate the whole person, most especially the spiritual side. Thanks, Anne

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Thank you for the e-mail and your concerns. In 1999 my son John was diagnosed with schizophrenia. In August 2001 I arrived in Darwin burnt out with the system. John joined me in February 2002. In March 2002 John was admitted to hospital. While John was in hospital I read Breggin's Book *Toxic Psychiatry*. I learnt from his book of the brain damaging effects these drugs have. I have written many letters to Mental Health professionals about this issue with my new found knowledge and requested tests to be done; also, I requested alternative treatment. The reply: there is no other treatment available that is covered by Medicare. I would sue them if the law permitted for not informing me, or educating me about the dangers that these drugs have. John was an involuntary patient the whole time, unable to give formal consent; however, so far no one cares about this individual case. I am very angry and upset with Mental Health Services and the way they enforce medication that has been proven by some researches to be directly associated with a permanent loss of overall mental function.

John was released from hospital on the 17th April. After one week his medication ran out. Because of what I had learnt, I didn't enforce John to visit his doctor when he refused to go.

Instead I took him to a herbalist and a psychologist. I read Dr A. Philips' book *New Dimensions In Health*, where I learnt which vitamins would be helpful for Schizophrenia and off I went spending \$300.00 on vitamins. However in April John had his first ever witnessed-by-me psychotic attack. He punched, pushed, kicked and threw me around the lounge. John was admitted back to hospital. Mental Health Services have me bent over. The drugs control the psychotic side of the illness, meaning John must take the medication even if it is against our will, and we know of the brain damage caused by these drugs. This is the reason I am campaigning to have orthomolecular treatment incorporated within the hospital system. I have had a good response from other carers, since I introduced orthomolecular treatment to them last Tuesday. Last night in class the Mental Health representative was bombarded by carers who wanted to know why have they not been given 'orthomolecular' as an option and why have we been kept in the dark.

Over the next couple of weeks I will meet with these carers again and we will brainstorm together. I am anti-drug treatment; however, the way the system is designed at present, I and many others are in a controlled situation without choices. This I want changed. However, I know this is going to take time. Anything at all that you think would help us on this journey, please share with us. I have been to see a kinesiologist. However, John refused to go in person so I went and took a photo of John with me and the kinesiologist worked through me and the photo to help as much as he could. Regards, Viki [NT]

Hi Viki

'Orthomolecular' refers to a branch of nutritional (physical) medicine, not to 'psychiatry'. The latter literally means 'doctor of the soul'. I have hence called my own approach to the healing of psychosis 'soul-centred psychiatry'. (We recently hosted Australia's first national Conference on this). Ideally, this complements orthomolecular medicine (and other natural therapies) in order to offer a wholistic response to schizophrenia - as an acute psychospiritual crisis (since there's no proof it's a brain disease, or chemical imbalance).

Psychiatric drugs are not 'medicines' - which implies healing. They are toxic drugs which work by disabling the brain. Most sufferers therefore don't want 'em.

Kind wishes
MBR