

# Journey

A Personal Account by Beverley Sweeney

Ten years ago as a public servant life was difficult. The office where I worked was not healthy. I see now the signs that triggered my crash and subsequent revelations: unfair treatment and no help from those in charge. I wanted to run away but knew I couldn't. I crashed.

I was off work for three months with panic attacks. Not long after my return I stopped eating and sleeping. Ten years of flashbacks began: body memories, triggers, terror. An unimagined part of my childhood emerged. The sexual abuse happened at the hands of an uncle who I thought had died when he was a boy. He did what he needed to do to make himself feel powerful. I learned he was a drinker and he had drowned when I was five.

I thought I was going mad. At first my husband was terrified and didn't know how to help me. We kept talking and found our way. My son who was living away from home was a sympathetic listener but I didn't want to burden him.

Meditation and relaxation had helped me with my anxiety so one day I tried a new meditative technique. I hoped it would give me peace from the memories whirling in my mind. Suddenly I felt I was lifting from my chair. My body whipped from side to side like a snake.

I didn't feel scared. My psychologist and yoga teacher each said it sounded like Kundalini. One of them gave me a book on how to raise the Kundalini. I decided it wasn't for me. Whatever was happening I was going to let happen naturally. I wasn't going to push it. Somebody up there was guiding me I am sure.

For eighteen months it manifested in an occasional, gentle wafting up my spine. It felt nice, comforting somehow. I stopped meditating though. It was bringing up feelings of terror, an inner voice screaming for help. The repressed memories kept coming, terrible memories. No wonder they had been so completely blocked.

I decided to have some bodywork as I was reliving the physical aspects of the memories. I was constantly

stressed. My psychologist referred me to an osteopath who felt he could also help me with the Kundalini as he had studied the practice in India.

On my third visit the osteopath tried some craniosacral work. Fountains of energy exploded in my belly. I felt euphoric, wanted to leap from the table and dance and sing. I began to have visions and prophesies. My hands ached to be placed on people.

The osteopath suggested books to read about others' experiences and that I do a massage course. Perhaps I was meant to be a healer he said.

I felt I had been led to this osteopath so I followed his advice. I loved massaging but tired easily. However things were changing. My hands were led to pressure points on people's bodies although I had no learning in this area. I heard voices telling me where to put my hands. I was finally told that this guidance would come from inside me and that I should trust myself. It was so hard. There were no "how to" books and I was always guided away from Reiki and other healing modalities.

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On the web I found a Kundalini support group facilitated by a healer in New York. It was confirming to share with others having similar experiences to mine. A friend introduced me to another local who had experienced an awakening and I found comfort and support in talking with her.

Being able to validate my experiences and not go into fear about them has been extremely important. I journalled regularly and one night my writing became poetry and a new passion.

What I think of as my true spiritual awakening happened around this time. Whenever I had a flashback I would end up curled in terror in the foetal

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position and take hours to recover. My osteopath suggested that I try to stay sitting up and welcome the fear. The second time I tried this it worked. I told my fear that it was part of me and loved it as such.

I felt a white beam of light descend over me. I was held tall and a great peace came upon me. For the first time I truly felt God's love.

The flashbacks continued. Energy and euphoric experiences intensified. I continued to receive psychological help but most of the time I was handling the abuse triggers reasonably well. I did much Inner Child work. It was a revelation and privilege to regress safely and experience the beauty of the child I once was.

I began to connect with many New Age people and they continue to be among my closest friends. They were really the only people I could talk to who seemed to understand these mystical experiences.

Then something even more unexpected began.

I had left Sunday School at twelve and never returned to church. I grew up thinking I was a Presbyterian but that was only the closest church my parents could find. I was never baptised or christened.

There I was, a nothing in terms of religion, suddenly finding myself reading every article I could find on Christianity. I began to use the sign of the cross in healing work. To my terror I would find myself on my knees weeping and praying for the world. Mother Mary came to me in my poetry talking about the Catholic Church. What did Catholicism have to do with me?

I decided a priest might be my best avenue for help. I was led to a Charismatic Priest who together with a very intuitive Catholic woman offered healing support. I used their suggestion to ask Mary and Jesus to accompany me back into my unhealed areas. I was stunned at the gentle effectiveness of this practice.

But I was still resisting the call. I couldn't resolve the dichotomy I assumed between my New Age experiences and the Catholic Church. On a trip to Europe, I felt amazing energetic and spiritual connections at pagan sites. In the churches of England, France and Italy I found a special peace.

On the day of our flight home I visited Sacre Coeur at Montmartre. I was guided to the crypt underneath the church where there was a statue of La Pieta - Mary holding her son's body.

Suddenly I was completely overcome, shaking and crying. I felt I was carrying the grief of every mother for her son. I wanted to scream it out but there were people around. I knelt in front of the statue and breathed out the sorrow until it was released and I was calm again.

Two months after returning home I attended a healing workshop for abuse survivors run by the Catholic priest and woman healer. I was guided to a passage in Isaiah. That night at home I asked God what He was saying to me. His voice was loud and clear. He said He would give anything to have me back in the fold and that I would never be harmed by returning to the Catholic Church. (I had "remembered" in earlier years many "past lives" in relationship to the church.)

I began to cry as I felt the relief of total acceptance. I asked why the Catholic Church and was told it was because of the traditions going back to St Paul, that this Church knew best how to heal me and that institutions like people need to heal from the inside out. That night I dreamed of a straight, clear road ahead.

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I attended Christmas Eve Mass and trembled and cried for the whole service. I felt I had come home.

In the New Year I began the process of preparing to convert. It was challenging. I was triggered into panic attacks. The priest was concerned at times but I knew I was meant to make it. I was baptised eight months later.

One day I felt an urge to put my hands on things in the church. The parish nun came with me. At the altar I felt the purest, finest energy I had ever experienced. As I held the chalice a loving energy circled and nourished my heart. I cried at the beauty of it all.

I had dreams and visions about the church and its need for renewal and healing. I saw visions of my little local church with hands reaching out of the windows to the New Age movement. This was very confusing and a little scary for me. What was my role in all of this? I was just an ignorant newcomer to the church. How did I reconcile Kundalini experiences and the

Catholic Church with all its laws and teachings?

I continued to do a little healing work when asked, feeling strongly the presence of Mary, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I finally felt guided to an energy healing course - Therapeutic Touch which is taught to nurses. It gave me structure and qualifications which seem to be more accepted by conservative members of the parish.

I began to find richness in being part of this little country church but there was still a great loneliness. I needed a spiritual companion, someone in the Catholic Church who could understand all the different aspects of my journey. The priests and nuns I had met had been very open to me but knew nothing of Kundalini.

At a retreat directed by a Christian Brother I finally found someone who had an affinity and understanding of all the threads which were coming together in me. He offered to be my spiritual companion. His community is not far away and I can visit when I need. My local priest had told me there were many in the Catholic Church who were interested in the same fields as I but it had taken me a while to find them.

This year I commenced a Counselling Course. In my healing work people were beginning to open up more about themselves and I realised I needed more skills in this area.

Part of my journey I had felt was to learn to speak out. There was much healing on many levels to be done to "unblock" my throat chakra. During my youth I had loved ballet and had no qualms about dancing on stage. Speaking or singing was a different matter.

Four years ago I began to read my poetry in public and wanted to increase my confidence in this area. Two years of Toastmasters did the trick.

Over the last few years I have realised the importance of grounding this energy which had been awakened in me. This has involved coming into my body and trusting men as healers which is not an easy feat for abuse survivors.

I no longer have "big" intuitions and prophesies. I "tune in" when I am healing and praying and trust the flow of life and my intuition. I live in confusion at times but have learned to trust that place and that answers will come.

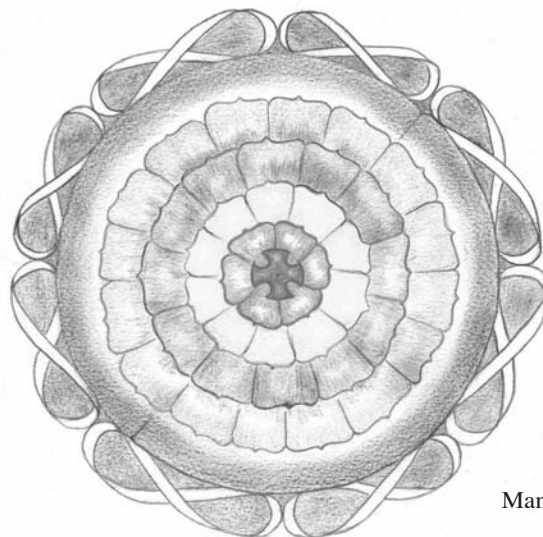
I eased into my studies gradually. Gung ho is not healthy for my body and mind. Meditation and retreats are vital. I joined a community choir and am finding my singing voice.

I am now working with our parish nun facilitating a support program for people suffering loss. I bring a wealth of experiences and ideas as does she. It is labour of love.

My life is rich and busy. My relationship with my husband and family is stronger than ever. I helped found a poetry community and love to perform my work. When I finish my counselling course I will have qualifications I can use in self employment. I can't stop writing. There are so many things I want to say. I am still on a journey with my own healing and that's fine.

Were the last ten years worth it? A resounding yes.

Would I do it all again? Hmmm, ask me in another ten.



Mandala - Sacred Journey To The Centre