

*A Definition of  
the Principles of  
Attitudinal  
Healing*



*by Patricia Robinson*



## **INTRODUCTION**

By Patricia Robinson

*When I found my old papers from 1987 and began to read, I was surprised to realize the words had a huge impact on me so many years later. In truth, they are more applicable now than ever. We face huge challenges today. We are constantly being bombarded with outside stimulus. Finding inner peace is essential for our well-being.*

*My definition of the Principles may be different from yours. No matter what the interpretation, "The Twelve Principles of Attitudinal Healing" is a powerful tool to guide you through each day gracefully.*

## **FOR ALL MY CHILDREN**

*Suzanne, Michael, Virginia, Mark, Adrianna, Tina*

## **AND ALL MY GRANDCHILDREN**

*Alexandra, Carson, Derek, Ignacio, Nicole, Taylor*

## FORWARD

Patsy Robinson, one of my dearest and closest of friends, was there at the very beginning of the first Center for Attitudinal Healing in 1975. She was one of the co-founders when we began our work in Tiburon, California where it remained for many years before we outgrew our location on the San Francisco Bay and moved to the present location in Sausalito. Patsy put her heart and soul into the Center and its work as a facilitator and volunteer. Throughout the years she has helped thousands upon thousands of people who have come to the Center. Her dedication to helping others continues to this day and serves as a beacon for so many others.

Patsy and her recently deceased husband, John, have been one of our leading financial supporters since the very beginning. They were keenly responsible for the Center remaining open in the earlier years. John brought Attitudinal Healing Principles into his business and both he and Patsy did their best to utilize them in their own lives.

There was an occasion when both Patsy and I were in England and a friend created an appointment with a famous psychic by the name of Ena Twig. The Center had just started and Ena Twig told us that she saw these Centers for Attitudinal Healing appearing and helping people all over the world. I recall not believing a word that she said, but her prediction has happily proven me wrong.

Patsy has demonstrated a commitment to the work at the

Center that is off the chart. She has been a wonderful and loyal friend to me, to my wife, Dr. Diane Cirincione, and to Attitudinal Healing even during times when things were very challenging. The depth of the personal friendship we feel for Patsy is beyond description and comparable to no other. We are so very happy that she has found these earlier writings and made them available.

Patsy's insights into the history of Attitudinal Healing and her perceptions of the Principles will be most valuable to those who wish to know more about the history and the application of the Principles of Attitudinal Healing. Thank you, Patsy.

*Jerry Jampolsky, M.D.*

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## **A DEFINITION OF ATTITUDINAL HEALING**

**Attitudinal Healing is not just adjusting or adapting our attitudes; rather, it is consciously choosing to let go of our fearful attitudes. It is a spiritual pathway that seeks to adopt a non-judgmental attitude toward oneself, others, and the world. The goal is not to change behavior, but to retrain and reprogram the most powerful instrument of change we possess, our own mind.**

**It is possible to have a single goal of peace of mind and a single function of practicing forgiveness. In doing this, we can learn to heal any of our relationships, experience peace of mind, and to let go of our fears. When we connect with the energy within us, Attitudinal Healing can become a creative force in our lives.**

## **TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF ATTITUDINAL HEALING**

### ***1. The Essence of our Being is Love, and Love is Eternal***

**Love can never be adequately explained or described, it can only be experienced. Attitudinal Healing is really concerned with experiencing love rather than defining it.**

**Love itself is an energy force. It remains constant and is eternal. It is what scientists call the “life-force,” that which cannot yet be measured but is known to exist. It is a pure energy that flows through us. If it is not blocked by pain, anxiety, anger, all manifestations of fear, we can recognize the essence of love and learn to feel peaceful inside.**

**It is important to constantly work at clearing our minds and realize that the energy of love is all there is, and that which we call negative emotions keeps us from this sensation. We can learn to experience a life that is about loving ourselves and extending that love to others.**

**This is different than the way much of society views love. To the world, love is something that we want to GET from someone else coupled with the fear that we won't have enough. When we live in this fear we are unable to give love freely. That is the work of the ego. Love, which cannot be evaluated or measured is to be shared.**

**The essence of love plays a large part in physical healing, as well. In one of our groups at our Center, a**

woman in her mid-fifties was complaining that she had been plagued by a constant back pain for about nine years. She insisted that she had never been without this pain for a moment. We asked her if she would be willing to partake in a small experiment. She agreed. We then asked the group of about fifteen people if they would be willing to send this woman love with their thoughts for about thirty seconds. All participants agreed. We then asked the woman if she would be willing to do the same, to send love back to the group at the same time. She did agree and we began.

It was a wonderful half a minute as we all focused on a single goal; that of sending love to another. When the thirty seconds were up, the tendency was to evaluate what had transpired. We, the facilitators, cautioned about that, and the meeting continued on with a lot deeper sharing than had gone on before. At the end of the meeting, the woman with the back pain excitedly said, “I just can’t stand it. I have to tell you that for the last hour I have not had any pain in my back.”

This example happened a long time ago, but it has remained implanted forever in my mind as a lesson in trust. What occurred in this meeting was not something tangible that could be seen or measured. The only thing that was happening for me at the time was my intent to feel love for this woman. My goal was not to take her pain away, make myself feel better, or whatever. It was only to be in the present, send love, and not be concerned with the outcome. It was a powerful lesson for me to realize that thoughts can

be transmitted clearly and felt by another at a deep level.

## *2. Health is Inner Peace, Healing is Letting Go of Fear*

In order for us to feel inner peace, we first have to make it our single goal. We can then start to release all the obstacles that stand in our way.

We experience many emotions in our body. They are all related to fear, but to us they have many forms. Anger, jealousy, guilt, depression, or whatever, arise in us all the time. It is important for us to know that we have a choice about how we want to deal with these feelings. We can become helpless and be a victim, or we can actually change these feelings. The mind is the most powerful tool we have and we can use it to change these hurtful feelings.

For us to do this, we must become both aware and willing to change. We must get in touch with our inner voice, the one that is connected to our higher self instead of our self that is governed by the ego. It is the voice inside that tells us our truth without judgment. The next step is to go to the experience of the emotion.

For instance, when we feel anger arise, it is very important to get in touch with it. This means that we experience it, acknowledge it, and are gentle with it. We in no way deny our anger because it is a very normal feeling and does not need to have a “bad” label put on it. Doing so only creates another emotion to deal with, that of guilt. It is only when we truly get in touch with our own anger that we can begin to change it. This can actually be done in an instant. It does not have to be processed at great length. Sometimes it

is not really necessary to know the “why” and “how.” These words can often lead to more turmoil in our lives. When inner peace becomes our only goal, we can recognize that holding on to anger does not bring us peace of mind.

An amazing woman came to the Center about ten years ago. She was in a devastated state as her nine-year-old daughter had been diagnosed with severe leukemia. She was in Dr. Jerry Jampolsky’s office, when she heard him say that she could actually, at this moment, choose peace instead of experiencing the pain she was in. She managed, somehow, to really hear his meaning and was able to instantly shift her perception.

This woman went on to become one of our most active volunteers at the Center for many years and was able to help dozens of parents who were going through what she went through. This does not mean that she said, “You can choose peace” to each person when they were completely devastated. It means that she was there for them wherever they were. And because of her own experience, she was able to rely on her own inner strength so that she could be of help in any way she was needed.

Seeing the instant shift in the woman I just described was a remarkable experience for me. It was a lesson that told me that “nothing is impossible.”

### ***3. Giving and Receiving are the Same***

**There are many people in this world who are labeled givers. Givers usually have a hard time learning how to receive. There are also receivers, who are great at receiving but don't really know how to give. Givers are usually rescuers who manipulate the other person. If the person doesn't respond to their expectations they are disappointed. The receiver, on the other hand, makes many demands on another and never seems to get his or her needs met. Both look to the external world to fulfill their needs, and both tend to have emptiness inside.**

**The Attitudinal Healing definition of giving and receiving comes from another place. It is egoless. There are no conditions, no expectations, and no boundaries put on the extension of people sharing love. When we have no goal or desire to change another person, or no need to get anything from them, a different dynamic takes place. We are actually only there for that person in an egoless way, and we can start to feel a sense of inner peace.**

**As we begin to feel a sense of joining with another person, we seem to forget about ourselves. We become less concerned about our own feelings as we extend and expand. It is at this point that one feels the gift of giving and receiving becoming one. The supply is endless, and we become more and more full.**

**This kind of interaction takes place in our groups at the Center each week. The Center provides a safe place for people to extend themselves towards others. They are able**

to forget their self-consciousness and through this become empowered with love to be able to reach out toward another without expecting something in return. At this point the person who is being helped almost automatically can let go of fears or anxieties and become one with those in the room. When people are truly operating in this mode, fears are released and healing begins to take place.

#### ***4. We Can Let Go of the Past and of the Future***

The past is there for our learning. All of our experiences are valuable ones and add to our growth if we choose to view it that way. Things that we have done that we label as “wrong” are merely experiences for us to learn from and build upon. It does not serve us, however, to dwell on the past. Things like “if only I had done this or that” or “I wish it were different” only serve to hinder us.

The fact is that we are in the present and we need to deal with what is going on NOW. This, again, is done by retraining our minds to stay aware and alert. It is so easy to slip into either the past or the future, but we are not truly alive unless we are living in the present moment.

The future can be exciting or scary depending on what is going on in our lives. We can dwell on the anxieties of the future all we want, but it surely does not give us peace.

There is an important distinction here. All this doesn't mean that we shouldn't make plans for our future. Of course

that is important. The distinction is that while we are making plans for the future, our consciousness remains in the present. We can't foresee the future, so it isn't productive to dwell on what may or may not happen. We can only set our intentions for the future, like making reservations, and then take steps to make them happen when they actually manifest and become the present.

The important aspect of this Principle is that we can elect to change past thoughts that are not beneficial, or that are hurtful. To do this, it is important to become aware of them, and then make a conscious decision to let them go. If they come back again, we just repeat the process. Every time something comes up that we don't want to hang onto, we can make a fresh decision to erase the tape. One of the concepts that is particularly valuable in Attitudinal healing is "My mind can change all thoughts that hurt." This is a powerful tool if we want to change our perceptions and create a new reality.

### ***5. Now is the Only Time There is and Each Instant is for Giving***

This Principle is designed to help us stay in the present moment. It is very easy to lapse into the past or build up anxiety about the future. When we do this, we are often not peaceful. When we recognize this, we can focus our attention back to the present where it is possible to experience peace.

If we stay in the present, we are best able to deal with anything that comes our way. If we are someplace else, it is not possible to make decisions. In essence, NOW is the only time there is. It is in the NOW that the love energy comes through us. It is in the NOW that we are not judgmental and we can see clearly what is going on.

We cannot control the external world. We will never be peaceful if we try to do so. We can, however, learn to control our thoughts. As we change our thoughts from those of getting to those of giving, we will start to notice evident changes in the outside world.

My most profound experience of an example of what can happen was when I was in Moscow recently with a group called “Children as Teachers of Peace” with Dr. Jampolsky who is Founder of the Project. We were at a press conference with the head of the Youth Organization of the USSR, the Young Pioneers. He gave a forty-five minute speech about how it was the fault of the United States that relations were not better between the two countries, etc.

We all listened to his speech and when he asked for questions from the children, they responded in a way he did not expect. One at a time they told this man how good the Russian people had been to us. They said that if the people of the United States heard the stories of the kind treatment we had received from the Russians on our trip, that there would be no wars. They went on to offer a donation from each of the children towards the Chernobyl disaster.

As each young person spoke from his or her heart the

man began to undergo a beautiful transformation. His face began to soften and have more color. His eyes became moist. He came from being very guarded to being very responsive. I went up to him and spoke to him after the meeting. He thanked us so much for coming and it was clear to me that he was a different person than when he walked into the room. I, too, was a different person. I was so moved, that I felt in my heart that it actually could be possible to have peaceful relationships in spite of all obstacles that seem to be in the way.

## *6. We Can Learn to Love Ourselves and Others by Forgiving Rather than Judging*

Whenever we make a judgment on another person, we make a judgment on ourselves. Forgiveness, in the Attitudinal Healing sense, does not mean condoning or agreeing with another's behavior or setting ourselves apart and choosing to forgive someone because we feel they did something wrong. It merely means that forgiveness is a vehicle to clarify our misperceptions.

Simply stated, **FORGIVENESS IS LETTING GO**; choosing not to hang on to a belief that will cause us inner turmoil. In the sense of self, it is up to us to forgive ourselves first by taking responsibility for loving ourselves enough to no longer suffer and to become self-fulfilled.

Using an "attack" as an example, there is a concept in

the Course in Miracles that helps us to look at another person, not as attacking us, but as either asking for help or needing love. In relationships, this is often a most difficult principle to grasp, because our ego mind says that we are being attacked. The fact, however, is that there are no true realities, only perceptions.

A perception is something that, with focus and willingness, our minds are able to change. If we learn to see ourselves as the essence of love, we will have no need to defend ourselves and we can look at the other person in a different light. If we can start to realize that it is only in the places that we feel unconfident or lacking in some way that we can “have our buttons pushed.”

When we feel OK about ourselves, there is less of a problem with how another person is behaving. Again, it is only our own perceptions that make us feel that we are being attacked. We have the choice to fill up with the powerful love energy so that we are able to not even have to defend ourselves.

## ***7. We Can Become Love Finders Rather than Fault Finders***

It is very easy to find fault with others. We sometimes feel that if the other person would only change, then we would be much happier. This is another illusion. No one has to

change for us to be happy. It is up to us to create our own happiness.

When we look for faults in others, it is because we don't necessarily want to see what might be the same fault, or what we fear could become a fault, in ourselves. Criticizing others is often just an outward manifestation of what is going on inside of our selves.

To practice Attitudinal Healing our job is to start to forgive, stop judging, and to love ourselves and others. When we begin to do these three things on a conscious level, we will automatically begin to see people and things differently. Gray days will not necessarily be "bad" days; they will simply become gray days as opposed to sunny days.

We will start to see the light in each person, because there is a light in all of us. Some of us try very hard to cover it up, but since it is the very essence of us, at some level it will shine through.

The more we can let our own light shine through, the more we can begin to see the light in others.

### ***8. We Can Choose and Direct Ourselves to be Peaceful Inside Regardless of What is Happening Outside***

If we wish to choose inner peace as our single goal, then we can realize that we need not be triggered by our external

**world which is a different belief system than we are used to. We all know how the world defends righteous anger and how it supports us to hang onto it. We can do what the world supports, or we can take responsibility for our own feelings, go inside, and choose to get rid of our anger, guilt, and judgments.**

**We are not robots. A robot is run by the outside world. Its buttons are pushed and it is programmed to do whatever someone wants it to do. We do not have to perform like a robot. We are free to do, to feel, and to act in a way that can give us the most peace. In essence, we can realize that no one is really able to “make” us feel happy, sad, lonely, or angry. We often feel this is the case when we say, “if only my spouse would act this way or that way, I would be happier.”**

**The truth is that we can all use these situations as a practice to work on ourselves. We can, at this time, go inside and see how we can change our perceptions of what is going on to make us more peaceful. To try to change the way the other person behaves is manipulation and control, and in the long run simply won't work. We can never change another person; we can only change ourselves. This takes awareness and willingness to keep monitoring our feelings so that we can recognize, acknowledge, and actively choose to alter them. It takes presence and courage to keep reflecting so that we can begin to change.**

## ***9. We are Students and Teachers to Each Other***

**As we begin to look at everyone we come in contact with as our teachers, we begin to look at life in another way. We become more observant and become better listeners. We begin to see that there is no order of learning, and that probably children are our best teachers.**

**Children are open and honest. They have not yet put up the barriers that we adults do. Our barriers are our protective covering that we can learn to release by being with children. The concept of student/teacher means that we don't necessarily know what is best for another person. Nor do we have to. Only each of us knows what is best for ourselves. The learning comes with the shared exploration of knowledge with each other where we can build relationships to learn and grow.**

**It takes away from the hierarchical, vertical type of learning and puts it in a horizontal plain where interchanging student and teacher can make active contributions for the ultimate benefit of the whole. In this type of relationship we tend to feel the freedom to explore ourselves more fully. We have permission to go deeper and not be judged as wrong or foolish. It is this continual effort to give and receive from one another that lets us learn from each other how to experience love. From this we deepen and from this we grow.**

## ***10. We Can Focus on the Whole of Life Rather Than the***

## *Fragments*

In order to feel inner peace we need to begin to focus an attention with ourselves and those around us. This means that we can begin to dispel the feelings of separateness which consistently cause us only pain. It is another of those barriers we put up to protect ourselves from being hurt. When we get caught in the right/wrong, good/bad trap, we are only seeing a fragment of the whole. When we play this game, there is no way that we can be peaceful. It is always a “no win” situation regardless of what the momentary outcome may be.

We can learn to have a new attitude toward ourselves, others around us, and the world we see. We can recognize that there is a greater whole other than the tunnel vision through which we sometimes look. Through an active power within us, we can learn to sense a greater picture. This power allows us to expand and become aware of this greater whole so that we don't need to get caught up in the conflict that others are experiencing. The conflict they are going through is their path, not ours. Our job is to stay focused so that we can begin to see each situation differently and not become a part of a meaningless pattern. To do this we raise our consciousness to a higher level of awareness by retraining our minds as each situation arises.

We can say to ourselves, “I do not choose to get caught up in what is happening right now, but instead choose to see the whole of life.” By doing this, our focus broadens and changes and we start to see things differently. There is

a tremendous excitement in the experience of the changes that take place inside us when we change our thought patterns.

### ***11. Since Love Is Eternal, Death Need Not be Viewed As Fearful***

To conceptualize this Principle, we go back to Principle number one, “The essence of our being is love and love is eternal.” If we believe that life is eternal, the fear of death can be removed. When we reaffirm our belief system that the love that is our essence goes on and that we simply enter a new form, we can erase the fear of death. To the extent that we can erase the fear of death, we can truly begin to live fully in the present.

### ***12. We Can Always Perceive Others as Either Extending Love or as Fearful, Giving a Call for Help***

This Principle is an extraordinary tool to be able to use in dealing with relationships. If we can keep this in mind as we interact with others, we will be able to mold our interactions in a more desirable way. When we are in a relationship with

another person and it is clear that they are extending their love to us, there is usually never any problem. We can receive the feeling of love and support and respond with our love and support. We feel no conflict and things seem to readily get resolved.

If, on the other hand, we feel for whatever reason that we are being attacked, we tend to put up our defenses and either retreat or attack back. The flight or fight response goes into action. It is a conditioned response that we have learned to use to protect ourselves from being hurt. If we can begin to see this person that appears to be attacking us as a person who is coming from fear, we can begin to see a whole new dimension of the dynamics of the situation.

To develop the use of this Principle, as with all the others, we begin by retraining our minds to focus differently. It again means going inside to take responsibility for our own thoughts and not putting the blame on another person for our own reactions in a moment of stress.

We are responsible for our own peace of mind and not that of another person. If we focus on this principle while listening to another, we might recognize that what appears as an attack is actually an expression of fear and a call for help. When we do this, another dynamic begins to happen. As we become defenseless in the moment, there is a shift in the energy and “the attacker” will feel it. He or she will not continue on with the same sense of urgency with which they began, because our shift in perception will create a space that will enable a new dynamic to occur. This new dynamic

**will change the pattern and the quality of our relationships.**

**In order to make these Principles work for us, we first choose to take complete responsibility for our thought patterns. We learn to become alert and cognizant at all times. Living in the NOW is essential to Attitudinal Healing for it is in the past and in the future that our fears crop up.**

**Fear is the antithesis of love and it is impossible to live in both frameworks at the same time. If we want to live in love, we can do it by letting go of our fears of both the past and of the future. The reality is that in the moment we can handle it, no matter what we happen to be facing. Living in the moment we are able to deal with whatever may come along, be it emotional, physical or spiritual pain.**

**To begin to retrain our minds, it is helpful to keep a list of the Twelve Principles of Attitudinal Healing handy for quick reference. When we get into difficult situations it is important to be able to recognize that we can immediately change the focus of anything that may occur. We can choose any one of the Principles to help us at any time we wish. We can read them all or we can just choose one that relates to what is going on. No matter how we work with the Principles, we will find that we are able to change our attitudes very quickly and consequently change the dynamics of what is happening externally. The external circumstances may or may not actually change, but by our changing our perception, we will learn to both see and experience the world differently.**

**Attitudinal Healing takes willingness, awareness,**

**openness and practice. That is all that is needed. It is important to not get discouraged with what may seem like failures. These are only learning experiences that will lead us on our path. Everything that happens to us happens for our learning, and from that point we can choose again so that our learning never stops.**

## **THE BIRTH OF THE CENTERS FOR ATTITUDINAL HEALING**

**TIBURON, CALIFORNIA**

The Center for Attitudinal Healing was founded by Dr. Gerald Jampolsky, in 1975. Dr. Jampolsky, or Jerry as he prefers being called, was a practicing Psychiatrist at the time with an office in a charming area of Tiburon, California overlooking the San

Francisco Bay. He was considered an eclectic Psychiatrist. He used many techniques such as biofeedback, hypnotherapy, relaxation techniques and what ever else he intuitively knew was needed at the time. His specialty was working with children with learning disabilities.

When my son, Michael, was suffering with dyslexia, I was desperately seeking help. Michael was nine years old, and our family situation was awful. I was referred to Jerry in 1971 when I knew we were in deep trouble and it didn't look as if we were going to get out of it. So with fear and trepidation we started weekly visits to the little office in Tiburon. My son improved and stopped therapy while I continued on. I became very excited about the prospects of learning about myself. I had studied psychology at Berkeley in the 50's, but it held a new fascination for me now. Whereas in the past my focus with psychology was on understanding others, now I saw it as a tool for deeper self-awareness.

Therapy facilitated an extraordinary awakening for me. As I began to explore and learn about myself, I realized the limitlessness of one's own growth. The truth is that it was a very painful, but rewarding process.

The Center for Attitudinal Healing started in a spiritual way. A few months previously, Jerry had been introduced to a group of writings, *A Course In Miracles*. He was deeply moved by these writings. From the moment he read them his spiritual transformation began. I was fascinated as well by what he was telling me of what he was learning, and I questioned him constantly for more details. At this point, I did not have a copy of

the books because they were not yet available. Jerry, however, shared willingly all that he was learning, and in the process he reinforced his own experiences.

Actually, before the Center for Attitudinal Healing as it is known today was formed, Jerry asked me if I would be willing to become involved in an experimental project involving healthy and active children in the primary grades at a local private school. Jerry wanted to see if these children could learn to control what was going on for them internally regardless of what was happening on the outside. He wanted to see if they could, in fact, change their perceptions in such a way as to help them in their daily lives.

I was enthralled by the idea and said I would be happy to partake in this experiment. We used the tool of biofeedback, a process which allowed both us and the children to actively see the results of our learning. This was a six-week project. Jerry enlisted six volunteer adults and six children. We met for six consecutive Tuesdays after school in a lovely room Jerry had rented just below The Dock restaurant, in Tiburon, next door to his office. Each adult worked one-to-one with a child.

The first process was to attach the equipment to the fingers of the child and help him to learn to increase or decrease the temperature of his hand by using his active imagination. For instance, I asked Brad, the child of seven that I was working with, to picture his hand sitting in warm water, or in contrast, seeing it in cold water. There was simply no problem. He was able to do this in the first session, as most of the children were.

It was exciting for both of us to actually see this before our

eyes with almost no effort. It was a natural process. The next step was, what was going on in Brad's life that he would like to change? The first thing we dealt with was his embarrassment playing baseball. He got pretty nervous when he had to go to bat and all the attention was on him. He froze, which made it next to impossible for him to hit the ball. We were able to apply biofeedback techniques to his situation on the baseball field. We began to work with picturing Brad walking up to the bat, swinging, and hitting the ball hard and high. We played with it, having fun, and both joining in a mutual goal. By the time we had finished working on it, we were both confident of the outcome. It was an excited and peaceful Brad who came the following week with the news that he had hit a home run!

Over the course of the six-week sessions we worked on many things — Brad's reading, his relationship with some children he was having trouble with, issues with his Dad, all the major things he had been dealing with. When we did our follow-up data, the results appeared to be long-lasting. The children had internalized the technique and were able to apply it themselves in needed areas of their lives. I was unhappy about the project coming to an end as I had not only developed a good friendship, but I had learned so much.

About two weeks after this project ended, Jerry asked me if I would be willing to do another six weeks project. "Would you be willing to work with children who have cancer?" Jerry continued, saying that he had a strong inner guidance to work with children who could be facing death. At the time Jerry was very fearful of his own death, while I was in a kind of emotional denial of the

subject. Jerry knew internally that there was something important about this.

I was fearful about the project. I said to myself that it would only be for six weeks and was hopeful that nothing would happen to a child during that time. I had never been around a child who had a serious illness before, and I was, frankly, very frightened.

There were four people involved — Jerry Jampolsky, Pat Taylor, who was to be the Coordinator of the program, Gloria Murray and myself. We first had to find the children. We asked doctors and friends, and found the desired number of children who might be willing. There were once again, six children selected. We then contacted the children and their parents and met in their homes to discuss the project. We asked for their help, saying that there were a lot of other kids out there who might be able to benefit from their experiences. Would these children be willing to meet once a week for the next six weeks to see how we could help each other? Needless to say, all the children and their parents agreed to take part.

In the summer of 1975 our first meeting took place. We were still meeting in the room under The Dock restaurant and we still did not have a name. Jerry, Pat, Gloria and I were all there. We prepared a dinner — salad, spaghetti, French bread and cookies for dessert. The dinner was a perfect icebreaker. We were all a bit nervous. We didn't have an agenda, so we weren't exactly sure what would transpire. We had set the time for a two-hour meeting.

When we finished our supper we all sat in a circle. We held hands for a minute or so; a custom that still takes place at the

beginning and end of every meeting. This is true, whether it be a business meeting or a group session.

What transpired next was, for me, the key to the beginning of the Center. We all in turn, shared our fears. Honestly and openly. I shared my own immediate fear. It was that I might go blind. I had been dealing with glaucoma, an eye disease that causes the pressure in the eye which can elevate to the dangerous point of causing eye damage to the optic nerve.

Death, of course, was discussed. I had never dealt with thoughts of my own death or that of my family, so I was in awe of these children who were able to so freely talk about their deepest concerns.

As we began to share with each other our own fears, we realized that we had no differences. Adults and children were facing the same thing. The children became our teachers. They were handling things in a much more direct way than I ever had about so fearful subject.

At the end of the first session we felt as if we had all been friends for a long time. There is something about a deep sharing that joins people more than anything else. It is important to say, however, that a light atmosphere prevailed throughout. There was laughter and love along with the caring and sharing.

At the end of six weeks Jerry, Gloria, Pat and I signed a thank you card and inserted a five dollar bill for each child for being our teachers. We wanted to tell them how much they had given us. The children practically in unison said, "Do we have to stop now?" This seemed like the perfect question because we were learning so much that we surely did not want to stop either. We all agreed that

we would continue our meetings for as long as it worked for all of us and that there was no reason to discontinue when we were all receiving so much. That was twelve years ago. And The Center for Attitudinal Healing was born.

Our groups continued over the next several years. They were small. We all participated regularly with the same format. We shared our love, we gave and received and supported each other with unconditional love. And although the format was nearly always the same, the groups were always alive and exciting. Always something new to give. Always something new to receive.

Slowly, children were beginning to be referred to us, because doctors, nurses and families were starting to see a difference in the attitudes of the children. They had another way of dealing with all the difficulties that they had to deal with. The shots, the chemotherapy, the psychological effects of losing their hair.

An example was Brian who was seven years old. He had a very painful ear cancer. Each week when he went to the doctor he created such havoc that the whole hospital was in chaos. The staff of the hospital began to dread the day Brian came because his cries were so loud and his protests so strong that the whole day's schedule became delayed, to say nothing of the resulting anxieties of the parents and children waiting to be seen.

Brian learned from the group how to refocus his mind. He learned how to see the situation differently and let go of the fear he had built up during the week. The results were truly amazing. Everyone saw profound changes.

We used a form of psychodrama to access our feelings, with four people taking part in the process. One played the doctor, one the patient, and two people stood behind them playing the part of the conscience. Whenever the doctor or the patient told a lie (such as, “no, it doesn’t hurt”) the conscience was there to remind them. It was a fun and effective way to get us quickly more in touch with our true feelings.

Another very important aspect of our work with the children was encouraging them to make drawings which expressed their feelings. In their simplicity, these drawings gave us an unexpected gift — they opened the door to the feelings and experiences of the children in a way that words could not, and we all grew closer in the process.

As we progressed with this exploration, we began to see how these drawings might be helpful to other children, their doctors and their families. One day, we decided to write a book. Operating under the assumption that nothing is impossible, we set about to do just this. We compiled the drawings and encouraged the children to make new ones focusing on definitive topics. It brought us even closer and added another dimension to our groups.

It was about a year later, our book was just about complete, when Gregg Harrison died. He was the first one in the group to face his imminent death. Gregg was eleven years old. He had leukemia, his drugs were no longer working and he was in severe pain. Gregg, himself, made the decision that he was ready to go. He told the group this and everyone gathered around him while he talked about his death.

Gregg told us that he thought death was when you went up to heaven and became one with all the souls up there. He said he thought that many souls came down to earth to be a guardian angel to someone. He decided that this is what he wanted to do. We who are left are, in fact, sure that this is what Gregg has done.

During Gregg's final weeks on earth, he was in the hospital. Gregg's parents and his doctors did a wonderful thing. They allowed all the group members to come to be with Gregg during this time. In the seventies, it was not precedent for children who were dying to have other children visit. It was feared that the sick child might become infected by one of the other children. Understanding how important these visits were to Gregg, the doctors and staff of the hospital disregarded this policy and we were all allowed to see him as often as we could. Gregg taught us about courage until the moment he died. He was a master teacher.

It was shortly after Gregg's death that our book was completed. Gregg's father is a book publisher and was grateful for the opportunity to help us get our book published. The book, *There Is a Rainbow Behind Every Dark Cloud* was to cost five thousand dollars for five thousand copies. We did not have the money, but in the usual vein of the Center we "put the cart before the horse" and went ahead to start the proceedings for publishing. As often happens at the Center, the day the money was due, a foundation gave us a check to pay for the books. It is a wonderful book and has helped many, many people. We expected a miracle and we received one.

Jerry sent copies of the book to the media. Shortly thereafter he received a phone call from Chicago. It was the producer of the Phil Donahue show. She said that she was very excited about the Rainbow book and that she would like Jerry to appear in an interview with Phil Donahue. Jerry said that he would like to but he wouldn't do it unless he could bring six children with him. In that miraculous moment, the producer said "yes." The Phil Donahue Show flew Jerry, all six children, Pat Taylor and myself to Chicago. Three parents came along as well. They put us up in one of the Grand Hyatt Hotels and hired a chauffeur and limousine to escort us back and forth from the hotel and studio. It was a very exciting time. The show was a huge success. The Center for Attitudinal Healing made its first public debut.

We still use the Donahue tape as a tool for learning. It is deeply moving and has a powerful impact upon those who watch it. The children are direct and honest. Phil Donahue was so strongly affected by the experience that he came to California about a year later to do another show. He said he had gotten enough material for about ten shows, and to this day still keeps in contact with some of the children.

When we came back from Chicago, our quiet little Center became a madhouse. The phone was ringing off the hook. People were calling us from all over the United States and asking for help. Letters came pouring in. We were on overwhelm, doing our best to answer letters and take calls. At the end of the Donahue program, Pat Taylor made the statement "We wouldn't dream of charging for our services... but we would never refuse a donation." This evoked a flood of donations, large and small. We

had no idea of the magnitude of the responses. It was awesome.

We were a totally volunteer organization. Now that we started to have public donations coming in we needed to legally become a non-profit organization. We decided to see if we could do it on our own, without having to pay an exorbitant lawyer's fee. It was really very simple. We went to Sacramento, California and filed for non-profit status. We went to the Secretary of State's office, on January 20, 1977, and were able to obtain this status in one day. The office helped us set up our Articles of Incorporation in a concise way. It is a simple document stating clearly our purpose under the laws of California. It was signed by our then, three board members.

We also created our own By-Laws by researching other formats and applying what we needed for our Center. Our By-Laws consist of ten pages, were adopted by the Board of Directors and signed by our Secretary, William Thetford. The only other official step we needed to take was to go to the California State Tax Board to make us tax-exempt. This was done with no problems after we had received our Non-Profit Status.

We were known as a children's center to the public, but we also from the beginning had an adult group. This was a group of adults who had glaucoma. As I mentioned, it was something I was dealing with in my own life, and I had quickly learned from the children that as you help others you help yourself. We had worked with this for about two years. Right at the same time as our small group was beginning to wane, the Donahue Show put us in the public light. As a result, we began to receive calls from adults asking if we had any

groups for adults with life-threatening illness. I started keeping a list of names, and after I gotten enough to form a small group, we started one for adults. It slowly evolved on its own, separate from the children's group.

Many adult groups evolved at the center. Some for life-threatened people, or women with breast cancer, chronic illness, persons living with HIV/AIDS, attitudes in eating, person-to-person (people who have no illness, but wish to work on Attitudinal Healing in relationships), groups for persons supporting a person with a life-threatening illness, and groups for elders (given in retirement homes).

All our groups have arisen directly from outside requests to form a particular group. Although we have never solicited members, we have continued to grow in both size and reputation, and through the media more people are hearing about us every day. Dozens of Centers and Groups to this date have sprung up around the United States, and in many other countries around the world. As self-governing organizations, these draw their inspiration and guidance from the principles established at the original Center, with many coming to us for training or being trained to do their own.

We do extensive trainings in Attitudinal Healing and also train new volunteers. We run extensively with volunteers, and are funded by Foundations and by private donors. We often have financial difficulties, as do many other charitable organizations, but miracles keep happening and we are still

growing.

The concept of healing our attitudes and our own minds is both ancient and unique. The principles are age old, but modern day thinking has confused many of them. We are trying to teach the laws of love rather than the laws of society. The principles, when applied, do work. They are the tools that unblock the fears that open the gifts of love.

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