

The MOON magazine

A magazine of personal and universal reflections

Beyond words | Healing communication



Sometimes a word or two changes everything: “You’re pregnant.”
“Not guilty.” “Benign.” “The worst is over.”

Other times, no words at all are necessary. A look. A touch. Our bodies’ response to music. Suddenly we are in sync. We have no doubt. We know what to do.

This issue of The MOON is about communication with the intent to heal. Our interview is with **Judith Simon Prager**, a therapist who has built a global reputation for her work in Verbal First Aid—teaching first responders what to say so that traumatized people can begin healing as soon as they hear the words. The topic of our conversation, however, is her investigations into healing *beyond words*—as dogs, horses, and dolphins do in animal-assisted therapy. Her book, *What the dolphin said*, is Prager’s dolphin-assisted wake-up call to humans to find our empathic hearts to heal a hurting world.

Dr. Larry Dossey agrees. In an essay that draws upon the research he presents in his most recent book, ***One Mind: How Our Individual Mind is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters***, Dr. Dossey argues that **the most urgent issue we humans face is how we conceive ourselves**—as competing egos locked in battle for survival, or as unique expressions of a singular consciousness, each with a piece of the collaborative puzzle. He then gives suggestions for ways we each can increase our connection to that Oneness for inspirational right action.

In “**Choosing words, choosing worlds**,” Dr. Peter Johnston illustrates how language can open or close the minds of young students; encouraging them to learn or convincing them they’ll “never” be good at one or more subjects. Reading his essay—an excerpt from his book, *Opening Minds*, made me want to select my own words more carefully.

In “**Poets and sages behind closed doors**,” Laura Grace Weldon describes her work with nursing home residents, who come alive to tell their stories—the accumulated wisdom of their lives, which she edits into newsletters. In other memoirs, **Beth D. Clary** describes how a weekend of forced encounters with a gruff relative turns into a practice session in listening with the heart, while **Florentina Ramirez Staigers** explores how to get past the pain of disagreement about injustice and find greater understanding.

We have *four (!)* wonderful short stories this month—Israela Margalit’s “**The other side of the moon**,” about a mentor who isn’t all he claims to be yet still helps a woman achieve her dream; Mike Wilson’s “**Kisses**,” about how understanding from a beloved pet can console us when the rest of the world just doesn’t get it; Paul Lewellan’s “**The after prom event**” about a surprisingly good time with a very different date; and Robert Pope’s “**Agnar from Akron**,” a laugh-out-loud tale about cross-cultural and even cross-dimensional communication.

AND we have evocative poetry from **Joe Cottonwood**, **Bob Findysz**, and **Emilio Iasiello**; plus **MOON Shine**, **Movies You Might’ve Missed**, and a video introduction to *What the Dolphin Said* in our Gallery.

As we enter the month of Valentine’s Day, please show some love for intimate storytelling by making a contribution to The MOON via our secure PayPal link. If you can afford the equivalent of a cup of coffee monthly, then visit our Patreon page, where you can become a monthly supporter of The MOON for as little as \$5/month. It’s readers and writers like YOU who keep The MOON shining. Thank you!