

INTERVIEW

For *SIAPA* Column by Bill Dalton (aka Al Hicks) in the Bali Advertiser, Bali, Indonesia, January, 2007

Title:

Barbara Brewster: *PSOL** (**Passionate Student of Life*) including--Patch Adams Clown, Inspirational Author & Speaker, Creativity Teacher, MS Survivor

Where do you come from? What's your nationality?

I was born and grew up in California, and currently have citizenship in both Australia and the USA. Wherever I am on the planet, however, is really my home.

What is your professional/educational background?

I graduated from uni with a degree in Russian, but the most useful preparation for my life is-- Life Experience. Risk taking—immigrating to Australia, alone, at 22; teaching school there with no training whatsoever; hitchhiking across continents; hosting a restaurant in Afghanistan; becoming a clown at 50 and touring Russian hospitals and orphanages with Patch Adams; experimenting with my life.

How did you ever wind up in Bali? When was your first visit?

I arrived on a police boat from Timor in 1970 (sleeping on the deck with the goats, rain, rats) which was patrolling the Indonesian islands for smugglers.

Why have you returned to Bali three times in the last 10 months?

I am devouring a spiritual teaching called the Way of Mastery. I come to the ashram in Ubud to study and be with friends of the heart. It seems perfect that the ashram is here since my experience of Bali is that the culture and the people here are deeply spiritually connected.

How did you get into offering self-help workshops?

I first attended personal growth workshops 25 years ago. I was sick with multiple sclerosis (MS) and knew I needed help in recognizing and breaking through thoughts, beliefs and fears that limited my ability to heal. My own breakthroughs and those of other participants excited me to want to become a catalyst for other's personal expansion.

What workshops are you presently involved in?

My primary workshops, The Power of Play (POP!) and Rambunctious Writing help people access their Power to say YES! to living creatively and fully.

What do you mean by "the power of play" and how can play bring about health and well being?

Most of us can self-observe that changing our thoughts changes our energy. It's sometimes difficult for stressed adults, however, to simply switch from worry to joy thoughts. Play, like meditation, nature, music, is a tool to help us change our thoughts/energy. When we are safely playful, we reconnect with our spontaneity and feel enlivened and relaxed. THEN as a beacon of vibrant, relaxed energy we can attract more of that frequency into our being. Playshop participants' feedback is, "I'm relaxed." "My headache is gone." "I feel free to be me." We can begin to heal at many levels when we relax, stimulate joy, and feel free to be ourselves.

Tell me about your three books.

While all my books evolve from my personal experience, there is a universality to their messages. I articulate what many wish they could say.

"*Journey to Wholeness*" grew from my journaling when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I was in big fear and confusion. Writing and asking myself questions (i.e. What is

the pay-off for having this disease?) helped to reveal how to proceed as well as the degree to which fear (of disapproval, for example) ran my life.

"Down Under All Over" grew from my enthusiasm at returning to Australia, after recovering from the MS—just oozing with gratitude for the country, the people and the spirit of the place.

"Love or Growth; Why not Both?—A Woman's Dilemma" speaks to the dilemma I faced in being with a wonderful husband who loved me but could not celebrate or support my passion and need for growth. One reviewer calls it "a modern western woman's journey," but I've met *men* and women in Bali who say it is also their journey.

What do you mean when you state that there are gifts in crises?

Crises come. Period. We ALWAYS choose how we experience them. We can choose to sift in the debris for gems—life lessons perfect for us—or we can choose to stay in hate, resistance, grief. Then we've got not only the crises but also the poison of those draining qualities. My MS experience, among others, has taught me that there is always a gift of learning—which often becomes the means of popping me to a new level of personal awareness, effectiveness and possibilities.

What is the biggest challenge you are facing in your work?

Being clear that my value as a person is not measured by my work or by the value others place or don't place on it.

What do you like most about your work?

I LOVE transformation! I LOVE seeing people drop out of their social masks and inner editors into their authentic selves; LOVE when we participate equally in bringing forth our (too-often hidden) creative energy, joy, fun, lightness, profundity. It's connective and liberating.

In a nutshell, what advice can you give people to help them attain inner peace and harmony?

These qualities cannot depend on outer conditions—which ALWAYS eventually change. Learn how to listen to your heart, then have the courage to follow it. Decide to rearrange YOURSELF so that you can show up as a happy person in the universe, AS IT IS. Hang out with people who desire for you only the full flowering of your soul. Anything less is not love but fear.

What are the greatest causes of unhappiness, frustration and lack of fulfillment in people?

I will speak for me: Forgetting that the universe is arranging itself exactly as needed for my soul's growth, and then resisting what IS. Judging. Comparing. Containing my true self (in case, for example, someone disapproves). Seeing myself as limited and then acting that way. Not knowing how to love myself.

Where can we learn more about your work and what you have written?

See my website

www.barbarabrewster.com. My books are available at Bali Spirit in Ubud and at the new Campuhan College over Toko's Restaurant, Jalan Raya, Campuhan.