

Living a soulful life

As the worldwide recession takes its toll on us individually and collectively we are each called to reevaluate our spending and our ways of living. Yet perhaps there is a deeper purpose behind this financial crisis. Is this simply a “knock” from the universal intelligence calling for a global realignment of values and raising of the collective consciousness. Are we being called to question our fixation on what we have, and being spiritually redirected to begin to pay attention to who we are on a soul level? Is the invitation in this globalised downscaling of materialism, to refocus humanity towards soulful living on a wider scale? Are we actually being pulled away from our obsession with the perfection quest, to become aware of the value of a different and far more potent currency, essential in humanitarian terms, that of compassion and love, which is the spiritual essence of each one of us? Perhaps time is now, to remember, that as Teilhard de Chardin (philosopher and mystic) said:” We are spiritual beings immersed in a human experience.”

If we look around us in the midst of the financial angst and suffering we are subtly offered an alternative lens through which to view the world. There is an upsurge of self help literature on our shelves, and invites to workshops and mind/body/spirit courses that urge us “to heal our lives”, loosen our attachments in the outer world, and focus our hungers on filling ourselves from the inside/out by connecting with our spiritual essence, to feel fully enlivened and in harmony. We are being moved to disengage from addictive material consumerism and engage with soulful living.

Described as the Rolls Royce in its category one such deeply effective and life changing course that supports the journey of uncovering our spiritual self is the Hoffman Process.

The Hoffman Process is an intensive 8 day residential process offered globally, pioneered by the late Bob Hoffman. The

underlying premise is that as children we all seek affection and love from our parents. In order to stay connected to our parents we observe and imitate our parent's patterns of behavior and literally step into and take on, their combined negative patterns to take our place in their hearts. Bob Hoffman terms this the “Negative love syndrome”. Yet, hiding underneath the patterns that then govern our lives, is our authentic shape, our spiritual being. Totally non denominational the Hoffman Process uses experiential activities in a group setting to support individuals to create lasting change, by literally challenging these negative patterns, and creating and maintaining unique harmony within, our “quadrinity”: our emotional self, intellectual self, physical self and spiritual self.

I spoke to 4 Hoffman graduates about their experience. I asked them what drew them to the process, what their experience

of the process was, and what lasting change they had experienced.

Andrea Anstiss

Transpersonal Psychotherapist and Hoffman teacher

“I was drawn to the process because of my interest in human potential and wellness. At the time I felt “stuck” in my life. I was feeling angry and resentful as my husband was working incredibly long hours and spending much of his time in other countries. Meanwhile I felt left behind, literally “holding the babies” and containing my work in Dubai. It seemed he had more intimacy with his work colleagues than he did with me!”

“My experience of the Hoffman process was extremely positive. I felt deep joy and adored being part of a palpable group energy which helped carry me through the challenging times. I had the

experience of being fully seen, my authority acknowledged, and I made a strong and easy connection to the spiritual part of myself. I came out transformed and with a clearer direction.”

Since doing the course, Andrea has trained as a Hoffman teacher and supports Hoffman graduates in Dubai, she speaks passionately of its ability to create change: “The Hoffman process has something for everyone, it really helps us understand our patterns, learn we are not them, and helps us to transcend them. We know we are love, lovable and loved. It helps us pay attention to our quadrinity of body, mind, emotion and spirit”.

Serena Wilson

Completed the Hoffman Process at Oxon Hoath in Kent, U.K in 2009.

Serena experienced the process as “hard- but hard in surprising ways”. I was fluent in the ways of introspection and overanalyzing things but it came as a complete shock to me that I was completely unused to having fun. I stopped when told to have fun. I noticed quickly that when hearing gales of laughter from the hall my first reaction would be that someone else had got to the wine before me. Though of course there was no wine”

In those moments in the big old house in which the Process was held Serena

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recognized she had used the glass of wine as a” prop” in her life to help her have fun. Though she still needs a prop to have fun, she reflects: “I know now that I have more choice over the way I react”. “I am doing much better in two other areas of my life which are saying what I need (rather than squeezing myself into a space that doesn’t fit) and doing what is right for me.”Serena feels she has learnt to be authentic in intimate relationships having recently been very transparent with a potential boyfriend, spelling out exactly what her terms were rather than indulging her pattern of “something is better than nothing”. She now finds herself in a mature relationship with this same man and “I am better at being kind to myself within the relationship and expressing my needs just in simple terms. In certain situations she says; “I still carry out my patterns of isolation and withholding, the difference after the process is that I know I do this, the difference: is I see other peoples’ actions and reactions much more like scenery, and it is just up to me how I react, rather than measuring myself against what I had always felt were messages about me. Other peoples stuff is just their stuff. I am very glad I did the course.”

Emily Madghachian

Completed her process in Florence House Seaford, UK, August 2007.



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Emily talks poignantly about the moment that decided her she needed to create a change: “I had been in a new relationship for a matter of weeks, and while everything about this man seemed right, privately I would react in a very irrational way to some of his choices, and I would spiral into confusion and despair. I knew on a level that he was doing nothing wrong but my reactions were out of my control, and it would take me a long time to sort my head out and get back on an even keel even in my own head. When it passed I would look back on my reactions and think what the heck was that about? Who was that person that I became?” Around about this time she heard about a talk being given on the process by Tim Laurence. She attended the talk in Dubai and his question “are you overpowered by things that are out of control?” spoke to her, Emily’s answer was “yes” and she sought to understand why? She signed up for the process.

“It was the hardest stuff I have ever done but that was overshadowed by the fact it was the most transformative and happy time”. I was very nervous, but I immediately knew I was safe and held”. I understood the word love what it really means for the first time”.

Emily describes the process as having “changed my life, because I really met my

SELF there. Not who I was expected to be, or raised to be, but my very own SELF and the effect was, and continues to be, a very powerful force for transformation. I had suffered from being so self critical, always believing I wasn't good enough. I struggled with patterns of constantly wanting to change myself. I realized that this was not me, just my patterns. I connected with myself, and felt a sense of self love and peace. I realized there was so much more to me; I have this spiritual self/soul. I have become a much better parent as a result. And what is even more amazing my mother has signed up to do the Hoffman process this march and I cannot wait for us to be able to have conversations once she has met her true self too. I literally cannot wait. I think it will give her the best years of her life as it certainly has done for me."

Nasreen Tadayon

Transpersonal psychotherapist and coach.

Nasreen speaks eloquently of the process" In the first couple of years after doing the Hoffman process when asked what the course does, my answers focused on how it helps people get rid of layers of old baggage, and remember who they really are. That is powerful and still true today. In the five years since then I've found an enduring benefit of the Hoffman is that it literally teaches a process of how to support yourself through change, whatever that change may be and whenever it occurs. So

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while the specifics of dealing with a major job change are different from relationship issues, learning how to respond with awareness and healthy habits is universally helpful. The Hoffman process is described as an 8 day course, but I have found it to be a lasting perspective changer.

Nicki Anderson

Completed the Hoffman Process at Oxon Hoath 2009.

"I have worked in the psychological industry for some years and therefore not a stranger to personal growth work, but personal trauma led me to look more deeply at my own personal process. The Hoffman process kept coming up in conversation and I felt I was being guided to find what I was seeking in myself. I was nervous about the process as I knew the group aspect would overload my need for space, and I felt would inhibit what I did and what I got out of it. What I found however, was an incredible energy and holding in the group, but also the potential to really be with myself and my own process in an intensely healing way. I faced the reality that somewhere along my personal evolution I had received the message "be strong". This message had translated in my life as walling up my heart and existing with my head in overdrive. My head simply created formulae for living that meant I was cut off from the richness of my emotional life and hence my deeper



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sense of aliveness. The Hoffman process allowed me to meet my weary intellectual self and to give it a well earned rest, and to allow my emotional self to express itself. 3 years on I have continued to build an intimate partnership between my heart and my mind. I have learnt to live more with my heart open rather than my head constantly engaged. I would say that Hoffman stopped me from stuffing my feelings, and has started a lifelong experience of living minute by minute with my feelings fully engaged and present. The Hoffman reveals to us what it means to be fully alive, fully dimensional in our humanness as it challenges the ways in which we are out of balance and works on a deep level to restore harmony between body, mind and heart with soul as a director."

As the Hoffman motto stands this is a process to take seriously when you are "serious about change" as you CAN BE: "the change you want to see in the world". ■

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Global Affiliations:
 The Hoffman Process is taught regularly in 14 countries around the world.
 www.quadrinity.com