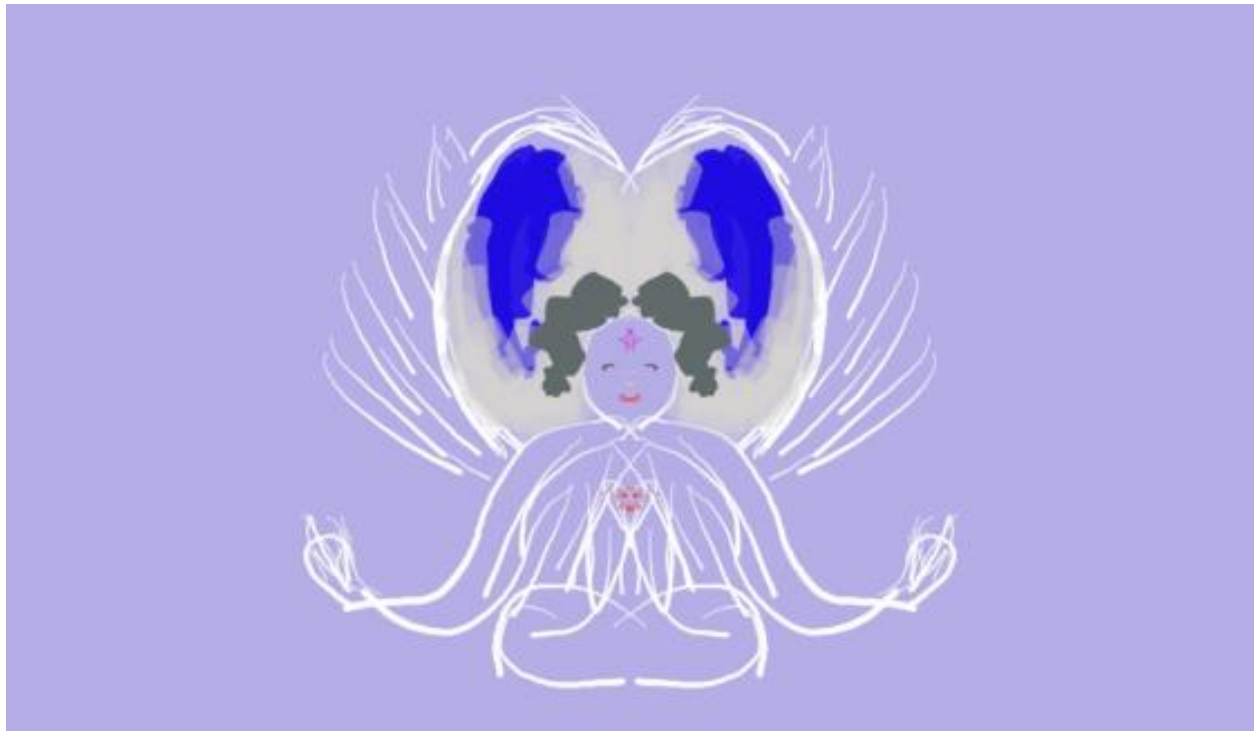


Conversations With Susan MacGregor

What follows are an edited version of conversations from 2016 with my friend from New Zealand, Susan MacGregor. We were in a writer's group together when I was in Auckland. These conversations capture the life, art, poetry, and mystical experiences of a beautiful human being and healer around the topic of what she called "deathing life." Susan was diagnosed with Stage 4 Glioblastoma Multiforme, a serious brain cancer, and she was sharing her insights and experiences with me. We talked about a series of lectures and workshops I was going to be giving at a regional hospice organisation in Colorado, about writing and publishing, and about Susan's memories of her life. As the cancer progressed, Susan started to make art on her tablet and would send these pieces to me, I will place them throughout the conversations.

The full conversations can be found at my blog, Being Fully Human:
<https://beingfullyhuman.com/?s=susan&submit=Search>



The Centered Heart, S. MacGregor (2016)

Biography:

My name is Susan Diane MacGregor. I was born in Whangarei, New Zealand, on 25th August 1958. I grew up in Northland enjoying its beautiful beaches, native forests, waterways, & small town lifestyle. When not reading much of my time was spent exploring nature, riding friends horses, rescuing damaged birds or small animals & swimming. There were cats, pigeons, chooks [chickens], sheep, dogs, canaries as pets, plus my blood brother & four fostered siblings to share time with. Having a musically talented mother & poetically inclined father, who enjoyed limerick & rhyme, meant our household was filled with music, rhyme & laughter. Despite some financial crises for my parents, it was an idyllic childhood.

Qualifications:

Cert Industrial Cookery; R.P.N; PG Dip Gerontological Nursing; PG Cert CBT; Cert N.L.P. & Eriksonian Hypnotherapy; PG Cert. Relationship Guidance; PG Cert Sexual Abuse Counseling; Cert Solution Focussed Therapy; Cert Grief Counseling; Cert Group Facilitation; Cert Stanford University Facilitator Self Management Of Chronic Conditions Groups. Successfully completed one year from Diploma of Psychotherapy, plus stage one National Certificate in Adult Education.

Alternative Therapy Qualifications:

Diploma Therapeutic Massage; Reiki Level 3; Cert. Therapeutic Drumming; Colour Psychology; Chaldean & Pythagorean Numerology; American Indian Aura Cleansing; Hands On & Crystal Energy Healing; Buddhist Sound Healing via Chris James; Home Study of Aromatherapy.

Gifts:

I was born with the gifts of Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Clairsentience, Pre-cognisance & Telepathy. These gifts began expressing themselves firstly amongst my direct family, surprising my parents on more than one occasion. As an adult I have practiced for 25yrs as a Clairvoyant, offering guidance to 100's of people throughout the North Island. This service included dream interpretation, energy clearing, & numerology if desired. As an adjunctive I have developed a method whereby it is possible to map a person's phases & time frames toward achieving changes & goals in their lives. The phases allow the person to consciously make the most of the vibrational energies in each phase. Feedback has confirmed this is a reliable tool for its purpose.

More About My Roots:

Family have significantly influenced my character & interests. Mums father Reverend Norman Hyde established an Orphanage during the N.Z. Influenza Epidemic of the early 1900s, & along with mums mother Lillian, brought up thirty three Orphans, plus eight of their own children. Prior to that Norman lived & worked closely with the Tainui Iwi, an indigenous Maori tribe from the Waikato region. Grand-dad spoke fluent Maori, & was fully conversant with Maori protocols & customs. When he died in his 50's he was given the rare honours of having Maori "wailers" at his funeral, plus a Chiefs cloak was presented to the family from that Iwi. As is customary, the family has since offered the cloak back, the Iwi have not accepted it, thus it & its significance remain in the family.

Respect for New Zealand's indigenous peoples & customs was passed onto me through my mother. Mums mother was a gifted pianist, being asked in her early teens to go to Germany to further a musical career. Grandma's parents didn't permit this, however. Prior to marriage Lillian established her own music school, teaching piano & singing. Her talent passed to my mum, who could play any instrument she was handed, & sang on radio in her early adulthood. Our household was always filled with music, with many nights sat around the piano singing Redemption Hymns, or listening to mum play from the great classics, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn etc. Though never having her ability I took lessons in piano, & continued to play into adulthood.

My father, born to the son of a Scottish Immigrant from Loch Carron, brought another form of creativity into our household. Dad had a love of words, particularly in rhyme & limerick. In early adulthood he published his poems in the local News Paper. His work as a carpenter also a creative occupation. His father was a lay preacher in Churches throughout the Tauranga District. Thus we have the foundations for my love of music, rhyme, respect & interest in different cultures, nature, the humanities, & Christian faith.

Faith:

Despite our Christian underpinnings, Christianity was never forced upon us as children. My parents wished us to choose rather than be forced to accept Christ, leaving the door open for enquiry & spiritual exploration. Notwithstanding that, prayer was a given in our household & my parents lives were distinctly lived from Christian principles.

In addition, my mother had the unusual gift of being a "diviner" i.e. someone who could find underground water merely by walking around with her hands held out to sense it. She would sometimes demonstrate this gift for others using a forked willow stick, which would violently twist in her hands when over water. She became well known in Northland for this gift, having divined the first steam bore at the Ngapha Steam Plant near Kaikohe, plus the water supply at a privately owned Camp Ground on the East Coast of Hohoura Harbour, called Tauranga Bay. Not to mention many farmers water supplies, etc. She was capable of identifying how deep in the earth they needed to bore, which way the water flowed, if it was salt, brackish or fresh & could,

by the same means, divine for minerals such as gold. This left the way open for enquiry as to things unseen, though felt or known.

As a young adult I entered training in Psychiatric Nursing, having chosen to diverge from my training at the Auckland Institute of Technology, where I qualified as an Industrial Cook. This led into my Career in Mental Health, & interest in Psychological methodologies. Upon qualifying I further developed my interest in caring for the Elderly, plus Special Interest in working with people with Dementia. Post Graduate study included a Diploma in Gerontology. Next I began developing qualifications & skills in Psychological Therapies. Gradually I moved from working within Private & Public Elder Care into Mental Health Psycho-Social Rehabilitation, including providing CBT counseling. I was working full time as a Therapist in a Psychology Division of a Primary Healthcare Organisation when I was diagnosed with Grade Four Glioblastoma Multiforme, this being my final job.

Spiritual explorations have included initiation into Western Sufism, initiation to The Rosicrucian Order AMORC, a home study course provided by my friend Patricia Sarne Paul in Kabbalah, exploration of Western Spiritualism, Meditational Dancing in the form of Circle Dancing, Dances Of Universal Peace, & Sufi Zikr, practice of Hatha Yoga in my late teens, then training & practice in Raja Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Mudra Yoga & Kriya Yoga, the latter following Paramahansa Yogananda's teachings. There was a short foray into Tibetan Buddhism, via Dhargyey Rinpoche at the Buddhist Centre in Whangarei. Training in Mindfulness Meditation. At times I would "drop" in on Hindu services to join in with the singing of Bhajans, which I always found an uplifting practice. Or through Jewish friends I'd join in Sabbath services at the open Auckland Synagogue, or join in at Anglican or Catholic Services & discussion groups. I gathered books to read surrounding these topics borrowing some & buying others.



Rising Consciousness, S. MacGregor (2016)

David: Susan, I'm going to be giving a talk soon at a large hospice organisation in Colorado, do you have any advice about this process that you call "deathing life" that might be of benefit to the staff there?

Susan: I can't give advice for your talk at the Hospice, as everyone's experience differs, however I can write about my experience.

Initially I experienced shock & grief at receiving such a finite diagnosis. I remember looking around the rooms in my house at the things I had built up & worked hard for, & thinking what did all of that mean, was what I had invested to get those things worth it? The answer that came back in response to that question was a feeling of emptiness. Then my heart filled with sadness thinking about my 3x beautiful cats & Mahmoud being left behind & I was glad at least that Mahmoud's life would be more comfortable, as a result of my previous efforts.

Within 2wks I was trundled off for brain surgery, after which my life completely changed. The surgery caused damage within my brain, leaving me with left sided paresthesia.

Mahmoud (my partner) was devastated. His welfare was always on my mind, as was mine on his. I had a large amount of time left lying in my hospital bed with nothing to do but think.

Years prior I had experienced a "healing" at a Buddhist retreat, in which my "difficult to control" hypertension completely disappeared, leaving my GP astounded. During that retreat I learnt that even illness has a beneficial purpose, i.e. to teach us something, to deepen us in some way spiritually, to raise our awareness or break through unhelpful patterning. Thus, I started to look for the lessons in this experience.

For me cancer has done all of the above plus brought me to an awareness of how much love surrounds me. It has deepened my relationship with Mahmoud, with God, & given me fresh hope for humanity. I have been shown so much love & kindness, even from complete strangers. Often those with little in the way of possessions have given me the most. I have been able to see the busy, tense person who "didn't have time " that I used to be, reflected in people around me, & their counter balancers in the people who will let me que jump, or help me out in getting something in a supermarket, etc., because they see I'm disabled.

As a consequence of my health & disability mine & Mahmoud's lifestyle has dramatically changed. We have needed to offload a lot of possessions & have moved to a two-bedroom rental unit. The money from my salary no longer flows in & the goal of being mortgage free in 3yrs has disintegrated. However, I have found that I am surrounded with so much love & kindness that my soul & heart are completely full.

From this point of realisation forward I have been able to take inventory of my life, looking at past regrets & losses, & freeing myself of built up emotions through self forgiveness & forgiveness of others. This has been aided by gratitude & compassion, both of which have deepened within me exponentially. I have become free again, letting go of pursuing goals,

things, dreams... most of which are erroneous now. Being present in each moment, with each breath, is how my days unfold. The natural world around me is exquisitely defined, colours, shapes, contrasts, each being impressed into my being through every sensory system I possess.

I still give ... a smile, a kind word, my knowledge or time. My **“deathing” life continues to have purpose & meaning**, people ask me “what is this like”, “how do you stay so optimistic”, “are you afraid”, etc, etc. I do experience moments of fear, but at the end of the day my answer to all of these questions is, “this is life, I am blessed to have lived it, I believe in an after-life, & it is my faith in God & Jesus Christ that sustains me when all else fails.



Flying High, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: February 7, 2016

... Though the cancer did return, following further radiotherapy, I am again in remission. Looking at things overall I've well exceeded the norm for this thing, the cancer having started in Oct 2012. I am not “fighting” it, just accepting it & taking one day at a time.

On other matters finally I've contacted a publishing company re: a selection of my poems. They distribute through AU, UK, NZ & USA. Not having great expectations, but it will complete a goal I've had for some time. The company is 'XLIBRIS'.

We are off to the exquisite beaches, hot pools & restaurants of Tauranga again in early March. I expect this will be my last visit there, as prognosis now months, not years. Frankly, I am ready to “go home” & shall welcome that journey when it comes.

David to Susan: February 26, 2016

Hi Susan, thank you for such beautiful, heart-felt writing. I will draw upon it as I put together these 11 hours of talks to patients, family members and staff around end-of-life decisions and hospice. What can we call it instead of “end-of-life?” I like your term “deathing life.” I have a working title of “Holistic Decision-making Across the Lifespan,” but I am writing about holistic decision-making and death or deathing life. I don’t like the phrase “end of life” so much, as it doesn’t sound active enough.

I am interested in developing something around “death stewardship,” or the dying process as a form of initiation in which the role of family and staff is to support the active, transformative initiation of person in the deathing life phase.

What you have written is so beautiful and full of wisdom. If you would like a public speaking space, I think your words would be an honor to my blog, Being Fully Human, if you would care to have me post them. I don’t want to exploit your deathing life, but I wouldn’t mind mining your wisdom and sharing with others what you would like to share.

Thank you for the gift of yourself!



Harley the Rainbow Lorikeet, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: February 26, 2016

Dear David,

Thank you again for your appreciation & support.

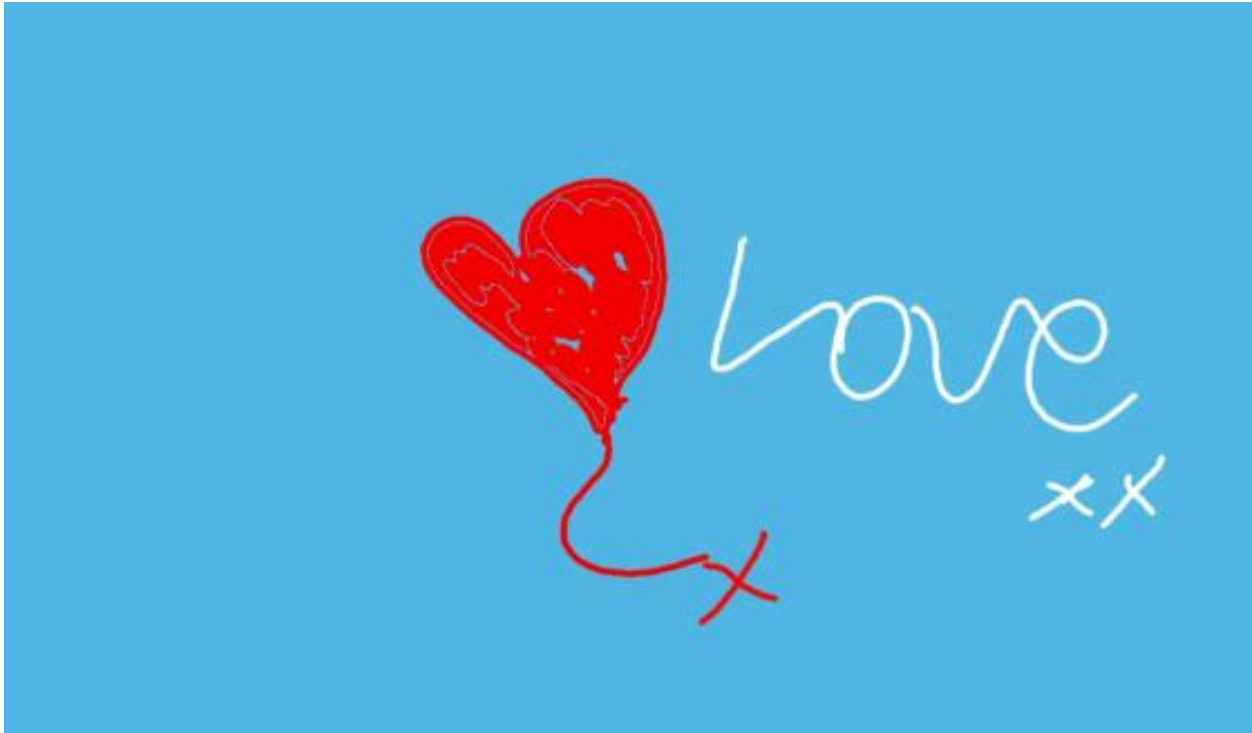
I would feel honoured for you to use any of what I send in whatever way you think appropriate. Perhaps if you will bear with me I will write more....

I feel the term “deathing” life conveys a more active involvement in the tasks & processes of leaving this world than other more commonly used terms. And it is also meant to convey that I am still very much living.

I have found the love & support of others key to my being able to move onto the life inventory work mentioned previously, i.e. the non-critical, non judgemental acceptance of my life as a whole. I haven't experienced all of the classical stages of dying as described by Elizabeth Kubler Ross, whether that's due to my spiritual beliefs or other factors I'm not sure. There has been no anger, no “why me”, no bargaining... so I think it would be false to believe everyone follows that path exactly. There has been sadness, letting go, cherishing, & communing, in a very rich meaningful way. I am approaching my death willing to accept it as a transitional stage of life, & as a part of my life that I can still be actively involved in.

The ability to self-reflect has been a great bonus, & I believe would be a useful skill for anyone to have. Mindfulness has been a useful tool & having alone time has been essential. I've found I have no interest in establishing new bonds, although this still happens naturally. Rather, existing bonds have been my focus & there has been a “turning inward” away from the world. Sometimes this has been hard for Rest Home staff to accept, as their focus is more on maintaining an active, engaged life as people age. Their desire has been to fill my hours up with activities, which I have resisted. Other helpful tasks have involved completing an Advanced Directive, detailing how I would like to be cared for & where I wish to die, plus meeting with a Funeral Director to discuss my wishes (plus inform Mahmoud of what to expect, as there is no embalming of the body etc. in his culture). I have engaged Hospice Services into a “shared care” relationship with the Rest Home Facility as they are the experts in care of the dying. I have chosen my last piece of furniture, i.e. my coffin, where I wish to be buried, & Mahmoud & I have chosen a headstone/a double one. All these things done I am now enjoying the time I have seeing friends, family, having outings & doing short trips in NZ. So that is my life until I am “returned to sender”.

All the very best to you & family.
God Bless, Susan



Love, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: March 1, 2016

Dear David,

Some of what you speak of reminds me of the concept of the Adam Kadmon within the Kabbalah & gnostic or Pauline Christianity. I certainly relate to the perspective that all is vibration. In fact this reality made it possible for me to be healed via a Buddhist sound technique taught to me at a healing retreat by Chris .This technique enabled me to move beyond 6yrs of constant pain, which I was experiencing due to a ruptured c5 disc. On day 2 of this week-long retreat all pain dissappeared, & though subsequent x rays show the old injury still exists with narrowing between the discs, I have never returned to that daily, debilitating pain. Also as a result of the work we did on this retreat **I entered such a heightened sensitivity that I experienced the “oneness” you talk about, including hearing the sound that “everything” makes.** This retreat spoke directly to my heart, enabling me to release the feelings of longing & sadness I had internalised, engendered by my belief that I was “separated” from God.

Breath travels through matter, creating movement which creates sound. Sound alters vibration & structural patterning. Years ago, I experimented with the music of Geoff Clarkson, a Kiwi musician who composes music to aid meditation, relaxation etc. I was Matron of a Rest Home at the time, & found my residents were often fractious, having petty

squabbles & altercations. Playing Geoff's original soundtrack of "Butterfly" via the paged music system had such a profound effect on staff & residents that I later incorporated his CDs & live music sessions with him into my work in Psychosocial & Inpatient rehabilitation.

It gives me joy to read how you are incorporating a peaceful approach towards talking about war & the development of war consciousness. Through Kriya Yoga I was benefited by learning that the way to protest for change is by creating more balance of peaceful, proactive, or positive energy. This is to counterbalance the energy of anger, hate, violence, already in the world. Some of the early "circle dancing" I did, missed this point, with facilitators propagating, "express your anger into the dance", with no modifying expression to follow.

With discussion of the four directions I am reminded of four Archangels; Michael, Raphael, Uriel, & Gabriel. These vibratory emanations speak to the Mastery of the colour/sound/movement components you mention. **I am currently wondering how I can use knowledge about suffering for myself, regarding my physical disability. Though the cancer hasn't thrown me, the disability has. I am certainly not at peace with that. The only thing I can be grateful to it for, is that it is making it easier to let go of this existence.**

As you can see, your writings have moved me to recall these moments within my own life, & some of the rich teachings I have been privileged to discover. Thank you for that.

All the very best, may your work be blessed to produce the results you want.
Kind regards, Susan MacGregor



My Picture, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: March 7, 2016

Dear David,

I am slowly reading through your attachment on stewardship, & have nothing yet to add. It is written beautifully, from the heart using knowledge & personal experience. I still have more of it to read.

What comes to mind right now in thinking about Stewardship is my lesson about energy & responsibility... when giving clairvoyant readings I used to put a lot of effort/energy into helping the client, including trying to “enlighten” them. In doing this I often found myself exhausted. Ultimately my lesson was simple... it was not my work to enlighten my clients, only to deliver the messages I was instructed to give them. It was the clients own work to seek enlightenment. It was not my exhaustable energy that was needed to deliver guidance & support... **all I needed to do was to be a willing conduit actively engaging with the person with right intention, a compassionate heart, & openness to the inexhaustible energy of Source.** Having done this I used to find that rather than feeling depleted, I was greatly energised ... on all levels.

I have read about the man you mentioned who can move his eyes & lids only [Jean-Dominique Bauby, author of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*]. Remarkable person. Much more fortitude, tolerance of pain, acceptance of incapacity than myself.

Things I can't do now are: *drive, dance, play piano, crochet, cook/bake without help, dance, walk barefoot through woods, swim, soak in the sea, stroll through parks or gardens, kayak, walk barefoot in the sand, take full care of a pet, dress myself, shower myself, make my bed, fold or hang my clothes.... etc., etc.*

Many tasks are full of difficulty. I have, as you said, needed to turn away from the physical, external plus give up much of my independence. It's been hard to ask for help & relinquish my high standards/preferred ways of doing things. It's been a major loss to no longer be able to freely move when or where I wish. My fragile energy is drained every day doing basic things e.g. pulling up my pants after toileting. **I find myself angry with this new body I'm in, its constant pain & limitations. I look forward to the freedom of relinquishing this tired used up lump of flesh that entraps my spirit.**

On another note we recently returned from a road trip up north to my birthplace of Whangarei, first property at Hihi Beach Mangonui & childhood haunts around Kerikeri, Puketi Forest etc. **Travel is very uncomfortable & excursions limited to wheelchair friendly areas. However this physical journey felt very important to me, in that I was connecting with key parts of my life then actively letting them go by saying goodbye to that area. Some people believe we leave energy imprints in places, so this was, in a sense, an opportunity to pick up pieces of myself.** I had been doing some of this previously by going

through photos & memories with Mahmoud, my brother, foster sister & niece. However the physical journey has made this process feel more complete.

Lastly today... I don't find death morbid. Viewing it that way would seem to convey it is somehow dirty, repugnant, & to be avoided at all costs. The labour of death may not be pretty nor comfortable, but neither is the labour of birthing into this life. It is merely a transition, transformative in its process.

Choosing my own coffin ... it was like choosing a new car, exciting & full of anticipation. I have nothing to lose I either go to oblivion, being oblivious to all further suffering or go to the home from whence I came.

Love & Bless,
Susan



Playful Kitty, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: March 7, 2016

Dear David,

To answer one of your questions, I have always had one foot in this world & one in the next, being clairvoyant, clairsentient & clairaudient all my life, plus experiencing lucid dreaming, premonitions, recall of some past lives, etc. Things are no different for me now.

In regards Joseph Rael's statement "we don't exist" I can't agree with that totally. Rather I take the perspective that... Energy never dies... in our true form we are light beings/having energy... we do exist but confuse our physical beingness & ego identity with our true self. Our true self, originating from the source of energy & light, doesn't belong to us in fact, but rather to the "I am" presence, i.e. God. **Our purpose then is to return love/ light to our source. We do this by being manifestations of love & light in the world... living ethical, moral lives, & loving our source as much as we love creation plus ourselves.** If we confuse only what can be seen, heard or experienced by our baser bodies, for truth, we lose sight of all of the magic & mystery in our existence & become unconscious automatons. Also I believe our soul is a combined vibratory record of all our actions, thoughts, non actions, throughout various lifetimes. Thus our soul survives each lifetime in the form of a collective memory, alongside the myriad other souls, or perhaps merged with all other souls.

When applying principles of vibration to healing, remember each word we utter has a vibratory pattern, plus a positive or negative connection in an individual's memory. NLP teaches a lot about linguistic principles which can then be included into therapeutic groups & 1:1 therapy.

During one meditation I... meaning my spiritual self... passed through a tunnel toward a door. On opening the door a brilliant light was present & loud sound similar to the rushing of a strong wind. "I" immediately felt myself flying through space & time, hieroglyphs & symbols shooting past at a tremendous speed. I have come to believe that these symbols unlock certain energies & memories. Can I remember the symbols now... no, not consciously, but I later learnt Reiki which uses various symbols in its healing, seeming to reinforce this perspective. **The higher our rate of vibration, the more "light" we are. Perhaps the more light we are, the more removed we are from "ego" consciousness & the consequences of a denser reality...** I consider that this was how the Buddhist healing techniques freed me from 6yrs of constant pain i.e. by raising my vibratory level. Also Vibration from trumpets, chanting & tempered walking flattened the walls of Jericho, as recorded in the bible. So it is a two edged sword, having power to raise up & to destroy.

When I was 18yrs old the I Am informed me that there are 7x worlds above & 7x worlds below; referring to vibratory realms. Planet earth is in the middle, like the heart of the entire organism. Earth is Jesus's footstool, he being the divine being supplanted in earthly soil. It is here, due to our own free will that we can increase our light quotient, or decrease it. We influence this by our deeds, words, thoughts, plus not taking action when it is needed.

The very best.
From Susan

Susan Group Email: March 11, 2016

Hi to all my beautiful friends & family.

I trust & hope you are all ok.

Sorry to say you may not hear much from me from now on.

Following a few lovely days away up north, upon returning to the Hospital I had a significant seizure. I am now very weak & will not be able to maintain the Skype chats or emails as previous. We are trying to get to Tauranga for a few days. To assist I am taking dexamethasone. However that will stop on returning. I expect thereafter the seizures & strokes we were told about will take hold.

Please don't be sad for me, I am happy to leave this disabled body & go to a place beyond the suffering & struggles of this world. I have led a blessed life with the love of good parents, friends, family, & of course Mahmoud, a good career & lots of fun along the way. Thank you all for the memories & support.

When I leave I will be caught in the embrace of angels with a heart full of joy.

Love you always,

Susan xx

Love

Love, XX, Susan MacGregor

[Susan had sent this email, but then some days later began emailing again]

David to Susan: March 18, 2016

Hi Susan,

Thank you for your thoughts on Stewardship and for sharing how beautiful your journey is even with all the loss and disability. In your writing I only sense the liveliness of your spirit and not any of the limitations of your body. I like how you describe being a conduit or channel to Source. That is such a sweet feeling to have that flow through.

We had a guest at our Whole Health Class that we run for veterans, this week. Mike Lee, who is from the plains tribes and is an elder of the American Lake VA Sweat Lodge, spoke with us. He did a ceremony in which we turned off the lights and sat facing outward in a circle, with our backs to each other, and then he sang a couple songs and kept time on his

drum. It was very moving. He said that our bodies are made of the body of Mother Earth and they are not our own, our spirit moves through them for a while. We breathe in at the start of life and we breathe out at the end of life. It is all just one big breath, moving through some earth, and there really is no such thing as death as the breath and spirit never die. It was very beautiful.

Beautiful day here, today, clear, we can see the Olympic mountain range, covered with snow, to the West, and the Cascade Range to the East, not as tall, but also with snow, and to the south the massive bulk of Mt Rainer, a vast snow-covered peak.

My heart and thoughts and prayers are with you,

David
xoxoxo



My Picture.2, Susan MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: March 18 2016

Hi David,

Speaking more of vibration, I have wondered if we ourselves actively influence vibratory patterns when having visions so that the vision suits a frame of reference that we are familiar with being merely representational, rather than actual, in its appearance. As

typically we would not visually perceive vibration itself, & the mind has a tendency to want to organise sensory stimulus into orderly patterns that are familiar. This could be at work in psychosis as well, with the visual hallucinations matching an internal vibratory state & using images that represent that state for the person.

When seeing angels ascending staircases this occurred to me.

In Whangarei one of the Senior Psychiatrists was Sufi, we talked about Sufism & my interest became piqued. Knowing me somewhat he would refer clients to my caseload, as a Mental Health Rehabilitation Therapist, who were reluctant to be treated medically due to the belief they were psychic, not unwell.

My approach here was based on having a foot in each camp i.e. I informed the client that I do believe in illness including illnesses of the neurological functions of the brain, but I also believed in Psychics & knew some personally. In CBT fashion I then invited the client to “scientifically” approach the questions of ... am I Psychic or am I unwell, or am I a bit of both?

Using DSM we would list on one side of a whiteboard diagnostic criteria, on the other side the phenomenon experiences of what we collectively knew about psychics, drawing from our personal experiences as well as what we had read or found out from others. We then ticked or crossed off items from each list to see what was left. In the few cases I worked with in this manner we typically ended up with some items from each list. The client was then asked to return to the three choices at the start to hypothesize where they might sit along a continuum. End result being the client usually concluded they had a little illness & accepted orthodox treatment knowing that if they wished to do a “planned” withdrawal from meds I would support them in that. With this input they were typically offered much less in the way of medications as they were able to express more clearly to their Psychiatrist only the DSM symptoms they were having & had lost their fears re other phenomenon, having talked these through & being given some “alternative” strategies to manage these if they wished... **I hope this illustrates one way mental health workers could include a more holistic paradigm into mental health diagnosis.**

In personal experience with visions, voices, sensations one thing has remained clearly differentiated compared to DSM, i.e. **I have never lost awareness of who I am, what is me, what is other, what is “real” what is vision or other experience.... in other words my ego boundaries have remained intact, no psychotic break has occurred.** Only once have I been in a situation where I felt controlled by something not me. This happened when I was learning about “channeling”. However I established control again via focusing my mind on a particular piece of music. I never liked “channeling, & never did it again.

Well seems each time you send me something it brings to mind something else. You are definitely a positive catalyst in my life. Thank you.

With best wishes for your continued development of new ways for “being” in healthcare.

Love from,
Susan MacGregor

Susan to David: May, 24, 2016

Dear David,

Feeling I am starting to walk in the light now. Last night had these dreams:

First Dream

Mahmoud & I were sitting in hilly country having a cup of tea together whilst watching a man chisel away at the outer covering of a large boulder, the covering was a greyish white. As he struck away the last chunk of stone there was a brilliant blinding release of amber coloured light. When we looked again we could see the man had found a huge boulder of citrine crystal, it was a massive boulder of very clear bright colour.

Next Dream

A large brilliant white Angel stood in front of me with a sword of white light. It turned the sword point toward the earth then plunged it into the ground. It stood there still holding the hilt of the sword as if on guard.

Next Dream

I was joined by someone in white, emitting light who gave me their hand & invited me to walk with them.

Possible Interpretations

I was thinking about the way you seemed to be able to move above things & continued to be inclusive & responsive to all of us when we were in the writers group. Thus I think the man in the first dream was you. I believe the citrine showed you have a huge power of creativity & will be highly successful in your writing work. I believe it also showed the

immense level of protection around you & your ability to rise beyond negativity. Also that citrine's light was helping me to release my negative energy.

Then the Angel & the offer to walk with a light being. The Angel felt protective, & both felt like signs that my death is not far off. I feel that Angel will be beside me all the way. When I got up today all the negativity was gone.

Many blessings
Susan xx



Strong Loving Arms Enfold Me Each Day, S. MacGregor (2016)

David to Susan: May 24, 2016

Susan, thank you for sharing such amazing dreams. I have had a very active dream life this week as well and was in New Zealand and US last night.

We all labour through our lives to release the brilliance within us!

Thank you for your kind words and your blessings and being an angel of my work!

David xx



An Angel Without Wings, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: May 25, 2016

Dear David,

Hope you are making headway with your latest project. Do you keep a dream journal? Maybe that could be an interesting addition to your own biography one day?

I am mindful that if something causes a ripple on my inner calm there is inner work for me to do as otherwise it couldn't take root in me. That doesn't mean other's energy & negative thoughts can't impact me, nor that their issue is mine, but rather that the negativity can't cause turmoil or remain in me when there is nothing for it to attach to. The only fully self realised being I believe has walked this earth is Jesus, whom was Christed. Thus though endeavouring to improve myself I find I also need "outside" help.

Love from Susan xx

David to Susan: 25 May, 2016

Hi Susan, thank you for sharing with me how you are doing. I was thinking about the roses, how each one is so beautiful and bursts into the world, bringing sweet fragrance and beauty (I sent you photos of an Angel Face variety of roses have a nice scent). And then the flower gradually fades, loses a few petals and then passes away, yet in each individual flower's passing, new space is created for the other buds that are overflowing with desire to burst forth into the world, giving of themselves and becoming themselves. Even once the flower blossom is gone, though, then the not so beautiful work begins of transforming dead flower into seed – for the rose, it turns into a bright red rose hip berry and becomes beautiful again, until once again, at its ripest, falls from the plant and begins to decay, which allows the seeds of new life to sprout and take root. It seems so beautiful with plants, with people it is a bit harder to stretch the metaphor...

Susan to David: 26 May, 2016

My function is deteriorating, some difficulty talking, tripping over words, some stuttering. Getting some laughs out of that currently.

Mild nausea, blurred vision, breathlessness, dizziness, fatigue, tremors. Had lots of lovely visitors, 16x peeps over past 6 days. Stopping visitors except family & extended family now as most others have had opportunity to come whilst I could still talk to them.

In light & love,
Susan x x



The Central Rose, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: 28 May, 2016

Dear David,

That's wonderful, again my appreciation & thanks. Metaphor about roses very apt.

My friend from Perth is here, we are having a lot of laughs together. Having known each other from babies we have covered a lot of territory together, I will forward her contact details. Such a special person I think it will be a good link.

Re tripping up on words, in saying goodnite to Mahmoud last nite I said *byebye banana*, getting stuck on the 'b' of the *byebye* his name then becoming *banana*. A bit like when I called my friend *Pam Lamb*, then blamed it on her having moved to a farm, lol, but of course it was pressure build up in the language areas of the brain.

Susan to David: June 1, 2016

Dear David,

Feedback arrived from the reviewer, very useful. My "poetry" doesn't fit into the current definition of poetry & is more akin in layout & content to 19th Century poetry. Not suitable for competitions nor publishers. It fits into rhyme, & bush poetry, but would be more accurately titled selected rhymes.

On the plus side I'm told I have an exceptional gift for rhythm & on the whole not too bad with rhyme. I am excited by the creative challenge of reworking a few of my rhymes into a modern layout & writing style. Not sure how far I'll get but will just keep it going until I can't do anymore. Really the most time consuming part is done, which was cataloging the key experiences in some way. Any leftover rhymes can easily be made into a booklet for family. Well worth getting the review.

Bless, Susanxx

David to Susan: June 3, 2016

Hi Susan, editing more today... but it is a beautiful day here! Very summery.

One of the things I like about your poems is the elegant language. I remember Jung said that when the archetypes were speaking, they would often use Victorian language or old formal usages. It gives a kind of timeless quality and stature to language. It is not always a good thing to be accepted by contemporary society, most great artists are not great until time passes....

[Here is one of the first poems that I remember Susan sharing with our Auckland Holistic Writers' Group in New Zealand]

Misty Lake Magic

*Behold, your ethereal waters wrapped around
In a cloak of soft white fairy down
Oh spell-cast land of watery hues
Helpless, I am enraptured by your views*

*Mossy garlands festoon verdant banks
Sentinel trees guard watery flanks
Ensnared in hues; green, gold and red*

Persephone to you has surely fled

*Willows, with heads bent in respectful bows
Send tendrils to caress you from their boughs
Whilst gossamer threads of droplets fall
Down soft green leaves into your thrall*

*Gliding effortlessly, propelled by unseen hands
Snow white swans dance in your watery land
Slicing through mists which then quickly enfold
Them once again in your wispy hold*

*A hush has fallen, I dare not breathe
Lest this vista before me depart & leave
Or your stillness echo a disquieting sound
Dispersing this magic, exquisitely profound*

*Should something now disrupt this scene
I would wake violently, as if from a dream
For this vision, disconcertingly surreal
Has me fully lost within its appeal*

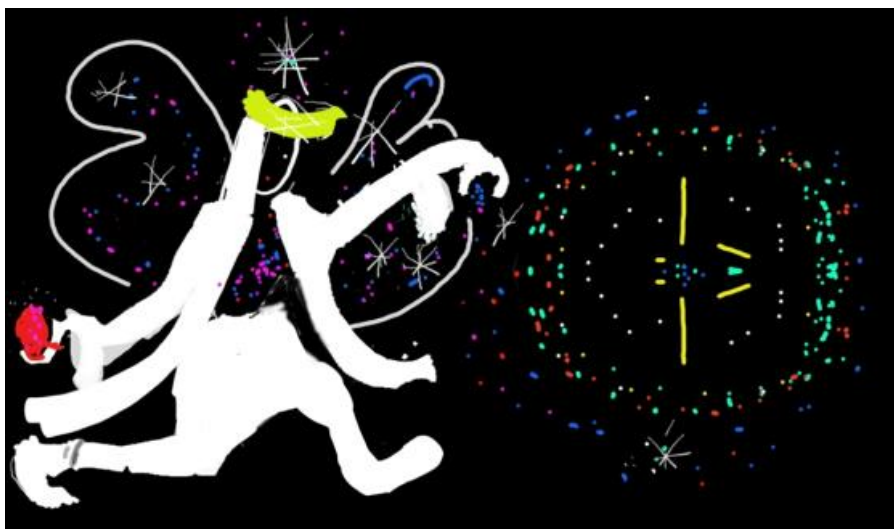
*A myriad soft lights begin to appear
Creating a shimmery stratosphere
A magical mirage before my eyes
Promising some deeper watery surprise*

*Continuing to look with transfixed gaze
Upon your mystical watery maze
I think I see, in your soft misty light
A fairy citadel of beauty bright*

*And a glimpse of creatures from another world
Messengers of magic who seemingly herald
The coming of a miracle dawn
In which all the world as this be born*

*And then the vision begins to fade
Your mossy banks now reveal a glade
The mists enfolding you vanish away
But not my memory of your splendour today*

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Sky Painter, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: June 11, 2016

Dear David,

Following small seizure last Friday am unable to stand or walk without 2x staff. Although previously being averse to having a catheter I have accepted the need & looked for a positive to help me adapt, the positive is I can now drink as much coffee as I like. Previously I limited coffee as it made me need to pee too much & sometimes I wasn't able to make the toilet in time. Hope that's not too much information?

Mahmoud stayed over one night this weekend he plans to do that once a week now. I had hoped to make my next birthday, on 25th Aug, but going by my current status predict mid-July which is ok. Have really enjoyed spending time with my life-long friend from Perth, Kay, she has been in every day until recently when she had to go to Matatmata to sort out some things for her mother who is in a Private Hospital there. Kay returns to Perth on the 17th July. We have reminisced at length, laughed, cried, listened to favoured music from our past. I am so lucky to have such a great friend!

God Bless,
Susan x x



Grumpy and Down, But Not Alone, S. MacGregor (2016)

David to Susan: June 11, 2016

Hi Susan, you are an unfailing optimist – seizure and then can't stand, but you are able to drink as much coffee as you like! Well, I hear you on the coffee, I would really miss that if I couldn't have it. That is not too much information about the catheter. I had to go through medical school to become a psychiatrist.

Every day is your birthday now...

I am so happy to see your paintings. Please keep sending them.

It is always so nice to hear from you, thank you for sharing yourself and your journey. Mary Pat and I were talking about you this morning and thinking we probably met you about 5 years ago. I can't remember when we started the writing group, I think maybe 2011?

Blessings
David xx

Susan to David: June 14, 2016

Dear Friend,

Going back to the morphine I find it is rather weird, as if the Death Eaters from Harry Potter have swooped in & withdrawn life & emotion causing everything to be bland, dampened down, monotone from my norm. Not sure if that is typical. Am wondering how it will impact on the experience of dying.

All the best.
Love & bless,
Susan xx

David to Susan: June 14, 2016

Hi Susan, that is interesting with the Morphine. I think it can cause some of that emotional blunting for people. A lot of people who get addicted to it use it for that purpose to dull emotional pain as well as physical pain.

I'm sorry for you going through all this, but I see how you are worrying about Mahmoud, too. How difficult this *deathing life* can be at times. It is quite an initiation process you are going through and it changes those around you as well.

Love & Blessings for you
David xx



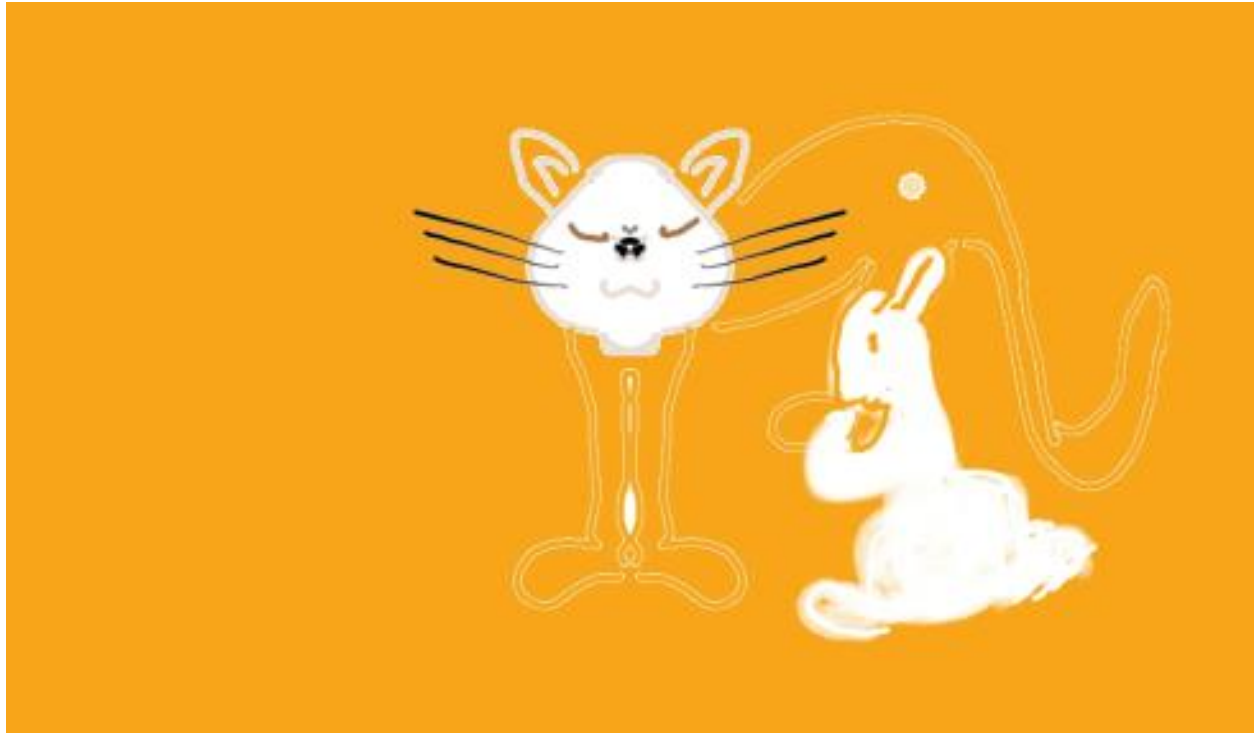
Finger Paintings - Joseph, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: June 21, 2016

Dear David,

Congratulations on birthing your latest work. Thank you for forwarding to me, what a treasure... I recall Chris James singing peoples' stories to them surrounding them in a circle of voices, how moving that was for each person, used for healing from physical health issues. Also singing their names along with personal qualities. I used that in some of the group work too within mental health rehabilitation services. **It's a shame I had to hide what I was doing from more traditionally trained workers as results were good. What I hope is that mental health workers move toward a more encompassing approach of methodologies that do produce results even though they may not be mainstream. It seems easier for some people to do that within a cultural context than apply same principles to**

every, living being, I hope Joseph's explanation of the principles convinces these people of the universality of the approach. Surely it will.



Beethoven, S. MacGregor (2016)

Susan to David: June 19, 2016

Hi,

I've had the worst day of all today since being diagnosed, nausea, constipation pain in neck from old neck injury being disturbed by being pulled up the bed etc... Getting into grapes, kiwifruit etc as lactulose is disgusting. My roommate puss is now dubbed Beethoven as keeps rattling his collar bells throughout the night... his Moonlight Sonata perhaps, I would love to try him on keyboards. He is such a treasure.

[Susan's emails ended and I received a couple updates from her brother, Rob. He wrote that she passed away peacefully on 23 August, 2016. Susan had said that she hoped to make it to her next birthday of 25 August, which she very nearly did. She lived through what she called her deathing life far longer than is generally predicted for her type of cancer. We'll close with one of Susan's poems, which seems very appropriate around her death. I sent Susan a painting a few weeks ago, I'll also include a photo of that as it was in progress.]

Separation

*If I can't hear you
Does it mean you're not there?
If I can't see you
Does it mean you're not near?
If I can't feel you
Does it mean you are gone?
If I believe I am alone
Would that perception be wrong?*

*How may I reach you
Without sight, touch, or sound?
Is there another truth
Perhaps, much more profound?
Do we all have a connection
Beyond what appears
To be a continual resurrection
Of endings and tears?*

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Turning to the Light, S. MacGregor (2016)