



THE SOUL-DIRECTED LIFE ~ APRIL 23, 2015

with Host: JANET CONNER (www.janetconner.com)

and Guest: Gail McMeekin; Author of '12 Secrets of Highly Creative Women'

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JANET: Welcome, welcome to The Soul-directed Life, the radio show that helps you notice, recognize, and the best part respond to the calls bubbling up from your soul, so you can live a soul-directed life.

And welcome to our beautiful experiment. At the beginning of the year I thought this was an experiment, but now that we're half way through, walking the Medicine Wheel following the rhythm, the natural rhythm of mother earth's four directions and four seasons, I see it not as an experiment, but as just a gift, a gorgeous delightful way to slow down and really feel Mother Nature coming to life in us.

Well, it's June, the first week of June, and that means we're stepping around that Medicine Wheel into the first week of our third and final month honoring the beauty, the wisdom, the grace of the east and spring.

So, I'd like to recap Spring for you because, as you know, every month builds on the month before. So we started out in the East in April, and this

was our theme: "The soul wakes from the rest of winter filled with desire to discover its true, whole, sacred self, and hears 'the call to awaken.'"

Well, then in May, "The awakened soul begins, or recommits to, a holy task. What kind of holy task? One that's in alignment with its divine purpose, and experiences the call to a new beginning.

So, we're carrying our awakened beginning selves into June, and this is our theme: "The energy of spring urges the awakened, energized soul to heed John O'Donohue's admonition, 'you were created to create' and honors the call to nourish your creative soul."

And nourish your creative soul we will, with my wonderful companion today, passionate mentor of the creative soul, Gail McMeekin!

What we are about to hear has the potential to change us and change us at depth. To help that happen, let's ask the Voice of The Tibetan Bowl to call us to listen and listen deeply.

<Bowl ringing>

Gail McMeekin is a therapist, writer, artist – take a breath now; this is a long list - brilliant creativity coach, insightful career counselor, and certified Scientific Hand Analyst. Not a lot of people have that on their laundry list of fabulous skills.

Did you know that your life purpose and creative gifts are right there visible on your hands! They are. So I guess from this list, I'd have to sum it up and say that Gail McMeekin is a Renaissance woman - and a wildly creative one at that! She's also a dear friend and fellow Conari author. Her book, '12 Secrets of Highly Creative Women' set the world on fire in 2000. She's also the author of *12 Secrets of Highly Successful Women*, *The Power of Positive Choices*, and more. I feel so strongly about Gail's ability to mentor writers and creatives that I've invited her to share one of her secrets every week in my August and September writing course, *Plug In for Writers*. And when I need a personal nourishing boost, the first person I call is Gail McMeekin! She joins us from her home near Boston.



Welcome Gail!

GAIL: Hello Janet, it's great to be here.

JANET: Oh, it's just my great joy to share your creative genius with all the listeners of The Soul-Directed Life.

Well, if you've been listening Gail, maybe you notice that our guest opens the conversation with some kind of invocation or blessing - something to honor the direction and season on the Medicine Wheel. Now, I think this is a real hoot for you because you in the Boston area suffered more winter - nobody had more winter than you guys in the New England area so I'm trusting that finally Spring is there. Would you like to invite us into the light and the beauty and grace of spring?

GAIL: I would love to. And of course, we're having a New England Spring where one day it's warm and one day it's cold. But the energy is shifting.

I want to share with you a healing prayer that was spoken by Medicine Grizzly Bear during the Earth Healing Ceremony in Washington in 1990.

Blessing of Wind

Spirit of Creation,
in the beginning you blew over the waters,
coaxing the earth up from the depths of the sea,
and inviting all creatures to rise up on their own wings.

Spirit of Renewing Life,
you breathed into me in my very first moment,
invigorate me with your gift of energy and newness.
Continue to breathe expansively in me,
inviting me to a vision for what is possible in my life.



Spirit of Restlessness,
stir me from my longing for comfort that so often stifles me,
help me to release from the places that keep me stuck,
and guide me in the direction you would have me go.

Spirit of the Great Winds,
help me to hear your voice
in the midst of the whirlwind of my life.
Grant me the trust to hold on
while I am being buffeted by life's storms.

Blessings of wind be upon me.
May my sails billow wide,
May I breathe deeply the gift of inspiration,
May I be carried to the place of my resurrection,
May I be fully free.

© Christine Valters Paintner, *Water, Wind, Earth & Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying with the Elements*

JANET: Oh thank you! That's beautiful. Who did that come from again?

GAIL: That is from Medicine Grizzly Bear during the Earth Healing Ceremony in Washington in 1990, and I will send you a copy.

JANET: Oh would you...that would be so lovely. Thank you. Thank you.

Well, as I was doing your little intro, I would imagine the listeners going 'What? Wait a second, how does a therapist end up doing all these fabulous things that you do. I don't think I've ever asked you, "How'd you get here?"'



So, would you give us sort of an overview of how you evolved into such a Renaissance Creative Woman?

GAIL: Well, it's been quite a journey. I started out as a therapist wanting to work with children and families and worked my way up in mental health and directed school consultation programs, etcetera. I was very into prevention and then the administration changed in Washington. They were no longer into prevention, so I thought – oh, time to shift.

And I was fascinated by the fact that all the parents I was talking to were complaining about their jobs. They were complaining about their jobs so much it was hard to get them to just talk to me about their kids. So then I read some research that said that 80% of people out there hated their jobs, and I thought – *Holy Smokes!* That's a need.

So I went back to school in Human Resources. I changed my practice around. I started doing career coaching and outplacement counseling, and all kinds of things – corporate training from everything from assertiveness to management development.

And then I got kind of overwhelmed, and got chronic fatigue, so I had to stop, and this was way before anybody knew what it was, so they really thought you were crazy back then, particularly if you were a woman. They had all kinds of theories about what was happening.

But part of my recovery was doing art therapy, and I had this creative awakening, kind of like a Renaissance. I started reading design magazines. I started painting. I created my first product, The Power of Choices tape with music with my brother, and all these things started happening, so I got fascinated with creativity and had a chance to study with George Prince here in Boston who is amazing.

And then I keep adding other pieces to the puzzle, so I was teaching creativity coaches for a while. I've written all these books and stuff. Then I got interested in scientific hand analysis and just got certified in that because that is such a powerful fast track technique to help people find their life purpose that continues to blow my mind as well as their gifts. I'm



actually mixing that up with photo collage which I got certified in, as well. So there's lots of art, lots of creativity, lots of writing. My husband's a photographer. We just did an app for *GPS for the Soul* for Huffington Post from a personal invitation from Arianna Huffington. So the story continues to change and expand, and I feel a whole new cycle coming on. So we'll see what happens next.

JANET: I feel exactly the same way. It's like you think – oh, okay, I've sort of arrived. I've got this thing going and then the Universe goes 'Write this way, dear' and the next thing and the next thing, and it makes life so exciting. And being in a creative flow – it's a career that never, never ends. I think on my death bed, you know, I'll still be having one more creative idea. It's a glorious way to live and I really view you as such a model, such a mentor of that openness to the next creative expression.

So, why did you write, specifically, this book that you're so famous for - *12 secrets of Highly Creative Women*?

GAIL: I wrote it because I got ticked off! My favorite is PBS; they're in my will; I love everything they do. It's wonderful. But I think I knew way back as a child that I had a longing to hear stories about modern day creative women and just really understand that. Because if you remember, in school we studied so few creative women, Betsy Ross and a few others.

Anyway, PBS did a show on the creative spirit, and they did what all the anthologies do on creativity. They had 25 men and 2 women, usually Martha Graham and Georgia O'Keefe, and I thought – That's it, somebody has to write a book about modern day sane, successful, happy creative women in a whole variety of professions, and I wanted it to be a portable mentor, which is my thought for that sub-title, so it would be a book that people could pick up before they got discouraged, and gave them 12 steps to being able to tackle all the challenges of rejection and saboteurs and so forth.

So anyway, it took a long time to find a publisher but I was determined to do it. And it worked! So I'm happy that it just had its 10th anniversary.

JANET: Oh, did it ever work! I mean, that's a book that means the world to people and I'm so grateful that you got mad and now you get to share a secret with everybody in *Plug In for Writers* in the summer.

Well, the book, for anyone who doesn't have it, and as far as I know, every creative woman has it on her shelf.

In the *12 secrets of Highly Creative Women* there are twelve chapters and there are twelve big secrets. Obviously, in our one hour together we've got to hone in and, in particular, the first one that just jumps out at me is – Honoring Your Inspirations.

And maybe this is because I am writing my 4th book right at this moment. In this book, *Why Did I Come?* the reader - the members of the course - are going to walk a sacred spiral, and in their imagination, go back in time to remember why they came, their conception and their divine purpose.

And then, wilder than that, is as you go forward in time you can visit your past experiences and change them. Now, even I am just a little stunned by what this book is telling me. The book is teaching me how it wants to be written. And I'm honoring, because this secret is – Honor Your Inspirations. I am honoring these ideas, these images, these dreams, and these mystical leaps that the book seems to want to take. Now, I'm just open and this inspiration is flooding into me. So people ask, 'How, Janet, can you possibly be this creative? Four books, six mystical courses – none of them anything like anything that's out there. And I would love to let people inside my head, - Okay, come on in here – this is what it looks like when you're utterly open, honoring your inspirations and saying Yes.

So would you please help them?

I am confident other people get these nudges; they just don't honor them. They don't listen, they don't take the action. Instead, they poo-poo themselves and go, 'Well...maybe I'm just making that up'.



So how, Gail, can we honor our inspirations?

GAIL: We need to honor them and not dishonor them. When I have some women look at the title of my book, they say, "Oh, I couldn't possibly read that because I'm not creative, which just breaks my heart because everyone's creative. We all have good ideas, we all have inspiration, but so often where we're too busy to notice them, or if they happen, and we don't embrace them as a cherished treasure chest.

It all begins with attraction. Creative inspirations seduce us like a magnet. They charm us, they tempt us, and they captivate our attention. And so our ideas, our hunches, our whims, our intuitions – they're all really valuable, and are stimulating us, our creative self to heed the call and pay attention, and make them a priority, even if we think they're foolish and don't know what they mean, and we have no idea where they're going, we need to honor those gifts from our sub-conscious that are pulling us in a certain direction, even if it's a total mystery.

But the mystery reveals itself, and as we know as creative people, when we start writing a book, we never know exactly how it's going to end up because it often ends up in a totally different place than we thought. So we need to allow thoughts to have a very important place in our lives, and I tell people if you're driving, and you get a brilliant idea, pull over. Don't keep going, because by the time you get home you'd probably forget it. Talk it into your phone, write it in your journal. When you're walking; wherever you are, keep some kind of method, either your phone or something that helps you capture these ideas. And then you can play with these ideas and put them together, because creativity is about new connection.

So we never know - one idea can lead to the next idea. We need to learn how to play with them, we need to spend time in nature. We need to look for all the symbols and we need to make a date to create. Time is vital to the creative process! We need to turn everything off. We need to find quiet. We need to have catalysts. I say Janet's Soul Vows every day and I look at my Mandala, so she helps me get moving in the morning. We need



some kind of sanctuary where we can sit there and invite those ideas. I often light a candle to signal to the Universe – okay, I’m ready. Show up.

JANET: I do that every day, absolutely every day. My morning practice is calling in all my guides, all my inspiration for the day, the book, my whole life. Oh! We’re going to honor our inspirations right after this break, because we’re going to learn about the Cycles of Creativity and, you’re going to love this one, *How to Partner with Your Muse*.

<Break>

JANET: I hope you caught that. There’s a special Facebook page dedicated to this show, *Janet Conner, The Soul-Directed Life*. There you can get the link to listen, and you can get the guest’s links and her books and all kinds of goodies. And you want to join the conversation because guests are always so generous. Gail is going to give a signed copy of *12 Secrets of Highly Creative Women* to somebody - even a guy - that joins the conversation at *Janet Conner, The Soul-Directed Life*.

So Gail, I did have a little trouble picking out what are we going to hone in on for this conversation, because I love all your secrets. But if there’s one that’s made the most difference in my life, and is always a wake-up call during *Plug In for Writers*, you can just see the light bulbs go on, and it’s the Cycles of Creativity.

I didn’t know anything about this. I had never thought about it. No one had ever talked to me about the Cycles of Creativity. But when you did, I realized I’m living this. I know this is true. When I turned in the manuscript for *Writing Down Your Soul*, I foolishly thought – Well, now you start working on the next thing. And I couldn’t. I sat in the chair and stared at the wall, I think for weeks, because I didn’t understand that I was flowing into a cycle, a natural cycle of creativity.

So would you teach us about the Cycles of Creativity?

GAIL: Absolutely. And the title is *Surrendering to the Cycles of Creativity*, which is really important. We have this myth in America that we should



always know what's next, and that we move instantaneously with it, that we're not supposed to rest, we're not supposed to guess, and be totally confident, no surprises, have it all planned out.

That's totally nuts, and so many people burn themselves out trying to live up to this terrible myth, and I just read another study last year. They said that vacations have gotten shorter over the past five years. And I just read an article the other day and they're saying now they're getting even shorter. I thought – *Holy Smokes!*

Because in all my research, these periods of the void, the neutral zone, when things aren't happening, when we're resting or we're dealing with something else. Sometimes we're dealing with something else and we need to rest after that, because life does intervene in the creative cycle that we get our great inspirations.

So often people say, 'I went to France' or 'I discovered this'...or 'I started walking in the woods every day and I discovered that...', or 'I started learning about herbs and that led to my next creation or my next painting. '

So, there are really three cycles – there's Birth, Death, and Re-birth. But there's a fourth piece because with Death, we end up in this oasis space of nothing.

In other words, we go from all this fruitful creativity to all of a sudden everything on the oasis dies, and we're totally lost in the desert. It turns into a desert. It doesn't have any water, nothing's growing and it can be very frightening.

But it's also totally normal.

The reason I talk about surrender is that, instead of fighting these cycles, surrendering is a skill of the Spiritual Warrior. So that when we're stuck in that space, we need to learn how to be patient.

And actually, one of my teachers for this is the Book of Runes by Ralph Blum, which are stones that you draw meanings, and there's a little book that goes with them. They've been the greatest teacher to me about cycles.



When I was sick with chronic fatigue and everything was stuck and nothing was happening, I kept drawing this Rune called Fertile Season One Year of the Harvest. I was trying to move ahead, and the Harvest says, "Remember the farmer who was so eager to assist his crops that he went out at night and tugged on the new shoots. There's no way to push the river and you cannot hasten the harvest".

So, sometimes we long for something to happen now, and it's just not the time, and we have to be patient and we have to potentially learn something else. And sometimes these crises like chronic fatigue – and actually Sarah Ban Breathnach, who wrote *Simple Abundance* will interview for the book. She had a tile fall on her head in a fast food restaurant, just missed her daughter, and it took her 17 months of recovering from a head injury to tap into the fact that she really loved everything Victorian which led to her first book which ultimately led to *Simple Abundance*.

Sometimes burn-out can be a real gift in terms of getting us to the next step.

So, when we're stuck in the neutral zone, we need to rest and then start looking for clues, and trust that we will re-emerge, which requires faith. Listen to our dreams, start paying attention to our clues. There are little whisperings that start happening.

But we're in a period of grief. When we let go of a creative project, there's a loss involved. And we need to honor that and recognize that we're in grief. We just birthed something. It's kind of like a post-partum depression, and now it's time to rest. And in this crazy Western culture, we're supposed to skip that.

We need to develop a relationship with our creativity so that we understand that, in between the cycles it's actually productive time, and we go deeper and deeper. And when the seedlings, like the east in the Spring, start sprouting, there are all kinds of wonderful things that come up. But we needed to be in the Winter for that to happen.

So it's okay.



JANET: That is so empowering to be told it's okay to not be productive, to rest. I can certainly raise my hand in affirmation that, when you take your eyes off the goal and you let go and say, 'well right now I'm just resting', then the seeds, the ideas, the connections between this thing and that thing, they just feed you and they feed you and then and then you are ready, when you're ready for a wonderful new idea.

One of the things you just said, you used this word 'relationship', and my ears kind of perked up - we need to be in relationship. Well, the funniest, most delightful thing you ever shared in *Plug In for Writers* is that you have a very intimate, loving relationship with your muse, and she even has a name. And when that class was over, I said, 'hmp, who's my muse? Who am I talking to?'

So, tell us – this is such a delightful secret, so let's not have it be a secret. Tell us about how we can build a relationship with our muse.

GAIL: Well, one of the things you can do is open yourself up to have him or her or it, because it might be a companion animal show up. This was many years ago when I took EST, when that was the big deal. One of the visualizations we were supposed to try to find some kind of inner guide. At that moment, this blond, very low key but attractive woman named Tiffany showed up and she was in one of my very favorite places, which is a resort in Bermuda called the Coral Beach club. And it has a beach that you wander down that has gorgeous grape leaves and caves and stuff like that.

And my Tiffany lives in one of the caves, one of the multiple caves at the top, very comfy, you'd never know it was a cave, there's rugs and everything. And when I need to go talk with her, I go in there and sit on her very comfortable couch and have tea or wine or whatever she's serving or what time of day it is. And I talk to her about one of her creative ideas. And she continues to be a very wise woman and very supportive, and understands all about cycles.

So Tiffany is my real live muse.

JANET: I love the added part of the visuals - it's a cave, she invites you in and you're drinking tea together ... this is just the most adorable concept! And I'm so grateful to you for bringing it up, because it did get me to start thinking - well, who am I working with?

This doesn't have to be true for everybody, but the way I implement this is I look to the angels. Which angels are walking beside me every single day; feeding me as I'm writing a particular book?

So you have Tiffany all the time, and I suppose I do have one all the time, but I have particularly conversations with an angel around a particular book. Right now, Haniel, whose name means 'The Glory of God' is talking to me every day. She is the source of all these magnificent ideas that come from nowhere for the next book, *Why Did I Come?*

And I don't know Gail, if you hadn't brought up that topic of a loving, intimate daily conversation with your muse, if I would have realized that I work in partnership with divine beings on my book, so I'm bowing in gratitude to you and to Tiffany.

And that's such a cute story, I mean EST! For heaven's sakes, that's like the 70's? But isn't that adorable? That something that's so important to you now came through that vehicle. Once again, it's just such a confirmation that creativity is feeding us all the time, but we don't know where, and we don't know when.

So now Gail, I have to ask you about sort of the opposite, that there's Tiffany helping you, guiding you, teaching you. But the reality is that we're all swimming in saboteurs. I have had some lulus in my life, and your book is so helpful in helping us recognize who they are, and escorting them out the door sometimes. So talk to us about our saboteurs.

GAIL: Yes, and we all have them. I really haven't met anyone who doesn't have some sort of a story from childhood or adulthood of creative trauma and shame, where something that they created that was very dear to them was trashed by somebody else. And so, now we have Amazon, so any

lunatic can comment on your product of any kind, including books. So we need to have some resilience.

So the external saboteurs, those are parents, teachers, people I call Ignorant Advisors of Terrible Advice, the Ain't It Awful Club - authority figures, people who can be cruel and devastating and make things up and so forth. And one of the things that we really need to do with those people is try to heal the wounds from the past. Sometimes we have to get some help to get over that because the fears are going to come back or someone is going to take their form. And we need to be very protective of our creative work.

In the beginning, don't tell people about it if you don't trust them. You don't want people saying, 'oh, nobody ever makes any money writing books' or 'you can never sell your photography' or whatever. You don't want those people around when you're trying to be creative. Put up a fence and get them out of there.

So those people we have to learn how to manage. And sometimes they're related to us; sometimes they live in the same house as us, and we really have to set up all kinds of barriers. I have a client now who keeps trying to get her father-in-law to understand that she's a writer. And he's never going to get it, she just needs to spend less time with him. Too bad but it's the truth.

But some of the worst saboteurs are the ones we internalize, so there's those voices that say - I know when I got my first Conari book contract, all of a sudden I decided, 'well, I don't want to write this book that I'd been writing for eight years. Totally absurd! So, fear and all those kinds of self-doubts can get into our lives and raise havoc.

One of the things that I love as a technique is Psychosynthesis, where we actually envision who these inner saboteurs are and try to get to know them. And I interviewed Sidra Stone who talks about The Inner Patriarch and how a lot of us as women got infused and very mixed up with patriarchal culture so that it's hard for us to be in our own power. So that's another thing.

So we need to get to know who these folks are. We need to learn how to honor our own natural abilities. And we need to learn how to deal with criticism, because when we put ourselves out there, somebody's not going to like it, for what – they may be projecting their own stuff on it, or maybe they don't like it. I mean, think about it – many of you have read a book or listened to a piece of music or seen a painting and you just didn't like it. Well, that's okay. It doesn't mean the person's terrible, it just means it's not your taste.

So we have to have what I call Rejection Resilience and learn which kind of criticism is valuable and we can utilize, and which kind of criticism is just kind of nasty. We really need to learn the distinction and who we can trust to comment on our work and what's going on with them that may be interacting.

So, it's a big job; we need to do a lot of excavation, but it's possible to make peace with the inner and the outer saboteurs who are trying to keep you small.

JANET: That's the key, they're trying to keep you small. And it always seems to happen in particular where with writers, and the first time I got a really awful one star, "I wish I could give this woman less than one star" on Amazon, it hurt my feelings. And then luckily – right? I mean, it did. – and then, however, in whatever newsletter I get about writing, I get a bunch of them, somebody said, "When you get your first one (star) review on Amazon, you should celebrate, because it means that a larger audience, not just your people, are looking at the book and also it gives kind of a validity to people when they come to read the reviews that they aren't all your fan club writing them.

And that helped me so much so that when the next one (star) review came, I could just smile and sort of wave to the person through the computer and learn to have it not push me off my stool. I love my work, and there are lots of people love, for example, *Writing Down Your Soul*. And if a few people don't, it's okay. I'm not letting that saboteur move out of the computer, out of Amazon and into my heart, into my being.

So we're going to take a short break, and when we come back, Gail's going to give us practical things we can do right now – today - to nourish our creative souls.

<Break>

JANET: So Gail, how can people find you, and all your books, and all your events.

GAIL: I have a beautiful new website, so excited, and it's www.creativesuccess.com

And if you sign up for my newsletter, I will send you a free e-book called *The Path to Creative Success*, and also, if you order a copy of *Creativity Courage Cards* right now, I will send you a free download 20 minute meditation about how to tap into your creative dream. So that's all at creativesuccess.com.

JANET: And I'll put creativesuccess.com on Janet Conner *The Soul-Directed Life*, and everybody that joins the conversation and talks about how they nourish their creative soul, or ask a question, Gail will pop over and join the conversation with the listeners. Everybody who says something, their names go into the Tibetan Bowl, and somebody next Tuesday will receive a signed copy of *The 12 Secrets of Highly Creative Women*.

So Gail, I've never asked you this and, given our topic, I just can't wait to hear. How do you personally nourish your own creative soul?

GAIL: I have a series of things that I do. Quiet is so healing for me, it's incredible. Being at the beach – a lot of people go to the beach and just relax, but I go to the beach – my husband laughs at this – I get so stimulated I start writing all these things in my journal. I'll paint, I'll do things. There's something about the beach. I love music, spas are just incredibly healing for me. My husband and I love to travel. That totally stimulates me. Again, I might be in another country, but I'm thinking about a project I'm working on.

Journaling, writing - *Writing Down Your Soul*, all those things are wonderful. And art and beauty, making art, looking at art, seeing things that are beautiful. Soul collage, painting, all those kinds of things, all the art. And also being in nature in addition to the beach. So, I'm just very open. My senses are very open to all that nurturance.

JANET: I guess that it really comes down to that. It is – because we receive the world through our senses, and so whatever senses are calling out to you to be fed, listen to that, honor that inspiration and look, listen, touch, feel, whatever will feed you.

So, how can we begin? Let's get this delicious conversation down to a few practical things that the listeners can do right now to nourish their creative souls.

GAIL: Okay, I have two things that are really helpful for me and they've been helpful for my clients, and really get the creative fires burning.

One is to keep a list of anything that fascinates you for thirty days, anything that excites you. It can be an airplane, the weather, drama, books on women, sculpture and spirituality, whatever it is. Keep a list of that for 30 days, and then begin to look at the patterns, and write each of these patterns on an individual file card, and then move the cards around like puzzle pieces to find as many creative combinations as you can. And choose your top three favorites, and look for ways to add them into your life. So if you're fascinated with animals, figure out – and there's some creative calling about that, then figure out how you're going to engage with animals. That's one idea.

The second idea is to go back to what you loved as a child, and we all loved things as a child when we were not constricted by people telling us what we should be doing and what we should not be doing. And dig up old photos, school year books, records, report cards, whatever it is, and make a collage of happy moments of when you were a child and feeling free and creative, and note what was fun for you back then, and is it possible that some element of that would be fun for you now, because fun

actually stimulates all of our creative senses and our creative ideas. Because play is a doorway to your creative ideas.

JANET: I love that you said that. Play – you know, in my courses, I don't call the pages that I send out each week to give people the various exercises and experience they'll have – I don't call it a workbook. The word 'work', I just bristle. I don't want to tell people that we're doing work. Playing in the soul level, the soul doesn't work. So I'm – I call them my 'play books', which I guess most people think like your coaching calls, and that isn't what I mean, but I don't know that there is a word that somehow conveys this is the adventure ahead.

But it's play...

GAIL: Yes, and those books are wonderful because you do take us on adventure, so it is kind of like playing.

JANET: It's playing. And so, as you said that, I'm looking at your list – art, beauty, soul collage, going to the beach, traveling, listening to music, and hanging out at the spa. I assume a massage is included in that.

Those are all fun. That's play.

GAIL: Mm hmm, we have a new spa here that has this room that's not a steam room and it's not a sauna, but you go in there and your body is actually warm. It's just the most pleasant feeling, it's like heaven in there, some kind of special heat room that's totally different but it makes you feel like a million dollars. I was in there a lot this winter.

JANET: I wonder if it's like going back into the womb, you know, it's warm but it's not hot. What an interesting idea. I have to get to Boston. We've got to go to the spa in the 'womb room'. I love the sound of that, and I love the idea of making a list of my fascinations. I'm going to start doing that tomorrow. It's a wonderful idea, 30 days of fascinations.

It is, because if you just stopped and asked yourself right now, well what do I love, you probably would miss – stuff would swoop by you, but every day for 30 days, it's a very interesting experiment.

GAIL: Mm hmm, yeah...

JANET: Thank you – fabulous, fabulous ideas for us to take into this glorious month of nourishing our creative souls!

So we just have another minute, two minutes – what final kiss of wisdom can you give us to nourish our creative souls in June?

GAIL: One of the most important things you can do when you begin your creative journey or creative process is to gather your inner critics together – and I actually light a candle and have a little ceremony with them – and I tell them, ‘I don’t need your input today; I don’t want your input today. You need to go to Antarctica on vacation, on a trip, enjoy yourselves and when I’m ready – which could be a long time from now. I will invite you back for potentially what I call ‘devil’s advocate’ commentary, like you forgot the punctuation point or something like that. But for now, you’re not to bother me until I invite you back. ‘

That makes such a difference for people, to just banish those little voices, and if they start, like ‘oh, you can’t do that’ or whatever, just use thought stopping, and just send them back. They really belong far, far away.

JANET: Antarctica! I love that, the specificity of it.

GAIL: Yeah, they may be God-forsaken that they’re kind of stuck out there; it’s hard to get them out, probably need an ice boat or something, so they’re kind of stranded there, so it’s a good place for them.

JANET: Well, you couldn’t have given a more perfect idea and at a more perfect time because *Why Did You Come?*, this brand new book and the course that starts in a couple of weeks is pretty out there – I mean, it’s a brand new adventure and I have no room, there’s no room for the critics right now! I just want to create this magnificent new course and new books, so I’ll remind them that they’re going on vacation - in Antarctica. What a wonderful – oh Gail, what a great way to begin this month!

Well listeners, guess what’s coming next? Next Thursday Natalie Goldberg is with us! Everybody knows her as the ‘Writing Teacher to the World’, author

of *Writing Down The Bones*. But did you know she's a painter? And she uses painting to nourish her writing and writing to nourish her painting. So, get her book, *Living Color*. Get it from the library, get it from the bookstore - *Living Color* - and have it in front of you because we're going to talk about this painting on this page, what about this, where'd this come from, what's this idea ... glorious conversation with a true creative genius, Natalie Goldberg.

Then on the 18th, sticking with that creativity genius mode with Michael Gelb, who is an expert on the creativity of Leonardo DaVinci. And he's going to talk about his brand new book *Creativity on Demand: How to Ignite and Sustain the Fire of Genius*.

And then - this unbelievable month - isn't this the most fun you can have? It's going to close on the 25th with Christine Valters Paintner, who is the creator of the *Abbey of the Arts* - an online community nurturing the marriage of a profound spiritual life with contemplative practice, and the creative life. We'll be discussing her very famous book and our Soul-Directed Life Book Club selection for June, *The Artist's Rule*. I highly, highly recommend it!

Please come visit me at www.JanetConner.com. You'll know all the guests and all the things in advance when you sign up for the newsletter, and you can look at my newest book, *Soul Vows*, and my newest course - We open on June 16th - *Why Did I Come? - Walking the Sacred Spiral Path to Remember Your Soul's Divine Purpose*.

Now, when I booked this date, June 16th, it was because it was the third Tuesday in June. But you know what June 16th is? It's my 67th birthday! And it's a Gemini New Moon - always, always launch a new beginning by a New Moon! I did know it was my birthday, but I sure didn't know it was a New Moon!

Oh, come and play with me at *Why Did I Come?*. You talk about a radical, wonderful new idea - you all love *Writing Down Your Soul* and how it activates that divine voice, because you slip into the Theta brainwave state. You know what we're going to do on that sacred spiral? We're going to



doodle and color and draw and create finger labyrinths on the sky! You'll be nourishing all the ways you have access to divine wisdom in this brand new, nothing like it, course and soon, the book *Why Did I Come?*

Come play with me – PLAY - at www.JanetConner.com .

Until next week, may you hear and heed all the nourishing creative calls bubbling up from your soul, and live a soul-directed life!

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Janet Conner
The Soul-Directed Life

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