

PERSONAL STATEMENT PAPER

BY NICK FAST

My most important life experience was the miracle of the birth of my son. Our doctor needed assistance and I gave up counting, after twenty-seven medical personnel physically touched and interacted with Anthony's mother. I learned that it's okay to ask for help, give up control and surrender to the process.

I was definitely challenged by *Come Alive* at the Haven Institute, after being labeled "emotionally frozen" by our marriage counsellor. It was an honour to witness the energy block release by the participants in the small and large groups. My release led me to the *Anger, Boundaries and Safety course*, also at Haven. I know now that it is my personal responsibility to take care of myself and be proactive when I find myself off balance. Part of my balancing act is the monthly cake night at Edgewood, an addiction treatment centre, which reminds me to follow the elements of my aftercare recovery plan. The plan was generated from *Insite*, an intensive six day therapeutic process, where I learned about co-dependency.

My boundaries and limits are constantly being tested in my role as resident manager of Valley View Terrace, a thirty-two unit townhouse complex. From rent collection, garbage, to arbitrations, every day is an adventure. Another similar situation was when I worked for the owner and twenty-two other realtors of NRS Gibsons Realty Ltd. Does this unpredictability and chaos provide an arena for the reworking of my unresolved childhood conflicts?

My past participation in the *Hero's Journey*, a weekly limited session men's group based in Parksville/Qualicum, led me to the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre (NMRC), where I presently volunteer one day a week as a Client Support Worker. Ongoing NMRC programs that I've participated in are *Anger In Control*, *Positive Parenting Program for Teens*, and workshops on *Separation/Divorce Court* and the *Family Maintenance Enforcement Program*. I'm a "Dad Guide" in the *Dads Make*

a Difference Program, which started in October, 2006.

My volunteer work continually reminds me of my own current unresolved issues such as: increasing my awareness and improving the ways I take care of myself; being a better parent and father to my son; coming to terms with the recent death of my father; obtaining a divorce after ten years of separation; choosing how to give back to the community; getting my financial house in order; overcoming my fear of intimacy, making myself vulnerable and exploring relationships with myself and others; and how do I manifest abundance in my life? How do I fuel my creativity, keep the joy percolating, grow in love and remain in awe of the mystery and dance of life?

Another important community resource is Lifestyles Health and Fitness Centre, which connected me to Susan Peach and the Hot Tamales, a fourteen member performing dance group. I learned how important it is to be in the moment, the joy of movement and laughter.

I have limited experience working with minorities, disabled and disadvantaged persons. I was a co-leader for two sessions of the Breakfast Club for Boys and Girls Club in the Comox Valley. For one of my son's elementary school field trips, I formed part of a protective adult ring around the children when we explored the alleys of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

I am completing the Volunteer Counselling Training the Nanaimo Family Life Association (NFLA) to become a more skilled interpersonal communicator to enhance the quality of my relationships. Through my "openness, willingness to change, and recognition that personal growth is a lifelong process," I inspire and encourage physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth in myself and others. I delight in the opportunity to be a part of a "profound and challenging learning time", especially if humour is

involved. I continue to cultivate my attitude of gratitude, so that I can receive and give more.

Important current social issues include corporate globalization – how do you support a family on minimum wage? Why does everything have to be "Made in China"? "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change" should not apply to implementing already existing solutions to the impending crisis of climate change. My recent ten month experience of the Nanaimo Transit System was a severe test of limited options. A drastic overhaul of our healthcare system is overdue, especially in regard to the big drug companies. If I ever need anti-depressants again, I'll be sure to ask for the long, not the short, list of side effects (or 'contraindications'). We need to take back our personal power and make our health and our quality of life our personal responsibility. I recently overcame some limiting self beliefs and now, I can sing and dance. I believe it is possible to shift from fear and helplessness to compassionate self-awareness.

Life is change and I continue to "work openly and honestly toward a deeper understanding of myself". I am more aware of my biases and how they affect my perception of the situation. I am responsible to, but not for, others. I now realize that there are "no final or universal answers to many issues." Duality is a new concept for me – that the light can not exist without the dark.

I explore and embrace my shadow side to express more facets of my authentic self. I perceive this three months of intensive group training with NFLA as one of the elements of my symbolic rebirth into second adulthood. Bring it on!

I accept myself totally and unconditionally as a unique and precious being, ever responsible for my own life, ever doing the best my current awareness permits, ever growing in wisdom and love.

Source unknown