

CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Divine Reflection

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."
-- Mark 1:35*

There's a rhythm to the Optimum Health Institute's (OHI) three week program created specifically to support the balancing of body, mind and spirit. During the first week, we seek to **inspire** you to embrace change and transform through the practice of spiritual disciplines such as fasting, meditation and prayer. During the second week, the classes and activities that are scheduled **encourage** you to **explore** your inner purpose, define your spiritual path and establish goals. In our third week, it's all about **reflecting** on what you have learned and **integrating** practices into your daily life so that you can continue your transformation after your stay and achieve optimum health in body, mind and spirit.

We refer to this as the "Horizontal Water Fall" where the natural rhythm of our program flows like a waterfall as the inspiration in week one cascades into a pool of exploration in week two and then meanders into a smooth reflecting pool during the last week. There is also a rhythm of the day where the daily routine inspires you in the morning, encourages you to explore mid-day and ends in reflection and integration in the evening. We call this the "Vertical Water Fall"

This newsletter is an extension of our program, intended to be another tool to support your transformation on the path to optimum health. In alignment with the rhythms of OHI, our spring issue had articles to **inspire** and **engage** you. The summer newsletter shared tips to **encourage** you to **explore** your inner purpose. Now, in the Fall, it's time to **reflect** on what you have learned; whether your choices are life giving to you; whether you feel in alignment with your purpose and whether you feel spiritually connected. This is the time to quiet the mind and tune in to your divine inner wisdom.

Way before cell phones, texting and 24-hour TV news channels became the norm, the ancient Jews and Christians as well as other religious traditions found it beneficial to seek out a place of uninterrupted solitude to effectively enter into a state of prayer and reflection. With all the external distractions that fight for our attention, it's so important for us today to follow their lead. Even before we feel overwhelmed or confused, we must find that special time and place where we can turn off the outside world and go deep within to find peace, understanding and balance.

The Fall is a particularly appropriate time to reflect on the choices you've made so far this year. What are the things you've set in motion? How are you sharing your time, your talent and your treasure with others? How joyful and grateful are you, and how frequently can you feel God's grace in your life?

It's important to discern the difference between reflecting on your life, and getting stuck in old stories that you tell yourself with judgement. When you relive and judge all the things that are causing you mental and emotional discomfort, it undermines your spiritual balance and results in dis-ease.

However, being an observer, let's say a historian or "Just the Facts Ma'am" Sargent Joe Friday from the old Dragnet series allows you to say, "I did *this* and they did *that*." Not good, not bad...just the facts. You, in essence, have become an unbiased historical observer of your life. Once you have accepted the facts, you have unshackled yourself from anger, guilt or shame and can act on what is really important to you.



Robert Nees, Jr.

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“The real man smiles in trouble, gathers strength from distress, and grows brave by reflection.”

-- Thomas Paine

Honestly acknowledging what’s causing your lack of peace, accepting it for what it is and asking for spiritual guidance is the path towards forgiveness, healing and transformation.

In my own experience in providing pastoral care and spiritual direction at OHI, I have found that encouraging people to meditate with a daily practice of journaling is frequently the first step towards becoming that unbiased, nonjudgmental observer of your life. One of the most powerful outcomes of spiritual reflection using meditation and journaling is discernment. The ability to comprehend what is obscure. It empowers us to make life giving choices and live a principle-centered and values-driven life.

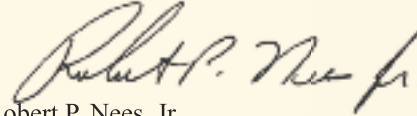
“Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.”


1 Thessalonians 5:12

In this newsletter, we share with you some ideas on how to develop your own practices of reflection to cultivate discernment.

This Fall, let us all reflect on our many blessings, and rejoice in our opportunities to continue to grow in wisdom and divine grace.

Yours in prayer,



Robert P. Nees, Jr.
Senior Pastor and Chairman
Optimum Health Institute
of San Diego and Austin 



Developing Discernment



It was a cold January morning, and a man was playing a violin near the Washington D.C. metro. Occasionally commuters would pause briefly, and a few tossed coins or bills. It wasn’t until the end of his performance a woman recognized musical genius Joshua Bell playing his \$3.5 million violin. Days before, Bell performed at a sold out Boston concert at \$100 per ticket.

The lack of discernment by people rushing past the famous musician is evidence of our frequent inability to “go deep” in our day-to-day activities.

Discernment is considered a spiritual virtue, and the mark of a wise and compassionate person of sound judgment. It is the ability to distinguish what’s unique or true from that which is superficial.

If you’re a good judge of character; if you feel a duty to help people see right from wrong and if you are usually correct when you feel something is amiss, you have discernment.

“Discernment” is not “judgment.” Judgment comes from the Greek word for “condemn.” Discernment comes from the Greek word “to separate,” or see the truth from the fabrication. It is to see things as they really are.

To develop your ability to discern:

1. **Pray.** Ask God to help you develop and trust your discernment.
2. **Meditate.** When you quiet your mind, you will be more able to hear your divine inner voice.
3. **Trust.** Remember compassion is always appropriate, but trust is earned. Be kind, but be slow to believe in someone or something. Give yourself time to “go deep” into the heart of it before you entrust it with your complete confidence.

Reflections on OHI Austin



“This is a day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Those beautiful words from Psalm 118 are constantly in my heart and around my wrist, printed on a bracelet I wear. It’s a reminder that I am blessed to work for an organization that validates my values of healthy eating, and staying grounded in gratitude. I remind myself of that every day!

The teachings of Optimum Health Institute (OHI) also support my dedication to my daily prayer and meditation practice. I use this time to reflect on my faith, my family, my values and my future intentions.

When I think about my work with our guests, I think what I reflect on the most is not so much that we might be modeling the healing OHI program, or even how we might be enriching their experience. To me, the thing that is most powerful is how each gathering feels more like a spiritual “family reunion.”

Although each guest is different, an individual with his or her own perspective, there is a common thread that draws them here, and draws us to each other. We discover we are like-minded individuals and can see our own divine reflection in each other. We find a very heart-centered connection that quickly bonds us, making us genuinely care for each other, support each other’s efforts, and celebrate each other’s progress and successes.

Every time, it seems like the people who are “called” to be there that week have a unique and special link. I believe there are no “accidents” – that each group has been divinely guided to come together to share, learn, grow and come into balance within themselves, and with each other. I see lifelong friendships begin at OHI. I am often awed and overwhelmed when I think of all the people that I meet that come through the OHI program, and how each and every one of them touch me, and touch my life. I can only hope and pray that I can also do so for them.

I am reminded week after week about how PRECIOUS everyone is! I think about how fragile life can be, and what a gift it is that we come together and connect with one another on such a deep and meaningful level. I am always grateful that our guests trust us to guide them through their transformative experience. I feel joy and gratitude to realize, each time I speak with a guest, that the very most important person is the one standing in front of me.

When I contemplate the word “reflection” I think of turning all my attention inward, and holding space for...whatever magnificent thing might want to happen next!

Cheryl Green

Program Director
Optimum Health Institute of Austin

Identifying Your Strengths

Executives at a southern California corporation participated in a team building exercise. Participants previously completed a questionnaire to determine individual strengths and personality types. The 28 executives were then grouped according to type. Each group had 15 minutes to create a brief presentation illustrating their particular skill set.

The resulting controlled chaos was simultaneously hilarious and revealing. “Duty Fulfillers” were eager to complete the assignment, but couldn’t generate ideas. “Nurturers” encouraged each other, but never came up with a plan. “Artists” sketched illustrations, but couldn’t connect the ideas. “Visionaries” had lots of great ideas, but failed to reach a consensus on how to present them. None of the 16 types was able to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Each group had specific strengths, but it was clear no isolated set of skills was sufficient to accomplish the task. Effective teams blend strengths and skills of members to envision, work towards and maintain the collective goals.

Instead of trying to fix employees’ weaknesses, companies that discover and nurture each person’s strengths enjoy more produc-



tivity, satisfied customers and profitability, while also experiencing less employee turnover.

No one is excellent in everything. Identifying your personal skill set can help make you happier and more self-confident as you build on those strengths, achieving even higher levels of success and spiritual awareness.

Finding Opportunities for Growth

An artist was thrilled to locate a small gem of a home nestled in a pocket of woods near downtown San Diego. With striking lines and walls of glass and stone, it was the perfect compliment to his creative soul. Even the moon cooperated, shining through a skylight in his bedroom, lulling him into a deep slumber every night.

After three months, the man suddenly realized the “moon” hadn’t moved. He checked outside and discovered the soothing “moonlight” was actually a streetlight.

The man was furious. How was he supposed to sleep with that light in his face? For a week he tossed and turned, unable to fall asleep, fuming at this unacceptable intrusion. Then, in his exhausted state, he made a realization. The light streaming into his bedroom since his first peaceful night in the home hadn’t changed -- only the meaning he gave to the light.

He was first shocked, then intrigued with the growing awareness that he gave the people, places and things in his world the value and power they would have to him. Every aspect of his life began to change for the better. Through pain came emotional and spiritual growth.



It’s too easy to drift into a comfortable rut. Our real spiritual, mental and emotional growth happen when we’re pushed out of our comfort zone. Maybe it’s a health opportunity, or a change in a relationship, or a financial shift. When the adrenaline kicks in, we have to assess the situation, and take action.

When we see things that frighten, annoy or confuse us as growth opportunities, we’ve taken a huge step on our spiritual path.

Why Being ‘People Smart’ Matters



When Joy, Sadness, Disgust, Fear and Anger get together, which wins out? How we process emotions and relate to others is addressed in Pixar’s animated film, “Inside Out.”

Eleven-year-old Riley tries to adjust to her family’s move from Minnesota to San Francisco. The five different aspects of her emotions take turns at the “control panel” of her brain.

Her sense of humor, connection to her family, even her values become hopelessly tangled, leaving her isolated, angry and frightened.

While she struggles to gain the Emotional Intelligence quotient (EQ) to cope, her parents need to hone their own EQ, for Riley’s sake, and their own.

The threat of tragedy makes them recognize, respect and honor each other’s true feelings. This interplay is the essence of Emotional Intelligence.

In 1995, psychologist Daniel Goleman published Emotional Intelligence. His research revealed technical skills and IQ are essential, but a leader’s ability to be self-aware, and build rapport, was twice as important for success and happiness.

He gave Emotional Intelligence five components:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing your emotions, and their impact on others.
2. **Self-Regulation:** Think before acting; control your moods.
3. **Motivation:** Persistence to pursue goals.
4. **Empathy:** Compassion for others’ emotions.
5. **Social Skill:** Establishing rapport and building relationships

These attributes can be taught. “Maturity” – accumulating life experiences -- develops self-awareness and compassion. Motivation, practice and feedback boost EQ, empowering you to make wise decisions and respect others.

Keep in mind, too, that tuning into non-verbal communication, your own and those with whom you interact, is essential for honing your Emotional Intelligence. As much as 93% of what is exchanged is done through non-verbal cues.

Challenging Circumstances Inspired Healthy Changes

Nearly everything in Denise's life had become problematic. Extensive dental work had left her in constant pain. She became ill from the long, demanding hours at work, and was laid off her job. A one-time successful businesswoman, she ended up selling nearly everything she owned, except her car and clothes.

That's when Denise knew she needed to approach her health, and her entire life, in a completely new way. She enrolled in a raw food prep class, and another student told her about Optimum Health Institute (OHI). Denise immediately knew she wanted to come to OHI, and her mother paid for a week-long stay.

From the moment she set foot inside the OHI gates, we could see she was the perfect candidate for a scholarship. In each class, she eagerly absorbed the new information that helped her understand how stress, unhealthy habits and a poor diet had taken a toll on her body, mind, and spirit.

She strictly adhered to the detoxifying food plan and exercise schedule, and appreciated the support of facilitators and missionaries. Her free moments were occupied with deep meditation, prayer, journaling, and enjoying the camaraderie of fellow guests.

We could see she was enthusiastically applying all the tools we offer in the first week of the healing OHI program, and we wanted to give her the opportunity to learn more. When we notified her that she had received an OHI scholarship to continue her stay another two weeks, she was overwhelmed at this second chance to build a healthy new life.

She gratefully credits OHI for bringing a healthy balance into her life, but we know we simply provided the program and encour-

agement to give her the opportunity to heal. So many of her health opportunities began to respond when she started detoxing. As her body began to come into balance, so did her mind and spirit. In a touching thank you note, Denise said she was "overwhelmed by the kindness of strangers," and she now has "a jump start on my health and so many tools to use to get back on track."

Two years after her transformation at OHI, Denise shares she's eating 90% raw, she's cultivated a supportive group of God-centered friends, and she feels more peaceful, happier and healthier than she's ever been. She learned how to love herself at OHI, she said, and she relies on the tools we shared, including praying, meditating and journaling. She said she doesn't do them all perfectly, but on a perfect day, she does them all.

Denise's circumstances were a textbook example of why the OHI Scholarship program is so important to so many. Recipients have a variety of health opportunities. What they have in common are a lack of financial resources, and an eagerness to truly embrace the program for life-impacting change.

When we determine an OHI Scholarship could truly transform and enrich a guest's life, as it did in Denise's case, thanks to your generous donations, we are able to offer them the opportunity to change their world.



Larry Taylor, Executive Director
Optimum Health Institute San Diego

The Greatest Gift of Love is the Gift of Healing

The **OHI Scholarship Fund** was established to help those who have a life-threatening health opportunity and require financial assistance. The OHI community relies on **acts of kindness and generosity** to support those in need.

Thanks to your support in 2014, we were able to provide **115 scholarships**, which represents a 26% increase given in the previous year. Our overarching **goal for 2015 is to raise \$500,000 in scholarship funds.**

You can give the gift of healing for those who are ill, and in need by supporting the **OHI Scholarship Fund** by making a:

- One-Time Donation
- Sustainable Monthly Contribution

Three Ways to Give

1. Donate by mail: Use the **newsletter donation envelope**
2. Donate online: www.optimumhealth.org
3. Donate by phone: **(800) 993-4325**

Optimum Health Institute is a non-profit, religious organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

Discover Your Passion

A woman wrote to “Dear Abby” to say her children were grown, and she felt “incomplete.” She planned to go to med school after college but married, had kids and stayed home instead.

“I’d love to become a doctor,” she wrote, “but after eight years of medical school and a residency, I’d be 49!”



Abby asked, “If you did NOT follow your passion, how old would you be in eight years?”

In our zeal to grow up and “be mature,” we can too quickly dismiss things we love to do as being frivolous or unattainable. When we’re very young, we’re on a journey of self-discovery and exploration. Chances are, the things that resonated for you then are actually the things most closely aligned with your natural talents and strengths. Meditate on ways to bring more of your childhood passions into your life in ways that compliment and enrich your personal and professional paths.

Another way to figure out what your passion is – take a moment to think of who most annoys you, or makes you jealous. Those emotions can surface when we see someone else doing the things we unconsciously want in our OWN life. How can you tap into that energy yourself? Take a sculpting class or a few guitar lessons. Sampling something that resonates might open an exciting and passionate new chapter of your life.

Finally, what would you do if you knew you could not fail? Meditate on the answer. Visualize yourself doing it, and feel the joy. Then start bringing the vision into reality.

OHI Was My Refuge

During my orientation at Optimum Health Institute (OHI) the facilitator talked about the importance of self-massage, so I purchased a bottle of sesame oil at the Optimum Health Store. As I was massaging my neck that night, I had a gut-wrenching feeling that something was wrong.

Over the next couple of years during physicals I asked doctors to check my thyroid, and they always said it was fine. I’m a nurse, and when I was in school again, I asked one of the professors to feel my neck. She told me to have the area scanned, and this time the doctors discovered I had a form of thyroid cancer.

I went back to OHI both before and after my surgery to prepare, rejuvenate and heal. Had I not come to OHI that first time, I don’t think I would have ever discovered I had cancer.

As a hospice nurse, I know working in a care facility is stressful and emotionally demanding. Every job has its stresses. What OHI has been for me is a refuge where I can rejuvenate and find the balance again in my life.

I’ve had the opportunity to be an OHI missionary several times, and be in service to the people there. It’s a three-month commit-

ment. You’re there to go through the process yourself, and serve others while they’re going through the process. You’re going to classes, working in the kitchen, and finding other ways you can help other guests. It’s the most wonderful gift I’ve ever had in my life. I am so grateful to OHI, and grateful to myself for giving myself this gift. I feel fully inspired and alive again.



Christy Silness, Missionary
Optimum Health Institute Austin

OUR OFFERS

Free Colonics

You let us know how much you appreciate the FREE Colonic Deals, so we're bringing them back! When you stay in a select single or double-occupancy room, you'll receive TWO FREE colonics for each week of your stay. **Some restrictions apply.**

Extended Stay Savings

Stay in any best-available, single or double-occupancy room and receive 10% off your entire 3 week stay or 5% off your entire 2 week stay. **Some restrictions apply.**

For Our Community Members Who Have Completed the Program

Get a FREE room when you book your 4th week within a 12-month period. Oh and better yet, when you book your 4th-week stay, bring a friend or loved one who has never stayed with us before and they pay only for the program tuition. **Some restrictions apply.**

Early Bird Special

Ideal for the one who plans and books early with us. Receive \$100 off any best-available, single-occupancy room for your 1st week when you book your reservation 3 weeks in advance. **Some restrictions apply.**

Find Out More

Call us toll free at **(800) 993-4325** to speak to one of our expert reservation staff for details or see all our offer details on our website at **www.optimumhealth.org**

Internet access now available in select rooms.



Connect & Share. Let's Get Social!

To support our OHI community we have expanded our communication lines to include various social media platforms.

Optimum Health Institute USA Blog website

www.optimumhealthusa.com

Articles on the OHI Program, healing, nutrition and creating balance in your life.

Facebook

www.facebook.com/OptimumHealthInstitute

- Visit and "Like" us on our **Facebook Page**
- Join one of our **Facebook Groups**
 - Optimum Health Institute San Diego
 - Optimum Health Institute Austin
 - Optimum Health Institute Missionaries

Twitter

www.twitter.com/optimumhealthusa

Follow us on Twitter and get notified of our special offers and special announcements.

YouTube

www.youtube.com/optimumhealthinst

View our promotional videos and guest testimonials on our OHI YouTube Channel.

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/optimum-health-institute

Follow us on LinkedIn and stay up-to-date with OHI career opportunities.

Come on in and connect with us...it will be fun!



**A Mission of
The Free Sacred Trinity Church**

The Free Sacred Trinity Church and its subordinate religious missions, the Optimum Health Institute of San Diego and the Optimum Health Institute of Austin, are not-for-profit organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Support OHI's Mission

We are a non-profit religious organization and your donation is tax deductible. On behalf of all those who benefit from the OHI Scholarship Fund, we offer our gratitude!

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VISIT WITH US:

Visit our weekly Open House every Sunday starting at 4:00 p.m. in San Diego and Austin. The OHI Program offers visitors, guests and adherents a personal tour of the facility, lecture, prayer circle and an all raw vegan meal. A \$3 donation is appreciated, but not required.

CONTACT US:

We'd love to hear from you. To receive special offers and updates, email us at newsletter@optimumhealth.org or call us at (800) 993-4325. For more information about the OHI Program, please visit our website at www.optimumhealth.org

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Our Mission

We serve as a change agent for human-kind by improving the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of everyone we touch.

Core Values

Holism, Generosity, Relationships, Life-Long Learning, Stewardship and Service.

Guiding Principles

Trustworthiness, Respect, Empowerment and Alignment.

The Five P's to Optimum Health

Purpose to achieve a natural balance and reconnection to the Divine.

Positive mental attitude that supports the healing process.

Persistence in following the holistic disciplines of the OHI program.

Patience with your body and yourself, as you allow your body-mind-spirit to heal.

Prayer to a higher source who will share the load with you.