

Being the Change

Local Residents Share Their Efforts & Momentum
Towards a "Spontaneous Evolution"



by Linda Sechrist

According to Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. and Steve Bhaerman, co-authors of *Spontaneous Evolution*, anyone on the planet today could be an "imaginal cell." This biological metaphor refers to the first cells that emerge as a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. As imaginal cells develop, they connect, communicate with one another and collect into a coherent field. The paradox of this transformation is that the butterfly and caterpillar share the same DNA, but their imaginal cells respond to a different organizing signal.

Lipton, a scientist, and Bhaerman, a political and cultural commentator and popular humorist known as Swami Beyondananda, propose that what happens during the metamorphosis of the caterpillar may parallel where our civilization is today. "We read newspapers and watch the media report on a caterpillar world," says Bhaerman. "Yet Dr. Paul Ray, author of *Cultural Creatives*, estimates that there are now potentially 70 million human imaginal cells in the U.S. who have changed their psychological and spiritual programming, awakened to new possibilities, and are clustering, communicating and turning into a new, coherent signal of love."

With humanity on the cusp of what Bhaerman and Lipton believe is an emerging leap in the evolution of consciousness, they point to good news: In ever-increasing numbers, we are realizing that we are interconnected, and that we live in a world of relationship. While Bhaerman jokes that no one is getting off the bus, Lipton interjects, "That's because we're all invested in the next phase of our human species."

Natural Awakenings looked to Southwest Floridians for examples of imaginal cells who are responding to a different organizing signal, connecting and communicating with other like-minded individuals to create the world they dream is possible.

Bill Van Arsdale

By creating opportunities for people to come together and interact in more meaningful ways, Naples resident Bill Van Arsdale is building the community he longs to be part of. Ideas posed by individuals he meets through the *Natural Awakenings*' Naples Tribe Meetup, a collaboration with this magazine, turn into fun and interesting activities: day trips, weekend getaways, potlucks and conversational gatherings that give people the opportunity to get to know one another on a more personal level.

Several years ago, Van Arsdale spent contemplative time pinpointing what creates feelings of wholeness, completeness and belonging. "I discovered that I

most often experienced these when I was in community and interacting with others in meaningful ways," he says, "and it led me to notice that it's at those times when I'm most likely to drop my boundaries and share more deeply."

Genai

A planet of peace is what Genai (Ellen Wachs) wants. "When we find room to accept everything about ourselves and each other, we'll have it," says the 23-year veteran of professional healing, who created SwanStar Essences and runs AllOnePeace Sacred School for the One. At a community level, public speaking, workshops, free monthly energy healing clinics and Soul Safari weekly meditation groups allow her to teach numerous self-healing techniques, as well as how to open up to a more unified consciousness.

"I hold my own peace as a high value," says this Naples resident, "and I honor that by claiming the joys of my soul and integrating them into my life through living simply, exercising, eating well and hanging out with other like-minded people."

Cathy Blair

A Naples resident in love with the resonations of crystal bowls, Cathy Blair has been playing them for groups and individuals since 2004. Blair seeks to create peace by raising an individual's

energetic vibration, which in turn can raise their level of consciousness. Like many others involved in psychoacoustics and sound healing, she believes that crystal bowls, the voice, tuning forks and other natural sound healing instruments produce sounds powerful enough to raise the frequency at which human beings vibrate.

"Sound slows the chaos of the mind and creates an inner state of peace," says Blair. "In our chaotic world, it's important to stay inwardly centered and peaceful, even when we don't agree with what is happening around us."

Herb Herman

Not long ago, Naples resident Herb Herman wanted to be a public speaker so he could motivate and empower others to open their minds to a different way of looking at the world. A long-time seeker and student of Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer, Marianne Williamson and Zen Master Genpo Rochi, Herman found a new teacher in 2007: Eckhart Tolle.

After reading Tolle's *The Power of Now*, Herman found that it answered many of his deeper questions and sparked the insight that it was more important to get his own life in order, clear up his own ego issues and become the change he wanted to see in the world. He felt called to help awaken humanity to the need to come together as a collective for the good of the whole, so he initiated an Eckhart Tolle book study group that has been meeting regularly for nearly two years.

"When I started on this path, it was like turning up my vibrational light with a dimmer switch, and ever since, I've been cranking it as high as I can, shedding light on the insanity of our world, so others wake up, too," says Herman.

Gwen Peterson

After 20 years of reading books and attending workshops on personal growth, spirituality and metaphysics, Gwen Peterson noticed that while every author or speaker was delivering the same important messages in different words, something was still missing. When an insight shed light on the omission—the

feeling aspect of our humanity—Peterson felt inspired to organize and facilitate a forum where people could share their personal stories about their experiences with the Law of Attraction and Art of Allowing. Rather than bring people together to listen to a lecture or discuss a book, Peterson's *MeetUp.com/Naples-Art-of-Allowing* invites individuals to learn from one another.

"We've all been talked at," remarks the Naples resident, "and now what we really need is to share our personal stories about how these things work in our own lives." Peterson regularly observes that in sharing our stories, we connect on deeper levels, see ourselves in others and become the change we desire.

Joe Wallen

Rather than fragmentation and separation, Joe Wallen would like to enable everyone on the planet to sense a connectedness to all existence. In 2007, Wallen, who owns For Goodness Sake health food stores, read *Awakening into Oneness: The Power of Blessing in the Evolution of Consciousness*, by Arjuna Ardagh. Three weeks later, he boarded a plane destined for Golden City, India, home to the Oneness University founded by Sri Amma and Sri Bhagavan.

Self-defined as a single consciousness in two bodies, SriAmmaBhagavan are the presence behind the movement of the Oneness Blessing, a nondenominational act of placing the hands onto the crown of the head and transferring physical energy by touch or by the power of intent. Individuals like Wallen, who became a blessing-giver after his 21-day experience at the university, are empowered to transmit the spiritual energy through SriAmmaBhagavan.

"I believe that this worldwide phenomenon, which is not associated with any religion, helps to raise consciousness and allows anyone to open their heart, expand their mind and connect with others on levels they previously couldn't imagine," says the Naples resident.

Panache Desai

The message of Spiritual Master Panache Desai is that we each have the power to shift the face of this planet, to

be the change we want to see. "You are the end of war, the end of famine, the end of pain and suffering," says Desai. "The answer and the solution lie within you. The power to change you and this planet is within you."

Desai, who has committed his life to traveling the world with this message, continues: "The power that lies dormant within each of you is magnificence wanting to reveal itself, to make a difference. There is an evolutionary impulse in every cell of your being, wanting to come forth, wanting to be shared, wanting to shift, wanting to make a difference, to be a contribution and shift the way we live with one another. You are here to evolve, to be empowered and to change the world. Now is the time to allow that magnificent and infinite power to shine forth through you. Slow down and look within. You are needed now. My role is to say, 'You are it,'" advises this global citizen, also a Naples resident.

"*Spontaneous Evolution* introduces the notion that a miraculous healing awaits our planet, once we accept our new responsibility to collectively tend the Garden, rather than fight over the turf," declare authors Bhaerman and Lipton. "When a critical mass of people truly own this belief in their hearts and minds, and actually begin living from this truth, our world will emerge from the darkness into a spontaneous evolution. People like those in this story are thankfully, adding to the momentum."

To connect and learn more:

Bill Van Arsdale, *Meetup.com/naturalawakeningsnaplestribe*

Genai, *AllOnePeace.com*, 239-293-4839

Cathy Blair, 239-398-3953

Herb Herman, 239-641-8892, *hlh3628@yahoo.com*

Gwen Peterson, 239-595-1587, *MeetUp.com/Naples-Art-of-Allowing*

Joe Wallen, 239-450-6160, *fgsoe@gmail.com*

Panache Desai, *PanacheDesai.com*