

# Self-Empowerment

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The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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## The Mattering Map

Some time in the 1980's I read a book called *The Mind-Body Problem*, a novel by philosopher Rebecca Goldstein. It was a very powerful story about a female philosophy student at Princeton University who marries a troubled Mathematics genius. In the telling of the tale, she expounds on what she called the "Mattering Map" – a unique way of describing a way that people value an aspect of humanity and judge others based on what they value most. Before I share about my own mattering map, I offer this excerpt from Goldstein's book for you to reflect on.

*Everyone loves a hero. What we differ on is the question of who the heroes are, because we differ over what matters. And who matters is a function of what matters. Here in Princeton what matters is intelligence, the people who matter are the intelligent, and the people who matter the most, the heroes, are the geniuses.*

Goldstein points out that what matters to someone not only determines their heroes, but may also manifest itself in negative judgments on those who do not share the same values. For example, people to whom designer clothes matter may esteem couturiers, and those who are clothed by them, while those who are attired in indifference or bad taste are judgmentally dismissed out of hand.

When external things – like clothing, food, or music – become the object of one's mattering, it might lead to a snobbery that can have hurtful consequences. When one's greatest focus of mattering is physical beauty, athletic ability, financial success, or intelligence, one could be swept away with disdain for people who do not measure up to their high standards of what – and who – matters in this world.

I believe that harboring disdain for people who do not live up to one's mattering map's standards can lead to tragic results. If a particular political or religious standard is what matters most to an individual, the objects of their negative judgments may become targets of coercion, bullying, or some other form of violence, including the stripping of rights and freedoms.

## Jill's Mattering Map

I struggled to put my finger on the bottom line of my mattering map. After reflecting on my favorite topics, it appears that my heroes are those who care about **Quality of Life**, for themselves and others. I feel deep respect and admiration for spiritual leaders, political leaders, teachers, and kind people who make a difference in reducing suffering in the world.

Quality of Life is at the heart of many causes, projects, and activities with which I get involved. While I am aware that *I can't do it all*, it sure doesn't stop me from trying to learn and do something about many issues that affect people's quality of life. I have been stretched to unhealthy limits in my life, trying to do too much, overloading my schedule with activities that seem essential at the time of my commitments. Then I listen to those who teach lessons of balance, rest, and recreation to put the brakes on for a bit... until I get caught up once again, enthusiastically saying yes to pursuing another aspect of a better quality of life.

Let's take a look at a few of my interests – or as I imagine – the *countries* that make up my personal continent of Jill's Quality of Life mattering map:

### Physical Health:

My quality of life had a major interruption as a breast cancer patient beginning in 2013. After submitting to standard medical treatments of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, I did much research to learn about healthy lifestyle changes that would help me reclaim a better quality of life as a cancer survivor.

I now look up to several health professionals who live a healthy lifestyle and are a great support to others. I found a wealth of information about essential components of preventing and curing cancer through Ty Bollinger's resources on "The Truth About Cancer" program <https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/> and Chris Wark's resources on <http://www.chrisbeatcancer.com/>.

One of Ty Bollinger's interviews with Dr. Veronique DeSaulniers suggested the following seven essentials for cancer prevention. I have taken these to heart and made some great changes in my life.

1. Let Food Be Thy Medicine
2. Detox
3. Balance Your Energy
4. Healing Emotional Wounds
5. Biological Dentistry
6. Specific Herbs, Supplements, Vitamins
7. True Prevention / Early Detection

In November 2014, my husband Rick and I were fortunate to find Dorothy Green, a holistic energy healer in New Jersey who assisted us both in some critical healing as well as in making some important and necessary dietary and lifestyle changes. <https://www.dorothyshealingcenter.com/> It was with Dorothy's help that over a short period of time we were able to stop eating wheat and sugar in 2015. We continue to maintain a mostly wheat-free and sugar-free diet, with only occasional "cheats" thanks to an abundance of available alternative recipes. Dr William Davis's Wheat Belly recipe book and many online recipes of various talented cooks offer delicious and nutritious offerings that we enjoy in addition to salads, vegetables, fruits, nuts & seeds, and our reduced consumption of meat, turkey, chicken, and fish. We enjoy our food, do not feel deprived, and enjoy benefits of our lower healthier weight. We let food be our medicine! I am happy to share more about this with those who are interested.

Our detox program started with efforts to reducing the toxic load on our immune systems from various chemical-laden household products. The first thing I did was to stop using static-free sheets in our dryer. I make other changes to cleaning products as I find better alternatives.

Balancing my energy and working on healing emotional wounds is an ongoing process. I exercise regularly to build strength, flexibility, and stamina. Some of my exercises also work on better posture and greater balance, which becomes especially important as we age. My exercise currently includes walking, stretching, deep breathing, and Country Western pattern dances. I'm strengthening muscles I didn't know I have. Hahahah!

I had old amalgam/mercury fillings removed and replaced by Dr. Zahra Afsharzand, a biologic dentist in Cherry Hill, NJ, as part of my effort to maintain a cancer-free health plan. <https://www.cherryhilldentalexcellence.com/>

We are open to the appropriate inclusion of herbs, supplements, and vitamins as we work with our new Functional Medicine Physician in Ocala, Florida.

True Prevention and Early Detection is essential to me as a cancer survivor. I am not afraid of mortality. This body of mine will eventually pass away. I will, however, do my part in honoring myself with every component of self-love and self-care that I am capable of while I enjoy a balanced and enthusiastic love of life.

#### **Politics:**

This year is the first time in a very long time that I am actively involved in politics. In an effort to support human rights, women's rights, LGBT rights, freedom of the press, free speech, and affordable health care, I have been calling my representatives in Congress, writing letters and postcards, joining with others who have similar values, making some financial donations, and participating in demonstrations. Progressives are the heroes in my mattering map, and I will continue to do my part in making a difference in the political arena. I would like to make efforts to understand the agenda of those on the opposite side of the aisle, but I have not been too successful so far. Maybe that can happen as time goes on under the current administration. I suspect that there are many on the other side of the aisle who are not being represented well in the current administration, so I will keep an open mind to see how politics plays out over time. May we endeavor to connect with other points of view for whatever compromises and pieces of legislation will support the rights and freedoms we all deserve.

#### **Spirituality:**

I have spiritual heroes: the Dalai Lama, Byron Katie, Eckhart Tolle, Michael Beckwith, Pema Chodron, and others. They are compassionate, inclusive, and shining examples of my concept of wholeness and healing. In my work as an Interfaith Minister and Religious Science Practitioner, I aim to follow Compassionate Wisdom as my guiding force, knowing that there are many valid paths to wholeness. Each of us has the potential to raise our consciousness for the good of all humankind and to move towards an end to suffering.

I meditate, pray, reflect, read, teach, learn, listen, and participate in spiritual community. Both spiritual and psychological lessons are available in abundance. While I do refer to God in some conversations, I have found that the word God holds much unhealed baggage for many people. Various religions have other names for the Creator or Divine Consciousness, which can be a more comfortable way to examine our relationship to the infinite and eternal Being that is beyond our puny definitions.

I value the spiritual and psychological lessons that show up in many different areas of life. Relationships tend to bring up a huge number issues for us humans. Whether the relationship is a random stranger, casual acquaintance, companion, friend, or partner, many aspects of our beliefs get tested moment by moment. In addition to the content of our beliefs is the style in which we communicate, open to new understandings, and agree or disagree with one another. How we relate to other people, their words, actions, and other forms of expression, makes for a life of interesting and/or suffering experiences.

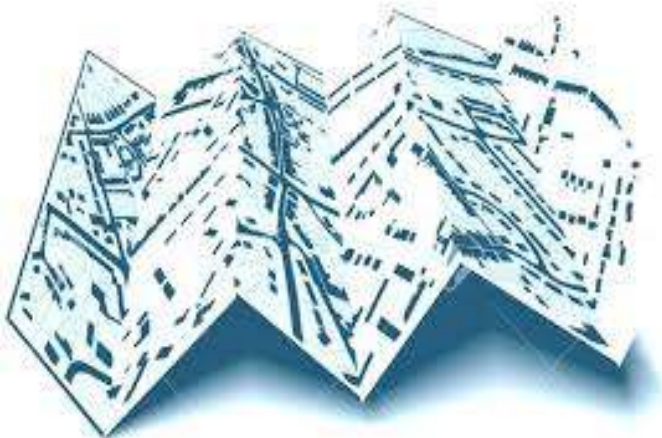
I currently see Quality of Life issues on my mattering map through the lenses of physical health, politics, and spirituality. I would like to see the end of suffering in humankind through whatever avenue can best address the particular issues. I would like to see decisions being made by individuals and groups with a cool head and a warm heart. The cool head is based on facts as we know them. The warm heart is grounded in the caring and compassion of those who endeavor to connect with both similar and diverse beings who populate our homes, communities, culture, and world.

What is on *your* mattering map?

Wishing you peace, respect, freedom, and love!

Blessings Always!

Your fellow traveler, *Rev. Jill*



## WHY HUMAN RIGHTS?

by the American Jewish World Service, Inc.

We believe that realizing human rights is the essential first step to building just societies. When people are empowered to pursue their own destinies and have a voice in shaping solutions to problems they experience, they are better equipped to overcome poverty, live with dignity and transform the lives of others.

We strive to overcome deep inequalities and injustices in society that are root causes of poverty and oppression. In addition to addressing immediate needs like food, jobs and healthcare, our grantees in the developing world advocate for people's essential freedoms—like the right to live without violence, the right to have a say in the laws that govern society and the right to express one's religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender identity.

While our grantees are defending these liberties and building movements to bring about lasting change in their countries, we're ensuring that the U.S. government does all it can to advance the rights of millions of people worldwide.

All people are equally entitled to human rights, a concept that is central to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which was adopted by the United Nations in response to the Holocaust. This modern tenet shares much in common with the Jewish belief that all human beings are created in the Divine image—infinately valuable and deserving of respect.

American Jewish World Service, Inc.

<https://ajws.org/who-we-are/resources/our-approach-to-human-rights/>

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## What are human rights?

by The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human

rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

### **Universal and inalienable**

The principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. This principle, as first emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, has been reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, for example, noted that it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems.



All States have ratified at least one, and 80% of States have ratified four or more, of the core human rights treaties, reflecting consent of States which creates legal obligations for them and giving concrete expression to universality. Some fundamental human rights norms enjoy universal protection by customary international law across all boundaries and civilizations.

Human rights are inalienable. They should not be taken away, except in specific situations and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law.

### **Interdependent and indivisible**

All human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights, such as the right to life, equality before the law and freedom of expression; economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to work, social security and education, or collective rights, such as the rights to development and self-determination, are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others.

### **Equal and non-discriminatory**

Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle in international human rights law. The principle is present in all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some of international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The principle applies to everyone in relation to all human rights and freedoms and it prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as sex, race, colour and so on. The principle of non-discrimination is complemented by the principle of equality, as stated in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

### **Both Rights and Obligations**

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfill means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights. At the individual level, while we are entitled our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others.

United Nations - Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner <http://www.ohchr.org/>

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."



# Wait! I Have a Plan

by Janet Detter Margul  
Plano, Texas, USA

When my daughter Lisa was in kindergarten, for her sixth birthday she asked if she could invite not only her whole class to her party, but the other class at school too. I probably turned pale at the thought of 60 kindergartners at a party because she said quickly, “Wait! Don’t say no yet. I have a plan.”

I was already thinking about how she’d been making a birthday wish list for weeks — that’s one way to get a lot of presents! But I let her tell me her plan. She wanted to invite a lot of people to a picnic in the park, and ask them if, instead of bringing gifts, they could bring food to give the food pantry.

Just the month before, her scout troop took a field trip to the local food pantry, taking canned goods we’d collected for a service project. Lisa explained that the lady there said it looked like they had a lot of food, but come spring all that food would be gone and many people would be hungry. She thought that if she asked for food for her party, the people wouldn’t be so hungry in May.

Well, I had to say yes to that, but I was worried she’d regret giving up all her birthday presents for food. I kept asking if she was sure she wanted to do this. Finally she explained, “Mom, you know I always get a bunch of junkie presents at birthday parties. I’d rather have food to give instead of those. Besides, the people who give good presents, well, you know they’ll give me food AND good presents anyway.”

So we had the party in the park, with a cotton candy machine, hot dogs, and jugs and jugs of lemonade. A ton of kids came, and some adults. Lisa was just beside herself when someone gave her TWO cans of food. Some gave big bags of food. It was like a one-child food drive. I was overwhelmed at how much food. We filled up two station wagons with it.

There was too much to take home and then take to the food pantry later, so we went straight there from the park. We arrived pretty late in the day, close to closing time. My tiny

kindergartner marched into the building and told the volunteer at the desk, “I’ve got some food to give you.”

The volunteer smiled down at her and said, “well, bring it on in, honey.” Lisa said “but it’s a LOT of food,” so the volunteer got a shopping cart to help Lisa bring in her donation. The volunteer was obviously thinking of a “child’s size” donation but, once she saw all the food, she just boggled.

Lisa handed her one of her party invitations “so’s you know how I got so much” and the volunteer started to cry. I, and the other adults, joined her. Lisa looked up at us and announced, “Stop crying. I’ll help carry it in.”

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“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Daily Word

*I express divine love and understanding to all.*

When I tune in to news of terrorism, racism, climate change, and more, I may wonder if there will ever be peace in our world. Yet I am also familiar with the deep peace found in the presence of Spirit. Peace begins with each one of us, and I have the power to access it at any time. Through divine peace, I learn to express divine love and understanding to all.

I take a moment now to turn off the news and breathe into the peaceful presence within. Here I find a sense of hope for the world. Engaging the power of imagination, I envision humanity acting with respect for all life. I glimpse the realized potential of a world at peace. I know we can and will achieve peace – one breath at a time.

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