

bed-sheets, a telephone ringing at the nurses station outside my door, the IV needle stinging in my arm, sunlight shining through the window, pressure and constriction with each breath, cool air on my cheek. These simple events now took on new meaning in the hospital setting where I found myself living and struggling to breathe.

These blessings and teachings allowed my heart to open, even with relative strangers like the hospital staff. I realized that I was part of their life, their job, what they did every day. And they were part of my life, my lifeline in the hospital. We were inextricably linked, bonded into the fabric of each others lives, even if only for the moment. By experiencing this in my heart I felt alive and present in the hospital rather than a sad, powerless victim of circumstances. This was how my illness acquired the flavor of a gift beyond measure.

"We are part of the whole. Realize that every breath in you and every drop of blood in you is the same life substance as in everybody else, and it's just as important and just as precious as that of everybody else." I felt now I more fully understood what Charlotte was trying to convey with those words.

After 13 days I was released from the hospital. I was given no specific diagnosis but the doctors told me, "It's a virus but we don't know what's causing it". Four liters of fluid had been drawn from around my heart and lungs during that time. Upon discharge I was taken outside in a wheelchair for a curbside pickup by my son. It was a great relief to feel a cool breeze touching my face in the morning sunshine bringing with it the realization that I was no longer engaged in a breath by breath struggle to survive.

Sensory Awareness Book Reading and Demonstration in Canada

By Mary Connely

(Mary is a member of the Sensory Awareness Leaders Guild who offers classes in New Brunswick Canada)

After receiving some information from the SAF suggesting that Sensory Awareness leaders consider having a book reading in our local communities to help promote the new book *Reclaiming Vitality and Presence*, I contacted the local bookstore to see what might be possible. As it turned out we were able to rent the large foyer of the Mount Allison University Art Gallery in Sackville. There was enough space there to demonstrate the actual practice of Sensory Awareness with all in attendance taking part. Posters were distributed throughout Sackville as well as other neighboring towns advertising the event.

A reporter from the local weekly newspaper interviewed me and ran an informative article about Charlotte and Sensory Awareness the week before the presentation.

March 26th, the evening began at 7 pm and ultimately there were 38 people who attended. I interspersed some readings from the book with actual demonstrations and experiments. I think that over the course of the evening everyone took part. The bookstore was present with books for sale. They actually sold out and took orders for more. We finished up at 9 pm with everyone agreeing the evening was a success.

New book on Sensory Awareness and Drawing

By Connie Smith Siegel

After many years of preparation, I am happy to announce the publication of **Spirit of Drawing. A Sensory Meditation Guide to Creative Expression.** a weaving together of my life experience as artist, university art teacher, and long time student and leader of Sensory Awareness. This new approach to creative expression began in 1972 as I explored drawing with fellow members of the first Sensory Awareness study group, starting in Mexico. When the group rejected my favorite university exercises, we explored the source of drawing more directly—in the sensations of movement, touch, weight, and space. From very simple drawing processes, often with eyes closed, we moved naturally to the magic of seeing and drawing the world, noticing the effects of each different perception on our state of being and drawing style. As we worked together it became clear that drawing is a natural language inherent in everyone, an important means of inner discovery and an intimate connection to the vitality and wonder of the world. From these first exciting beginnings on a porch in Barra de Navidad, I evolved the processes that appear in the book. The experiments presented are illuminated by many examples of students, colleagues, and well-known master artists, which can inspire, but leave the reader free to find their own creative way.

The book, published by Watson Guptill, is available on Amazon.com, and can be ordered in bookstores as well.



Charcoal drawing of a stone, influenced by the sensation of weight, by Liana Kornfield.