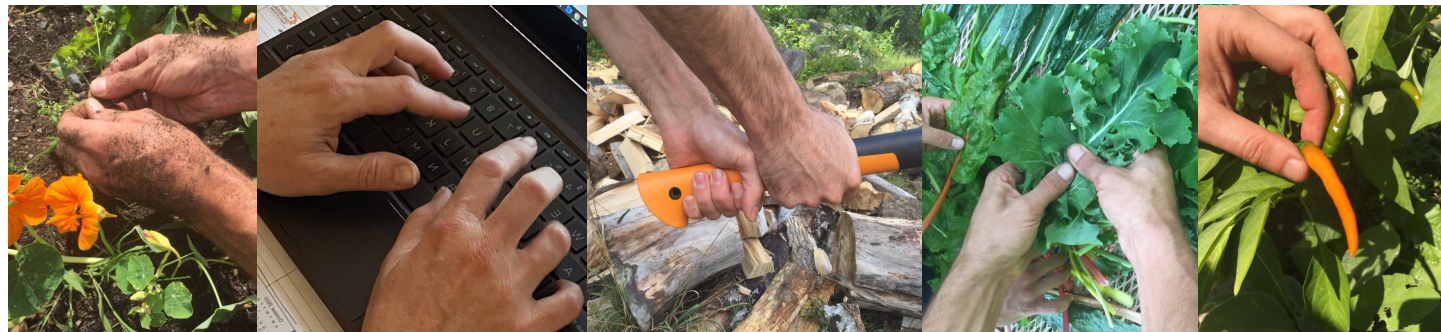




26 Parker Road
Brookline, VT 05345
<http://innerfire.us/>



In mid-October I had the pleasure of a full day and overnight experience at Inner Fire, sharing the day's chores, companionship, and art therapy with the staff, seekers, and guides. The visit both strengthened my belief in the mission and work of Inner Fire and allowed me time to listen to and re-center my inner self. I feel blessed to be a board member of Inner Fire so that I can, in some small way, assist it to continue and expand its wonderful work. David Dunn

Inner Fire Newsletter

Autumn 2020

Inner Fire Mission

Inner Fire, a healing community, offers a *choice* for adults to recover from debilitating and traumatic life challenges with minimal or no use of psychotropic medications. We believe in the power of choice.



Autumn 2020 Newsletter

Will Based Intelligence

**by Beatrice Birch,
Founder / Executive Director**



It seems people around the world have always been aware of the Head having a brain, an intelligence, the Heart having a brain, an intelligence and the Will also having a brain, an intelligence. Only recently in the latter part of the 1800's, was the intelligence of the Heart and Will ignored, favoring that of the Head alone. Curiously, in the late 1990s, the brain in the gut, (the Will) was rediscovered by an American neuroscientist, Michael Gerson. ([Reinventing Organizations](#), F Laloux, pg. 2).

Head intelligence, the intellect, may have little to do with 'free thinking'. Free thinking is an art as well as a will activity and is essentially what allows us to be unique Human Beings. Guided by our Will, Heart and Head based intelligence, with consideration and reflection, we can make 'free decisions', decisions not made impulsively but stemming from our whole self.

At Inner Fire we recognize and honor the Human Soul Forces of Thinking, Feeling and Willing. We grow to appreciate how all individuals are somewhere on the spectrum. For instance, giving extreme examples, we may know individuals who for one reason or another may be thinkers and feelers, (yet, without the Will, nothing gets done), others are feelers and doers, (yet, without the clarity of Thinking, chaos reigns) others are thinkers and doers, (yet, without the Feeling, this can be scary). At Inner Fire, we support the Seeker to recognize their strengths but also to appreciate their challenges and to work creatively to bring balance to their Soul, by awakening and calling upon their Thinking, Feeling and Doing.

Unfortunately, in our American society, schooling has been reduced to an education of the intellect, of the head, despite declarations of the importance of the arts and crafts as well

as physical activity for everyone of all abilities. Our children are expected to sit behind desks for hours at a time, a total antithesis to what nourishes a young person. Children learn by doing! Within our hearts, many of us know the importance of educating the whole human being. The over-medication of our children is a reflection of how, as a society, we are increasingly out of balance and out of touch with basic human needs. Medications are covering up the disservice we are doing to our children.

Educating only the head is leading to a psychotic society. Psychosis arises when we get caught in our heads and thoughts go round and round without an outlet. One Seeker, after splitting wood, declared: "I have just been splitting wood for two hours and it is the first time in years I have not heard voices!" Can you imagine what a powerful experience this is for someone tortured by aggressive voices who imagines they will have to live with the voices for the rest of their lives? At Inner Fire, Seekers experience that channeling their energy and getting into their will may leave little room for voices.

Our aim at Inner Fire is to support the balancing of the soul by providing a program which engages the whole human being. The will activities draw energy down into the body, encouraging the timid, wounded soul, which remains full of potential, to re-engage, to say 'yes' to being here on earth, to let-go of the trauma and breathe out through the support of artistic therapies. It all takes Time, Courage and Trust. It requires Faithfulness to Oneself and letting go of old unhelpful patterns. Healing is a process of developing inner soul harmony reflected in a balanced Thinking, Feeling and Willing. This work naturally leads to a connection with one's inner Charioteer, one's Divine Creative Self, one's Witness, the part of us which is never wounded, never ill. For more information about Inner Fire: www.innerfire.us



Engaging our Hands to Focus our Minds

Handwork at Inner Fire

by Victoria Mansuri, Handwork Guide

Handwork in general, and knitting in particular, is not just a skill used to make wooly scarves and hats. It is a therapeutic activity. Numerous studies have shown that knitting helps create calm through its repeated rhythmic movements. Both hemispheres of the brain are stimulated and harmonized when using both hands to knit and crossing the midline with each stitch (in the British method of knitting). As one Seeker observed, "I wish I had learned to knit as a child, it would have helped me focus and keep me out of trouble."

The senses are also enlivened through the various aspects of Handwork. The scent



of sawdust and beeswax that rises in the air as the Seekers sand and polish their own knitting needles; the different textures of wool, silk, and cotton against the skin; the rich colors of the yarn; these wholesome sensory experiences provide soul nourishment. The creativity and self-sufficiency that is born when a Seeker can knit on their own is a life-long gift. One Seeker recently commented, "Learning to knit is opening up a whole new world of artistic possibilities."

The first project Seekers make at Inner Fire is a woolen cover for a hot water bottle, to be used for a healing liver compress. Subsequent projects are considered, bearing in mind therapeutic aspects of each Seeker's personal journey. Handwork also brings a balance between the social and individual. Knitting around the hearth in a group, accompanied by stories and laughter, warms the heart. Creating alone, in the quiet of one's own company, is calming and centering.

Handwork is an integral part of the will-based, healing program that Inner Fire offers. As their skills develop, the Seekers see their clear progress and are proud of themselves. This builds greater confidence in their capacities and self-worth.

Poetry Night

By Amalia Pretel-Gray - Life Skills Guide

Every Tuesday, after dinner, our Seekers have a creative evening of writing with a wide variety of methods to elicit an enjoyable and engaging exercise in creating their poetry.

From a contemplative exercise, to using parts of speech, (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) to stream writing, the Seekers find concrete ways to write on the theme of the evening. Some themes we have covered include poetry on color, fear, flowers, and overcoming fear.

Stream writing, a method of poetry learned from poet Marie Perle, allows the Seekers to begin the evening with putting pen to paper, without pressure of spelling or grammar. Then, when underlining the themes from the steaming words, the Seekers create a beginning for their poem. Each Seeker, without fail, brings out imagery and feelings in unexpected renditions which inspire all participants, guides included! Every time a Seeker reads what they have written, they are surprised by what they have put together. In some cases, it was the first time that they may have written something meaningful to their current lives.

Sometimes, a pastel drawing might accompany the poem, after they have titled their poem. When each Seeker has shared and read the poem aloud, a feeling of satisfaction and declarations of how much fun it was, ends the evening, before retiring for Epsom salt foot baths!



Wave of Love - Poem by JP a Seeker

Green patch,
Stray cloud,
We spotted the reflective glint of a grinning
hound's drool,
The wandering whiff from a warm Halal truck,
A smile, a wave and on to the next,
A flutter down my spine like an agile child
Descending stairs, excited for greetings and
fanfare,
Not a worry in sight, as all shadows take flight
When the phosphorous sphere
Blankets all far and near,
Between columns, sits a soul,
Begrudged and unwhole,
For he lacked the secrets to soar.
Just one flick of the switch,
Albeit, tough, one admits,
Newly found from the lost,
We emerge, from the frost.
"Shake it off.
Just shake it off."

Gratitude - by JM a Seeker

I am grateful for the space I have found at
Inner Fire to reconnect with my inner life.
I am feeling so good in my body and curious
about life again.
I am sitting with uncertainty and curious how
the next moment will unfold.

Employment Opportunities

As our Seeker numbers increase, we are often in need of more staff. Would you consider being part of a healing community?
For current opportunities and more information, email laura.innerfire@gmail.com

Knifework in the Kitchen

By Julia Hampton, MS
Nutritionist and Chef

Seeker's spend one morning a week in the kitchen working with me to prepare lunch and dinner. This is a time for them to give back to the community and learn cooking skills to be more self-sufficient. Cooking is also considered a therapy at Inner Fire and another avenue for seekers to build their will-forces, which is all about being in one's body and executing certain actions.

One of the first things I do with seekers is teach them how to use a knife safely. This includes how to hold a knife so it is a strong extension of the person's hand and securely controlled by that person. Once holding the knife properly, I teach how to cut a variety of vegetables. To be successful chopping vegetables, one has to put a certain energy and strength from themselves into the slicing action of the knife to make a clean cut.

Recently, this lesson with a new seeker was a pivotal breakthrough. Engaging the proper technique of holding the knife and putting that personal energy into the action, he was able to successfully slice through the vegetables. He was so excited and empowered by the experience.

For some seekers it takes months for them to feel confident using a knife in the kitchen. With consistent coaching and en-



couragement, as well as directives to take control of the knife, they grow and build that will-force that can extend through them into the knife and slice through the vegetables.

Butternut Squash Soup

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and line a baking dish with parchment paper. Cut a **medium sized butternut squash** in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and coat the exposed flesh with ghee; sprinkle with **salt, pepper and nutmeg**. Place the squash cut side down in the pan. Bake for about 40 minutes or until the squash is very tender.

While the squash is cooking, dice a **medium sized onion** and mince **2 cloves of garlic**. Melt **one tablespoon of ghee** in a medium sized cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion and garlic until they become translucent. Turn the burner down to low and continue to cook until onions begin to caramelize (15 to 20 minutes), stir occasionally. When the squash is cooked, allow it to cool until it can be handled safely. Scoop out all the tender flesh leaving the skin. Place the squash flesh in a separate bowl; add the caramelized onion and garlic. Combine the squash, onions and garlic with **4 cups of chicken broth** and puree until smooth. Add more chicken broth to get the desired consistency. Taste and adjust seasoning. Heat gently and serve hot with your favorite toppings (i.e. **dry roasted pumpkin seeds, coconut flakes, pesto**, etc).



2020 Donations and Awards

We want to thank each of you for the support you have been to Inner Fire this year! Many of you have donated funds allowing us to continue offering individuals a choice to live without or with as few meds possible. While we may not see you each day, we carry you in our hearts and in our work! In the first three quarters of this year, you have given just over \$175,000! We are thankful that you have entrusted us to steward these funds in supporting choice!

Inner Fire Awarded the 2020 Subaru Share the Love

For every Subaru sold locally and nationally during November and December, Inner Fire will receive a generous donation. In addition, the national publicity which comes with this recognition will help the choice we offer to be more visible. Subaru's vision is to show love and respect to all people thereby making the world a better place. Thank you so much to those at Subaru who selected Inner Fire to be the recipient of such generosity! Perhaps some of our Friends are looking to buy a Subaru...why not in November?!



Needs and Wishes List

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Woodmizer for their very generous gift of a 50% donation for a Wood Mill for making boards out of the trees we fell. These boards will be used for building the goat barn and Thoreau cabins. Profits from developing a cottage industry: making picnic tables and Adirondack type chairs will be fed into our Support a Seeker Fund. Any donations toward the balance \$8,500 of the wood mill would be greatly appreciated.

- Conversion of garage into an office, preserving kitchen, apartment - \$20,000 to \$40,000
- Woodmizer saw mill - Balance of \$9,000
- Heat Pump to heat the office in the winter \$9,000
- Upgrading IT infrastructure - \$5,000
- Energy Efficiency for GBF - \$9,000
- AED Wall kit - \$1,450
- 5 Bicycles - \$1000
- gardening tools: spades, loppers clippers, hand clippers, gardening forks, fencing, hoses, wheelbarrow—\$500
- 5 pair of x-country skis- \$350 / pair
- 5 pair of Snowshoes - \$130 / pair



To make a tax deductible donation to Inner Fire, you may send a check to:

Inner Fire 26 Parker Road, Brookline, VT 05345