

Personal Transformation: Healing the Courageous Heart

**A Residential Course
December 4-6, 2009
In Virginia Beach, VA**

With Mary Elizabeth Lynch, M.A., J.D.

Theory Behind the Course

This highly experiential course is designed to help you make positive changes in your life, especially with your emotional life centered in your heart. When we consider the meaning of personal change, it's important to distinguish between **“improvement”** and **“transformation,”** two terms that are misleading but often used as synonyms. Both involve change, but one is more radical and ultimately much more significant than the other.

Improvement – or self-improvement – involves creating a better version of essentially the same person. It is a matter of polishing up or adjusting the Personality self – the familiar persona that we generally know ourselves to be and that we show to the world. All that is well and good. Self-improvement is a worthy endeavor, but we shouldn't kid ourselves into thinking that it results in genuine spiritual awakening.

Transformation is a quantum jump in our sense of self. It is the awakening of the Individuality – the soul essence of who we are. Both sides of us are important, but make no mistake about which is more important. As spiritual philosopher Edgar Cayce put it, **“PERSONALITY is certainly something NOT to be paraded or boasted of! Well to have, and necessary! if used properly! WITHOUT INDIVIDUALITY, you are nothing!”** (reading #257-79)

Transformation is a more challenging kind of change process because the Personality doesn't easily surrender its claim to be the whole of who we are. But unless we are willing to undergo an authentic transformation, something in the soul remains restless and unfulfilled. For many of us, **“issues of the heart”** are central to our capacity to undergo transformative change.

The human heart rests in the middle of our lives, and for virtually all of us, it stands in need of healing. Its basic nature is to be courageous – and, in fact, the root word for **“courage”** (**“cor”**) means the heart. Each of us has spent many years **“out of touch with who we really are,”** largely because of how our hearts have been wounded – starting with childhood experiences in which we learned what we had to do in order to get love. But this was a betrayal of our real selves – something that requires an inner transformation in adult life. In that transformative work, first comes self-acceptance/self-love in the heart, and then love pours out from our own hearts to the hearts of others. Our capacity to mentor and to help others along the path of personal growth in large part rests with our having done our own healing with these issues of the heart.

The Process of the Course

This is a very experiential course. There will be short lectures about key concepts, but overall we will have a minimal amount of **“left-brain”** explanations. Instead we will rely largely upon experiences and **“right brain activities”** such as:

- Guided imagery with meditative reveries and music;
- **“Energy Constellation”** work that puts us deeply in touch with transformative forces;
- Self-exploration exercises in carefully designed free-association for examining our inner lives – a process called **“Inquiry”**;

- Meditation that is practiced both by silent sitting meditations and the body movements of “Active Meditations” which were developed at a meditation center in India 30 years ago, especially for Westerners;
- Free movement or “unconditional dancing” to music
- Synchronicity that hints at life direction;
- Journaling invites inspirational writing and taps into our inner wisdom.

Location, Schedule, and Lunch

The course will be held at the A.R.E. Main Auditorium at 67th Street and Atlantic Avenue, in Virginia Beach, VA. The program will run each day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There will be a lunch break daily, for which you can bring a brown bag OR go to a nearby restaurant. Although there are no specific tasks to complete before the three days of the course, you might find it useful to keep a personal dream journal or a spiritual journal for the weeks before the class. When you come, plan to wear loose, comfortable clothing for the course. We will do some movement experiences, including some meditations that have not only times of stillness and silence but also movement portions.

To Register for the Course

Tuition for the three-day program is \$295 -- an enrollment called a "course sampler" by Atlantic University. This level of enrollment is open to anyone -- not just current Atlantic University students. Alternatively, these three days can also be part of a more extensive course that includes the three days in December plus two follow-up distance-learning modules to be done in the six months after December 5. This more extensive course can be completed as part of the certificate track program for the Spiritual Guidance Mentor training sequence. The tuition will be \$495 and the course designation is TS 582-c. The course can also be taken for-credit in Atlantic University's master's degree program. Contact the Atlantic University office to confirm the tuition level that would apply to you, but for most students this would be \$750, and the course designation would be TS 582. (If you wish to take the course for academic credit and you are not yet enrolled in the master's degree program, you will also need to go through the application and acceptance process, which the AU Director of Admissions, Candis Collins, can explain to you.) For any level of enrollment, call the Atlantic University business office at 800-428-1512 (or, for a local call: 631-8101).

For those coming from out-of-town, information about housing options is also available from Atlantic University.

Course Leader

Mary Elizabeth Lynch, M.A, J.D., is an educator, conflict transformation specialist, and an attorney/mediator. She holds a master's degree in philosophy and is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law. She teaches in Atlantic University's peace building program, and is a co-founder and president of the Personal Transformation and Courage Institute, where she serves as one of its principal course leaders.