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**I USED TO BE AFRAID I WAS GOING TO HELL**

**BY TERRI AMOS-BRITT**

***I remember about the age of 12 or 13, looking up at the yellow sky with angry looking clouds and asking, “Is this the second coming of Christ? Am I going to hell today?”***

**Terri, that kind of religiously-induced ignorance reminded me of the recent Miss America contest where all but 3 contestants said they did not believe in evolution. The only good news in that story, is that one of those 3 ... won. Terri, you were a beauty contest winner, weren't you?**

**Nice of you to go so far out of your way to prove the stereotype.**

***What a heavy burden for a child.***

**Terri, there is no heavier burden that a parent can place upon a child than religious indoctrination. Especially a religion that threatens them with eternal torture. Putting that kind of a burden on a child is "child abuse."**

***The idea of suffering in hell scared me to death.***

**Terri, the knowledge that I have to finish reading this essay ... makes me feel the same way.**

***It was that day, I believe, that I made a decision to always try to be good.***

**Terri, you didn't read your Bible very closely, did you? According to the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, salvation does not come from being good, but from belief in Jesus as the Son of God.**

***So I spent the next 20 years trying to do things “right.” I believed I had to be nice, put myself on the back burner, shut down my wants and needs, and always “act” good, so as not to receive God’s wrath.***

**Terri, rational people do many of the things you mentioned out of love and respect for those around them ... not because they are being threatened by an invisible monster. You just confessed to everyone that you had ulterior motive for being nice, and it wasn't because you thought it was the right thing to do.**

***It was in my effort to be good, however, that I lost myself. I felt angry, sad, often depressed, and a lot of the time hopeless. I felt alone. And I did not feel valued and loved. I thought that other people “made me” feel this way. However, this wasn’t the case at all. I suffered because I lived my life afraid of what might happen if I wasn’t good. I was afraid of God and being sent to hell.***

**Terri, it sounds like the realization that you were a dishonest hypocrite was finally getting to you. I would feel like crap too, if I was only nice and good because I was being threatened.**

**You must have wondered what would happen to you if the threat were removed: would you become a killer? A bank robber? Without that threat, what was there to stop you?**

**It's sad that you never realized that you had it within yourself all along to be a good, decent human being without the necessity of an invisible monster standing over you with a flame thrower.**

***In my mind, God was this man sitting on a throne just waiting for me to mess up. So, I continued to “perform,” always trying to “act” like a good girl. And in my effort to save my kids from pain, I pushed them to be good, too.***

**Terri, and all you ended up accomplishing was to subject them to the same grotesque indoctrination under which you had suffered. You performed the roll of a spreading cancer cell, perfectly.**

**All you really had to do was to be a loving parent and give them guidance. You should have left out the invisible monster, Terri ... He only gums up the works anyway.**

***For a long time, I believed the only reason I pushed my kids and myself was because I thought this was going to bring us all success and happiness. I didn’t relate this “push” to my fear of God and hell. I had pulled away from religion over the years and really didn’t think much about hell.***

**Terri, that is how most Christians deal with the concept of Hell. Because it was designed to be the most frightening place ever conceived, most Christians simply sweep it out of their minds and rely on God's promise of Heaven to save them. That is not dealing with the problem, Terri ... that is running away from it.**

***I just knew that in my effort to “make us all good,” I finally got to a point that I couldn’t stand my life.***

**Terri, let me get this straight: you have a loving family with good kids, and you are beautiful and smart enough to win beauty contests, and yet you "couldn't stand" your life anymore?**

**Terri, have you ever been outside the United States? Haven't you ever seen the abject poverty and danger that much of the world's population has to endure? And you have the nerve to complain about *your* life?**

**You sound like a completely self-centered, childish little brat.**

***I had no idea at that time what my “real drive to be good” was all about. I only knew that I had to make a change. So I made a decision to stop trying to “do things right” and, instead, love and accept myself unconditionally.***

**Terri, you headed in the wrong direction. You were already self-centered enough. Maybe if you tried focusing on others, like your kids, you might be able to find that happiness, that is so elusive in your life.**

***Interestingly, when I set an intention to heal my life, I was guided to an energetic school for healing. I learned tools to heal the false subconscious beliefs of how I thought I was “supposed to be,” otherwise known as “the good girl rules.” These hidden false beliefs are what caused my emotional pain. By releasing these beliefs, I began to love myself and discovered I had gifts as a clairvoyant and energetic healer. Boy, did I get flack for this!***

**Terri, you shouldn't have gotten flack for that ... you should have gotten counseling.**

**Terri, you're a nut. Whether religion induced it, or simply contributed to it, is hard to say from reading just one essay. But since I will never subject my brain again, to the assault it has experienced by reading one of your essays ... you'll have to figure that one out, yourself.**

***I had loved ones and friends completely back away from me for fear that I was working with the devil.***

**Terri, you've just identified another problem why your life is a complete shambles ... your friends and loved ones. They sound as wacky as you are. Be grateful they dumped you. It might be the only chance you've got to get back on the rails.**

***It was really hard to hear their accusations and comments like, “I’m afraid you’re being taken over by the Anti-Christ,” or “I’m scared you’re going to hell.” My whole body convulsed when I heard their remarks.***

**Terri, when you are surrounded by complete loons who live in a fantasy world, and you grant these tards the power to bring you to your knees, it's obvious that you are going to need help getting back on the rails.**

**Those would be the rails you were born on, before religion and a supporting cast of tin foil hats sent you careening into the underbrush.**

***Talk about breaking the good girl rules! Every fear about God and being sent to hell raised its ugly head. And yet, I knew deep down I was on the right path.***

**Terri, if you think you developed clairvoyant powers, then you are not on the right path. You are miles away from the right path and moving farther away with every step.**

***By using the tools I discovered while at the healing school and then implementing them into my daily life, I saw my emotional angst heal. I became more peaceful, happier, and felt a connection within that I had never felt. I was finally loving and accepting myself.***

**Terri, just like I said earlier ... totally self-centered. If you had directed that love outward toward your husband and children, you might have discovered that you wouldn't have needed to give yourself love.**

***Not only did I feel a connection within, I also felt a connection to the loving energy of God and the angels.***

**Terri, google "delusion."**

***I let go of the belief that God was a man sitting on a throne and began to feel God in everything. Whether it was a man on the street, an animal or something on the radio or TV, I allowed myself to experience God’s love and guidance in the world around me.***

**Terri, take a trip to Africa and tell us how well that belief works out for you when you pass by children on the street who will be dead in hours from starvation. Or how that works out when you see a group of young masked men hurriedly rushing up the street to bomb a church.**

**This essay has proven you to be a privileged, white, elitist snob ... who doesn't have a clue about the reality around her.**

***I made a commitment that instead of trying to be good, I would sit down daily to talk to the “other side” and surrender to the guidance.***

**Terri, I wonder if there is still time to notify Child Protective Services to get those kids of yours out of the house before something very bad happens.**

***I worked energetically with Christ and the angels, as well as spirit guides. I felt a connection to the whole universe! With each conversation, I began to slowly trust that they were here to guide and support me if I would just slow down and pay attention. But let me tell you, it was scary at times! More often than not, my guidance told me to break another rule in my mind of how I “thought I was supposed to be to receive God’s love and abundance.” But with each release of old limiting beliefs, I felt a deeper sense of peace, joy and unconditional love.***

**Terri, I was wrong about you. You are not someone in a tin foil hat ... you are someone who is trapped in a full aluminum suit.**

***Not only did I heal, but my family did as well.***

**Terri, that's probably because you were spending so much time in your little imaginary fantasy world that they were able to ignore you most of the time.**

***I no longer felt the need to control my loved ones to be good. I allowed them to be themselves. And in this acceptance, we all thrived! Fighting stopped. And the walls came down, especially between my hubby and me. Compassion, forgiveness, greater communication and intimacy became a way of life for everyone.***

**Terri, too bad you didn't figure that out decades sooner when you could have saved everyone all the years of grief. But then again, that's pretty much the price everyone pays for religious indoctrination.**

***Our unconditional love and acceptance at home soon flowed over to our friends, schools and community. Other kids came to our home to have a safe haven to talk and explore their feelings that they couldn’t share with their own families. Adults would come up to me and say things like, “Can I tell you about an experience that I had? I can’t tell anyone else.” People knew they could let go of their need to be good with us and find the freedom to be themselves. Healing not only happened with family and friends, but also with strangers on the street. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve crossed paths with others, for only a few brief moments, and have a healing occur for them.***

**Damn Terri, you make Mother Theresa look like a tinsel town whore. I can see why you want to share your marvelous gift.**

***As I have observed my life and others’ over the years, religious beliefs that cause pain and suffering have been the re-occurring themes. So I made a decision to go deeper and clean this up within myself.***

**Terri, the logical response would be Atheism. But first you would have to conquer your fear of Hell; and it doesn't sound like that has happened yet.**

***During prayer and meditation, I found myself doing more and more past life regressions of religious persecutions. I’m talking about past lives from centuries ago! Yes, I know. This is completely against what I was taught by religion. I was taught that THIS is it. And if you don’t get it right, you’re going to hell. But by energetically cleaning up these old past life beliefs, my relationship with God flourished. Once again, I was shown that the more I gave myself permission to be myself and release beliefs that weren’t true for me, I found a closer relationship with God. And, by recognizing and healing past lives, I finally knew that THIS is not it, and my beliefs about hell went away.***

**Terri, you're totally bonkers. But almost adorable in your sincerity.**

***I believe hell is here on earth. Hell is in our minds.***

**Terri, it sounds like you've found a way to tolerate yourself, at least for now.**

***We experience hell when we choose to separate from God by trying to be good. But when we go within and release hidden subconscious beliefs from this life or past lives, and give ourselves permission to live in our truths, we find God. The kingdom of God is within you.***

**Terri, if you are trying to prove that beauty and brains cannot coexist ... you've succeeded.**

***As you allow the kingdom of God to reside within you and stand in your truth, you love unconditionally. You release any fears of hell. You feel worthy of God’s love and support. And it is in this trust that you allow God to show up. I believe THIS is the second coming of Christ, not what I used to believe as a child.***

**Terri, you still are a child ... at least mentally.**

**Terri, I know this might not be a nice thing to do to someone as mentally fragile as you, but - you were right earlier about fearing God.**

**Luke 12:5:**

**"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."**

**See Terri, your religion is evil and monstrous. The God you worship is an evil monster. No human is that evil.**

***I believed that I had to “perform” to stay out of hell. But this is what caused my emotional pain and suffering and created my own hell on earth. If you’re living your life with a subconscious belief like mine, I don’t believe you’ll ever find true peace here on earth. But, and it’s a BIG but, when you allow yourself to be an expression of God, loving and accepting yourself unconditionally, you give birth to the Christ within and find peace on earth.***

**Terri, now that your essay has finished I must go find a high-powered hose and shoot water into my ear. It's the only hope I have to restore my brain to the condition it was in, before you filled it with your crap.**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Help for a scarred heart:**

**Scarring cells turned into beating muscle**

**Physicians know that a scarred heart cannot beat the way it used to, but the science of reprogramming cells offers hope.**

**Biomedical engineers have turned cells common in scar tissue into colonies of beating heart cells. Their findings could advance the path toward regenerating tissue that's been damaged in a heart attack.**

**Previous work in direct reprogramming, jumping straight from a cell type involved in scarring, to heart muscle cells, has a low success rate. But researchers think they know at least one of the missing factors for better reprogramming.**

**Many reprogramming studies don't consider the environment that the cells are in – they don't consider anything other than the genes. The environment can dictate the expression of those genes.**

**To explore how the cells' surroundings might improve the efficiency of reprogramming, researchers attempted to turn scarring cells, or fibroblasts, into heart muscle cells while growing them in gels of varying stiffness. They compared a soft commercial gel with medium-stiffness fibrin, made of the proteins that link with platelets to form blood clots, and with high-stiffness collagen, made of structural proteins.**

**The fibroblasts came from mouse embryos. To begin the conversion to heart muscle cells, they infected the fibroblasts with a specially designed virus that carried mouse transgenes – genes expressed by stem cells.**

**Fooled into stem cell behavior, the fibroblasts transformed themselves into stem-cell-like progenitor cells. This transition, which would be skipped in direct reprogramming, encouraged the cells to divide and grow into colonies rather than remaining as lone rangers. The tighter community might have helped to ease the next transition, since naturally developing heart muscle cells are also close with their neighbors.**

**After seven days, they changed the mixture used to feed the cells, adding a protein that encourages the growth of heart tissue. This helped push the cells toward adopting the heart muscle identity. A few days later, some of the colonies were contracting spontaneously, marking themselves out as heart muscle colonies.**

**The transition was particularly successful in the fibrin and fibrin-collagen mixes, which saw as many as half of the colonies converting to heart muscle.**

**A number of challenges stand between current techniques and healing hearts by reprogramming scar tissue. Researchers need an effective way to wake up the stem cell properties without the use of potentially risky viruses. Also, the scar tissue needs to be altered so that cell reprogramming – or even new heart cells prepared outside the body – will take well.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) 42 years.**

**He was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher. He wrote critical texts which displayed a fondness for metaphor, irony, and parables. Much of his philosophical work deals with the issues of how one lives as a "single individual," giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking, and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment.**

**He was extremely critical of the practice of Christianity as a state religion. His psychological work explored the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices.**

**Kierkegaard said that while scientists can learn about the world by observation, he emphatically denied that observation could reveal the inner workings of the spiritual world.**

**By the mid-20th century, his thought exerted a substantial influence on philosophy, theology, and Western culture.**

**“There are two ways to be fooled.**

**One is to believe what isn't true;**

**the other is to refuse to believe what is true.”**