

*Adam, age twelve, his brother Bruce, thirteen, and a new kid are playing a game, sitting around one of the red tables in the hanging-out room. I greet them. In Adam's eyes something lights up. Not a big light, but something.

»»

GIORA: Do you want to do some art?

ADAM: Yes, but I'll wait till they finish the game.

BRUCE: Why?

ADAM: Because I don't want to be in the art room alone.

»»

At this open-center program adolescents from the neighborhood are welcome to drop in. They can choose to participate in a variety of activities, including the art studio.

I wander into the kitchen at one end of the room and check what the cook has made today: some dark cake, chocolate chip cookies, and sweet tea. The room is empty except for the three boys and Marvin, the social worker. Marvin has lost weight and is always smiling a bit too easily. You can feel how sadness and fear are close to the surface.

»»

GIORA: You know, you're not going to be alone there.

ADAM: Why?

GIORA: Because I'm going to be there too.

»»

They all laugh. Adam gets up and follows me to the art room.

»»

GIORA: The thing is to not plan anything. Just do whatever comes to you from inside. Whatever idea shows itself in your imagination, just do it right there. Use what comes to make the painting beautiful to your eye. You know what you like, so you can always create something you like. It's easy: if it doesn't come out the way you want, just change it until you're happy with it.

»»

We each take a set of watercolors. We choose brushes and share the water in the middle between us. As we paint together, I only see what he is doing in the periphery of my field of vision. He makes a broad circling line and paints different colors inside it. When he finishes I only get a glimpse of his work.

*The names of my clients have been changed throughout the book.



I sense that he's very satisfied. He's proud. He runs with the painting to his brother. He leaves me with, "I'll be back."

I wait awhile. I finish my painting. I go back to the hanging-out room. The two others are still playing. Adam is sitting next to them and he doesn't show any emotion. He sits there as if he has been there all the time and nothing has happened. I don't see the painting.

»»

GIORA: Where's your painting?

BRUCE: It was nothing.

GIORA: What do you mean? He liked it and it was beautiful.

BRUCE: No, he doesn't like it now.

GIORA: So where is it?

BRUCE: In the garbage.

»»

I find the crumpled painting in the big garbage can in the kitchen. I smooth it out on another table, next to the one they're sitting at. Adam turns around and looks at it with me.

»»

GIORA: Imagine that I'm as small as this little white dot on the table. Now I fly above the painting and land here, on the blue. Look with me there. What do you think I feel?

ADAM: Bumpy.

»»

It's a good answer. He is sensitive and open.

»»

GIORA: Now look at the color. What would this color make me feel?

ADAM: Sad.

GIORA: All right. Now I'm flying to this black part. I stand there, very small, and I'm looking around. What do you think I feel there?

ADAM: Confused.

GIORA: Okay, confused. Now I'm moving to this violet part. How do I feel there?

ADAM: Anger.

GIORA: Right, I feel anger here. And what do I feel here, on the green?

ADAM: Good.

GIORA: So here I feel sad. Here I feel confused. Here I feel angry. And here I feel good.

ADAM: Yes.

GIORA: Now let's imagine that I fly to this point in the middle, right where the tips of all the colors come to one point, where they all touch each other. There I stand, right among all of them. I look around. What do you think I feel there?

ADAM: Life.

GIORA: Yes, life, which includes sadness, confusion, anger, and goodness. A complete life. You see? There is a complete life in this painting. We don't throw such a thing away. It's beautiful. I'm going to hang it on the wall.

ADAM: Okay.

»»

This Book Is About Healing and Growth



In the short scene that you have just read, a step in healing and growth happened and it included, almost magically, a short version of the whole process of every healing. It started with an ongoing situation of a young person denying himself the possibility of being who he is, because he so desperately wants approval from his brother. Into this state, something new is introduced, a process of art making which emphasizes listening to one's own heart. Doing this process, Adam has a glimpse of the happiness that naturally appears when we follow our own heart.

Then an inner automatic, subconscious program kicks in. He desperately wants his brother's approval. He starts to fear that by trusting himself, he is going to lose his brother's support.

His brother does not approve and Adam sinks into listlessness, which is the natural result of not listening to your heart. If you don't follow your heart, what is there to live for?

Through the process of looking at his painting, Adam goes from seeing the ruinous result of giving up his joy (bumpy) to being sad, then confused (a step before things become clearer, when the old paradigm is shaken and a new one hasn't appeared yet), and then angry (the first step of climbing out of depression), and finally to knowing that it is possible to feel good.

Seeing all these changes in himself, Adam realizes that he is able to be a witness to his own life. He sees a complete process of healing, from the best position, that of awareness, which sees everything indiscriminately, allowing the process of healing to unfold and giving us deep wisdom.

You may wonder how it was possible to create the right order of Adam's experiences and how a healing experience could happen so fast. All this took place easily, playfully, and effortlessly, because it all happened intuitively. A similar process will have to happen more times for the healing to be final but this was an important step.

If you belong to the therapeutic milieu you have learned to use diagnosis. First you define the client's diagnosis. Then you decide on a way to change the diagnosis into something that is considered healthier in our society. So the diagnosis is the

“problem,” if you look at it this way.

Of course, underlying the diagnosed condition is a private system of thoughts and beliefs that cause it to be so. And many times, underlying this is an even deeper layer of thoughts and beliefs. If this is followed all the way to the core belief, the one that started the whole process that created suffering, we find that at the core of all mental suffering there is always one and the same event: the blocking of intuition.

This book introduces a process of healing from emotional distress or wounds that does not make use of diagnosis. The first part of the book introduces intuition and explains how its role in development creates the possibility of happiness and its lack creates suffering. It follows that creating intuitive flow has to be the first fundamental step in therapy, so that healing can happen.

Later in the book I will show you how to create intuitive flow in art making, how to read what intuition says, and how to use this communication with the unconscious part of yourself or others to heal and grow.

There are several examples of this process in the book, taken from sessions that I had with my clients in my work as an art therapist. They show how the process is done when there is a therapist and a client. But you can also use it independently to work on your own issues that need resolution. In my blog www.intuitiveflow.org I show how I do this. By doing this work on myself I have become a much better therapist for my clients and I have healed and evolved in major ways. This can happen for you too.

This book is about a very effective way to heal, for your clients and for you. It works thoroughly and relatively quickly. At the same time it is one of the easiest and most beautiful paths to freedom.

We have all experienced loneliness, being unsafe, and needing assistance. These feelings drive us to betray what is true for us and to take on other people’s opinions instead of trusting our own. These are the feelings that make us work at jobs that we don’t really like, as an example. To overcome these feelings, usually we try to connect with other people and resolve the issue with them. But this never works permanently or even satisfactorily.

The only way to truly fulfill the yearning for safety, support, and trust is to connect with who we really are, our authentic self, which is accessible through listening to intuition. In this way we can gain knowledge through experience. You can call it knowledge of the heart. It is not my heart or yours alone, but the heart of all of us. We are all loved and supported by this heart. This book gives a way to know this experientially.

A Few Words About Myself

I was born in Israel four years before the 1948 war by which Israel became a state and my father was killed. The main feeling that I had as a child was the loneliness that I mentioned above. I yearned to be connected to complete love and acceptance but felt that I could not get those from the people around me. I found very early that if I followed my heart I felt better, and my life became a series of changes of occupation, each one answering my heart's desire more precisely. I started out as a graphic designer and excelled in typography. I became interested in illustration and started to incorporate more and more illustrations into my work as a designer. Before long I illustrated many children's books and worked with almost all of Israel's magazines and newspapers. I came to the United States in 1985 and worked exclusively as an illustrator. I worked regularly for the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal and illustrated many more children's books, including two that I authored myself.

Throughout my life there have been two significant continuing experiences that have determined my direction. One of them is a strong, stable connection to making fine art. I have continued with this consistently, creating paintings, sculptures, and installations. The second was a series of spiritual experiences that kept telling me that there was more to existence than met the eye. Along with those experiences, I had the inborn ability to read art. I could look at a painting or any kind of art and know what the artist felt when he made it. This ability grew and expanded. Today I can sit at home and make an intuitive painting about any person, and feel what goes on with them on a subconscious level.

I became deeply interested in Zen Buddhism when I was twenty-two. Four years after coming to the United States at age forty, and after surviving throat cancer, I started to study meditation with the late Chinese Chan Master Sheng Yen. I stayed with him for twelve years and during this time the way I see the world changed dramatically.

In 2002 I went to New York University to study art therapy. I was fifty–eight years old. I saw deficiencies in the way art therapy was done and knew that I would have to find my own way. An experience in meditation showed me the way. I was in a deep state and when I came out of it, one clear thought came to my mind: Now, after seeing this, it does not make any sense whatsoever to do anything in the world that is not the most beautiful that you can.

That thought became my guide for creating my method of Intuitive Flow. I discovered that if we follow only our sense of beauty as we make art, the art becomes a flow of intuition. I called it my method, but the aim of this book is to offer it to you, so it will become your method too, if you like it.