

East Coast Gathering Retreat for Highly Sensitive People
Menla Mountain Retreat Center, Phoenicia, New York - www.menla.org
October 2 - 6, 2008

Note: All activities and programming are optional following the motto at all Gatherings which is "Focus on Needs, Not Approval."

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Welcome to Fall in the Catskill Mountains, Upstate New York

- Noon - 5:00 pm** You can arrive as early as Noon !!! Arriving early lets you relax, and get familiar with your surroundings. Look for check in signs.
- 5:30 pm** Meet, Greet & Share - Please bring the latest book you are reading, or current CD you are enjoying. This will be our informal HSP "ice breaker."
- 6:00 pm** Dinner
- 7:15 pm** **Welcome to the 15th HSP Gathering Retreat !
the first one on the East Coast since Pennsylvania in 2005**

Orientation & Overview to our 4 days together -

- General Norms: Focus on Needs, Not Approval; Quotes Worth Remembering; Housekeeping Things
- Learning - from the presentations and each other
- Applying what we've learned
- Leisure & Social Time - Use this time to explore the area, join in a group activity - or to nap, journal, spend time alone in nature. Or create your own Conversation Café discussion on a topic of your choice.

Group Introductions - Optional Sharing - 'Passing' is always an option

- How/when did you find out about the HSP trait?
- How has it changed your life?
- Share one thing you have learned that has improved your life as a HSP. Share one thing you are still working on.
- What do you hope to take home with you from this Gathering?

- 9:30 pm** Adjourn for the evening.

Friday, October 3, 2008

- 8:00 am** Breakfast
- 8:45 m - 9:00 am** (Silent) Group Meditation - Please wait outside the door if arriving after 8:45 am
- 9:00 am** Welcome to the Morning's Discussion Groups
Introducing the Conversation Café Discussion Model
www.conversationcafe.org

Conversation Cafes have become a *favorite staple* of the HSP Gatherings. We'll spend 15 minutes introducing the concept to prepare you to use this excellent model for those deeper HSP conversations we all thrive in being a part of.

We all know how HSPs enjoy and gain energy from deep, meaningful and authentic dialogue. However, we also know that sometimes it can be difficult, if not impossible, to find these types of conversations to engage in - or worse, that we seem to be only ones wanting to explore the deeper meaning of life's sometimes perplexing questions.

Choose from an extensive list of HSP topics provided to explore in groups of 4-5. Assign a recorder to make note of those inevitable "Quotes Worth Remembering." We will record these on our flip chart papers and also share them with the group when we reconvene.

11:15 - 11:45 Reconvene with large group to hear report from Recorders and any "Quotes worth Remembering."

Noon Lunch

1:00 - 2:00 pm Free time

2:00 - 5:00 pm **The Journey to Belonging for the Sensitive -
Tools and Challenges on the Journey
with Jessica Thayer**

The journey of the HSP is lifelong. Stepping fully into your gifts and developing a personal owner's manual involves acquiring an adequate vocabulary for your unique ways of perceiving and attending to experience. As you evolve, there is a requirement to clear subtler levels of attachment to cultural expectations. Adept at taking care of your needs, you begin focusing on the nature of your gifts. You will continue to refine how you use your gifts. As you grow, you step into new levels of engagement with the world and find new ways to advocate for, and nourish, your authentic self. Jessica will offer tools and concepts for this journey.

Jessica Thayer's background includes graduate studies in the fields of education, social work and environmental studies. Training in art therapy, sensory integration, play therapy and educational kinesiology illustrated how much of healing involves engaging wisdom and experience which is not consciously available to the client. As a certified educational kinesiologist Jessica discovered a gift for attending to the places of unique and previously undetected conflicts in individuals. In 1993 a car accident propelled Jessica into a decade long healing crisis. The healing journey brought her fully into her gifts and honed her capacity to identify subtle and elusive qualities of the HSP's experience. Learn more about her work and philosophy at: www.jessicathayer.com

5:00 - 6:00 pm Free Time

6:00 pm Dinner

7: 30 - 9:15 pm **ART NIGHT** - Hosted by Jackie Kutner, Bronx, New York

Join us in this creative time of images, words, music, visions, and your own creativity. What images and words are you attracted to? Why? What images or words resonate with the HSP part of yourself? Why? Making a personal collage is a soothing way to settle in for the night and possibly help create some pleasant dreams. Music, candles (if no sensitivities to candles ☺), materials provided. No experience necessary. Bring your favorite CDs to share, your knitting, journal, or just yourself to sit by the fireplace.

Saturday, October 4, 2008

8:00 am Breakfast
8:45 am - 9:00 am Group Meditation

9:00 am - 12 Noon **Using Energy Medicine for HSP Self-Care and Wellness
with Sarah O'Doherty**

We all know the Highly Sensitive Person's nervous system is more refined than 80% of the general population. The challenges of living in an over stimulating environment can cause our bodies to sometimes become suddenly fatigued or to close down.

The good news is that our more highly refined nervous system is precisely what makes us particularly adept at learning, utilizing and receiving the many benefits of the alternative "energy therapies" that have been emerging in recent years.

In this workshop you will learn:

- the basics of how the HSP energy system works
- how to protect and maintain your own personal energy system, especially when it needs some support
- a short daily maintenance routine to keep your energy system strong
- ways to lessen anxiety and stressful responses in daily life
- an introduction to two meridian therapies which can help you clear 'issues' as they emerge in daily life.

These simple techniques, which are useful for all people, will be specially adapted for HSP's in this workshop. It will pull from the work of Donna Eden's *Energy Medicine* as well as the meridian therapies: Emotional Freedom Technique® and Tapas Acupressure Technique®.

Sarah O'Doherty, M.Ed. is an HSP who works as a teacher of self-healing techniques and a guide for people on their journey towards healing and wholeness. She has a healing practice in Philadelphia and in Vermont. Sarah is certified to teach Emotional Freedom Technique® and Tapas Acupressure Technique®. She is also a graduate of the four-year program of studies at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing. These techniques have helped her immensely as an HSP and she is pleased and passionate to share them with other Highly Sensitive Persons. www.portalofgrace.com

12:00 pm Lunch

2:00 - 6:00 pm "Retreat Time" - Take the afternoon off for a group activity, a Conversation Café discussion, journaling, napping, hiking or whatever you desire.

6:00 pm Dinner

7:30 pm - ? Movement and Dance - Dancing has been a delightful surprise at past Gatherings - yes, even for introverts! Bring your favorite CDs for listening or dancing.

Sunday, October 5, 2008

8:00 am Breakfast
8:45 - 9:00 am (Silent) Group Meditation

9:00 - Noon **Option A**
The Myers Briggs Personality Inventory
Jacquelyn Strickland, LPC

"What you are is God's gift to you...what you become is your gift to God" and "Gifts Differing" describes my philosophy in utilizing the MBTI as a gift for understanding ourselves, others, and how we operate in the world. We'll discuss this in light of our sensitivity, and gain tips on manifesting our gifts in the world! *The Myers-Briggs Inventory has an additional \$45 materials fee, payable with your registration, and includes an extensive handout package which will be mailed to you after the Gathering.*

Part One: After learning the 8 preferences and what they measure, you will self identify your MBTI type and use the statistically valid and reliable 93 question inventory for final clarification.

Part Two: You will learn about the Dominate, Auxiliary, Tertiary and Least Preferred functions of your type identified in Part One. This is perhaps one of the most overlooked, yet crucial aspects to learning about type and how to use it in your life.

Jacquelyn is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Coach and workshop leader based in Ft. Collins, Colorado. She has been certified to utilize the Myers Briggs Personality Inventory since 1991. Her counseling and coaching practice combines therapeutic orientations, and coaching principles with a spiritual foundation. She is also a Level II EMDR therapist and works exclusively with HSPs, adolescents and families – assisting them toward optimal health and happiness. Visit her web site at www.lifeworkshelp.com or call (970) 484-0840, or email womenoutdoors@yahoo.com

Option B - Conversation Café - Hosted by: Peter Messerschmidt

If you have already taken the Myers Briggs Personality Inventory and are satisfied with the accurate assessment of your type, you may want to take this opportunity to join in another Conversation Café dialogue experience.

Noon: Group Picture - Please be prompt; bring your camera & be sure to check your batteries

12:15 pm Lunch

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm **Dr. Elaine Aron**
HSPs & Self-Esteem

The pain caused by shame and rejection is registered in the brain as if it were physical pain. No wonder that if we have experienced very much of these we go through life trying to avoid them in the future. We do that by expecting the present to be like the past--we expect rejection and defeat before we know enough about a situation to see what it is actually about. How sad. But much of this is pure instinct, so it is not always banished with an affirmation.

In keeping with my new book on love and power--now tentatively named *The Undervalued Self* (probably to appear in spring 2009)--I will talk about the many reasons HSPs have for undervaluing themselves, from cultural to innate to the effects of the interaction of our trait with trauma. Then we will think about how we can better handle each, according to its roots.

2:30 pm - 3:00 pm Break

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm **Questions & Answers with Elaine**

As we know, **Elaine Aaron, Ph.D.** is a research psychologist and author of *The Highly Sensitive Person*, *the Highly Sensitive Person's Workbook*, *the Highly Sensitive Person in Love*, and *the Highly Sensitive Child*. She holds a master's degree in clinical psychology from York University (Toronto) and a doctorate from Pacifica Graduate Institute. She also studied at the Jung Institute in San Francisco. She is a widely published research psychologist, a workshop leader, and has a private psychotherapy practice in San Francisco. She divides her time between San Francisco and New York. You may reach her office voice mail at (415) 765-7617, and her web page at www.hsperson.com

4:00 - 6:00 pm Free time

6:00 pm Dinner

7:30 pm **Creativity Night - Another Favorite of HSP Gatherers**

This has always been a *very special night* at the HSP Gathering Retreats. It is a time for you - our dear creative HSPs - to shine. Please consider sharing your own creative talent which might include poetry, art, music, song, dance, monologue, photography -- or whatever you would like to share. Sign up with our HSP Master of Ceremonies volunteer.

Monday, October 6, 2008

8:00 am Breakfast with plenty of time left to pack your things to be out of your room by 10:00 am

10:00 - 10:15 am (Silent) Group Meditation

10:15 am Our group's final gathering - until next year

This is always a special time of closing. We will take 5-10 minutes in silence to write our thoughts -- sharing your experience over the last four days. You might consider asking:

- If your hopes and expectations for attending were met?
- Did you experience any epiphanies you would be willing to share?
- How has this experience changed your life?
- What will be different upon your return home?

Noon: Lunch is on your own -

Next HSP Gathering: April 2-6, 2009 Somerset, England
Croydon Hall