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# Living in the Balance

December 2011

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*The second  
star to the  
right.....  
Shines with a  
light that's  
rare....  
And if it's  
Never Land  
you need.....  
Its light will lead  
you there.....*

From Peter Pan

It wasn't until I heard myself laughing that I realized how long it had been since I heard myself laughing. I think it was Nana, the dog, that first brought a chuckle. And Peter Pan soaring through the air and into the nursery brought a smile, too, when I heard the children in the audience gasp, "He's flying!" Indeed, he was flying. Magic was all around us. But it was the appearance of the crocodile that made me laugh out loud. Looking much bigger than life-sized, the plushy green croc rolled across the stage in a screen of hazy fog stopping mid-stage to glare at the audience with big, beady, red eyes as if to say, "I see you....I see you *all*.....beware.....you are not any safer than Captain Hook!" And we laughed. At intermission, I came out of the Peace Center ladies room. A little boy of about four stopped me and started telling me a fascinating story about the two stuffed green crocodiles he held in his hands. His eyes were bright and pleading, and he was preaching the gospel of magic to me, "And SEE.....they were kissing....JUST LIKE THIS. I can make them kiss. SEE??!!!" as he smacked their little green mouths together. "Yes, I see," I said and smiled.

And I did see. I saw the amazement of a child, and it connected right inside of me with a long ago, little girl I used to know. I had really forgotten her. She believed in magic, too. She used to pretend that if she sat in the kitchen chair and wished hard enough that she could make it lift off the floor. She built little houses for her dolls in her father's workshop. All the dolls played and danced. She made magical costumes out of her mother's scarves and put her treasures and secrets in her grandmother's old pocketbooks. And watching Peter Pan, I remembered her.

I envy people who grow up and are able to keep their sense of play and mystery and magic. My husband is one of those people. He can make my nieces squeal with delight with a made up game using a napkin and a salt shaker. That ain't me. I find myself feeling much more like my inner Edgar Allen Poe rules the roost, "Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary." Yes, Poe and I can brew up quite a pot of gloom. The endless possibilities for my impending demise start with the first crunch of my cereal. Check the box. Is it whole grain? Sufficient fiber? Was it made with anything genetically modified? How much sugar? Am I getting adequate protein? I wonder if Dr. Oz has vetted this supplement? All before seven a.m.

Peter tells Wendy, "I have a place where dreams are born, and time is never planned. It's not on any chart. You find it with your heart. Never-Never land." I need a daily dose of Never-Never Land. A place where I allow myself to daydream and look at the world with wonder. To be soulfully seven again and to see all the possibilities that lie before me. And I know what that looks like. Dancing. Singing. Writing. Oh, yes, and laughing. I mean a real, snorting, iced tea out your nose, laugh. All these things can set my spirit free.

My soul's desire, though, is for Never-Never land to become some part of Each-and-Everyday land and not just Now-and-Then land. And being out in the natural world is what truly frees my spirit to soar. Feeling the dawn's cold, clear air and seeing first light. Watching the bare trees silhouetted against the red sunset sky of winter. Seeing the night sprinkled with stars and the full moon's glow over the darkened trees. That's this woman's wonder. But the real world of awe for me comes through taking photographs of Each-and-Everyday land. Turn me loose with a tripod. Let me bring that camera to my eye. Joy springs up as I hold my breath and then squeeze the button to release the camera's shutter and simultaneously my heart's deepest desire. And at that moment, I'm flying. ©Wanda Meade



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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Awakening the Soul Advent 2011 – December 4 -8**

John Philip Newell is the featured presenter  
Lutheridge Retreat Center, Asheville NC  
<http://www.llmi.net/adult/advent2011.aspx>

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### **Jung and Spirituality**

#### **The Human Experience of the Divine: C.G. Jung on psychology and spirituality**

Thursday, December 1

A web-based seminar with Murray Stein offered by the Asheville Jung Center

CEU's available

<http://ashevillejungcenter.org>

The Center offers a wide variety of resources and programs. Many are web-based and offer CEU's.

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### **Kanuga in Hendersonville, NC**

Krista Tippett host of NPR's "On Being" formerly "Speaking of Faith" will keynote  
Lansing Lee Conference Listening to Faith, December 4 – 6  
For more information see [www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **Southern Dharma Retreat Center in Hot Springs, North Carolina**

New Year's Retreat, December 26 – January 2

For more information [www.southerndharma.org](http://www.southerndharma.org)

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### **Abbey of the Arts offering a variety of on-line courses**

"Advent 2011: Birthing the Holy, Becoming a Monk in the World," "Way of the Monk, Path of the Artist," and  
"Eyes of the Heart....photography as a contemplative practice."

For information see [www.abbeyofhearts.com](http://www.abbeyofhearts.com)

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### **Engaging Faith Conference featuring Brian McLaren and Yvette Flunder**

Friday evening, February 24 and all day Saturday, February 25, 2012

Offered by NEXUS and to be held at Furman University.

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### **Life in the Second Half --- The Bowen Conference**

Featuring the Rev. Margaret Guenther and the Very Rev. Alan Jones

February 27 – 29, 2012

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

[www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **Machu Picchu and Peru's Sacred Valley – A Pilgrimage**

August 8 – 20, 2012

Offered by Jerry Wright, Jungian analyst, and Diana McKendree, Jungian psychotherapist.

The pilgrimage will include Peruvian teachers and guides.

For more information, contact Jerry Wright at [jwright@morrisbb.net](mailto:jwright@morrisbb.net) or call 770-656-3818

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### **Spirituality and Practice**

Offering many on-line retreats and programs, including some "on demand."

I just finished doing the James Hollis on-line course. It was excellent.

[www.spiritualityandpractice.com](http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com)





## About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

### You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

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For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone  
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*The photos are my work. Edgar Allen Poe is buried in a church yard in Baltimore, Maryland. I took this photo on Halloween.....two red roses had been placed at the foot of the tomb and pennies had been placed around the upper ledge of the tomb. Evidently the pennies' tradition originated to fund a proper burial site for Poe. The giggling girls are our great nieces. The little bikes were taken in front of a hardware store in Floyd, Virginia. The moon was taken out my back door last November. And the seed pods are from Sourwood Inn in Asheville.*

