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# Amazing Grace by Gita Bellin

Foreword  
June 2009

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I have known Gita Bellin for almost 30 years. I was introduced to her by the late Lionel Murphy, one time federal Attorney-General of Australia and later Justice of the High Court of Australia. She was instructing him in meditation. She later tried, ever so hard, to give me similar instruction. But at the time, although intellectually convinced of its merits, I was so pre-occupied, young and predictable, that I did not grasp the chance as I should.

Lionel, on the other hand, took Gita's advice. Soon afterwards, he was in great need of meditation and stress-control because he was subjected to tremendous pressure by allegations of improper conduct. A jury eventually dismissed the charges against him. But he did not survive long. Some people say that cancer cannot be caused by stress. Yet I have known too many (Lionel was one) to put out of the realms of possibility the triggering effect of intense stress and pressure upon deadly cancer cells. Certainly, it is a good thing to be at peace with oneself. Gita Bellin has a loving spirit that may not be able to stop intense stress, cancer and other diseases. But she can certainly help people through hard times and give wisdom to us all on how to cope with our lives and with the pressures that so often now accompany them.

My brother also suffered a huge loss in the 1980s. His beloved wife died from the effects of cancer. It was a devastating blow, leaving him with two young children. Gita Bellin was there for us at that time. Our family will never forget her kindness. She joins us all from time to time when she is in Australia, freed from her international work.

In the rush of daily life, I have no doubt that many casual readers might be tempted to dismiss the aphorisms and injunctions contained in Gita's work. They would regard them as Pollyannaish, self-evident, simplistic and unscientific. For some, perhaps, that would be true. Each one of us, as a spark of life, is on an individual journey. Words, which are only the skin of ideas, transmitted from one intelligence to another, have a different impact on each one of us. Reflecting on the unique capacity of the human species to transfer complex concepts and information from the unpromising physical cells of one brain to another, it is truly amazing that we can find help and solace by occasionally concentrating on words and sentences. And then translating them into the realities of our own unique lives. This is what Gita's book tries to do.

Reading through her injunctions, I could certainly see many packaged ideas that have been true for my own life and that caused me to smile. For example, her definition of joy as "a perception empty of judgment, expectation and condition" was sobering reading for a judge – or even a retired judge – given that judgment was what I was paid to do and to record over 35 years.

Likewise, her boast of "crazy ideas when I am young" causes me to think that maybe I did not have enough crazy ideas. All of the great leaps of the human imagination and science were originally the product of a certain craziness that defied orthodox boundaries. Her encouragement to us to search for our ability to be "outrageous" and to take risks may be easier said than done in many lives. Finding a median path between peace and inner calm and outrageous risk-taking to grow the spirit is a constant dilemma for all human beings.

And not every reflection should be pompous and solemn. I always thought there was a lot of truth in Peter Ustinov's declaration: 'I was irrevocably betrothed to laughter, the sound of which seemed to me to be the most civilised music in the world'.

The Confucian ethic and that of the Buddha encouraged followers to focus on words of wisdom and to meditate upon them. In the Occidental tradition too, there were habits of meditation and contemplation, but normally we reached for a God to pour our anthropomorphic prejudices into Him and to curse those who did not “unfailingly believe His holy” teachings.

Gita Bellin’s aphorisms encourage self-realisation, discovery and the quest for personal truth without necessarily denying the role of God or what she calls “the God Force”.

There is a lot of wisdom and grace in these pages. Now, 30 years since I first met her, I must find the time, before it is too late, to look inwards, to reflect upon the words written, and to puzzle more deeply over the amazing reality of our all too brief existence.

For the Amazing Grace that Gita Bellin has shared with many, and now extends to the readers of this volume, I say a heartfelt thanks.

Sydney

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