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LIFE & STYLE

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Soulman

Author wants to bring out the best of what's inside

By: [Carolin Vesely](#)
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Jeff Brown

"Some people pick up their tools, others become the making itself." -- Rumi

When asked how he created his masterpiece sculpture out of a block of flawed marble others thought worthless, Michelangelo is said to have replied it was easy: He simply chipped away at everything that wasn't David.

Jeff Brown believes every one of us was put on Earth to become a master sculptor -- commissioned by our soul to excavate and honour our own inner David.

The Toronto author calls this quest for an authentic self -- "the real who you are, the real why you are here" -- soulshaping.

It's an artist's journey, he says, and like true artists, we have to be both willful and surrendered at the same time.

"At the heart of the challenge is the courage to be vulnerable. Although the world rewards insensitivity with the spoils of war, it takes more courage to surrender than to numb," Brown writes in his new book, Soulshaping: A Journey of Self-Creation (North Atlantic Books, \$19.95). (He turned down a contract with Namaste Publishing, the company that put Eckhart Tolle on the map, and self-published the first edition of Soulshaping to stay true to its vision.)

Freeing David may have been easy for Michelangelo, but chipping away at the emotional debris and distorted self-concepts that imprison our spirit is a task for a spiritual warrior.

Take it from an "inner-war veteran" who started his own soulshaping process with a sledgehammer: Waking up is hard to do.

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live, he says.

"Although many Westerners do not actually have to worry about basic needs, the collective unconscious is still gripping at the root. Many of us are more concerned with barricading ourselves against assaults than surrendering ourselves to our deepest being," the author writes.

"Focused on the imagined legions of doom at our doorstep, we become anything we have to become in order to survive."

Brown became a criminal lawyer.

The first-born child of a Jewish mother and Irish father, he coped with his impoverished and abusive upbringing -- his father beat him regularly and his mother was suicidal -- by becoming a master shapeshifter, always on the lookout for inventive ways to avoid the present moment. He became Hyperboy, Encyclopedia Brown (heady, detached observer), Badboy (the abused as abuser) and finally, the Warrior.

Brown was just a teenager when he saw Eddie Greenspan, one of Canada's most high-profile criminal defence lawyers, on TV. Listening to Greenspan, he felt a flash of knowing: The Warrior had found his home. Years later, Brown was an articling lawyer, working alongside his hero on one of the country's most infamous murder trials. Driven, he wrote a 168-page jury address in four days.

"I was ready to become a trial lawyer but I knew that on some deep level that while my ego would be gratified and my neurotic security issues quieted, I would not be a success in the ways that meant anything to me on a deeper level," Brown, 47, recalls during a phone interview from his Toronto home.

The soul, as he points out in the book, doesn't like to be ignored. "It will manifest its frustrations in the form of grumbles and stumbles, fitful sleeps and pleasureless unions until we wake up to the truth of our lives." This guiding presence is often called the inner daimon. Brown calls it the "little voice that knows" and he dubbed his Little Missy.

As his legal career built steam, so did the internal debates between the Warrior and Little Missy, leading to many dark nights of the soul. It would take many years and many false starts -- plus a lot of therapy -- for the Warrior to shed his egoist armour and work through the emotional material that Brown says contains the seeds for our transformation.

"I'm a firm believer in the development of a healthy ego as part of our spiritual growth," says Brown. "Otherwise, I'd be in a meditation cave right now thinking I'm enlightened."

Having heeded Little Missy's call, the former lawyer and former psychotherapist -- he went on to earn a master's in psychology -- says he's finally on true path: helping others to unmask.

Call him a spiritual teacher, but Brown has no interest in becoming anyone's guru.

"I'm always making sure internally that I'm coming from the right place with this," he says. "I keep admitting my faults constantly."

"You think I'm so great? Well, I happen to have a little addiction to fudge bars at Starbuck's and after I get off the phone, I'm going to go get me one."

carolin.vesely@freepress.mb.ca

Reading & Signing

Soulshaping: A Journey of Self Creation, by Jeff Brown

Thursday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m., McNally Robinson Booksellers

Music by Winnipeg singer-songwriter Beth Martens



Soulshaping dictionary

Soulshaping: The idea that our soul comes into each lifetime in a particular form, with a natural inclination to evolve beyond it.

Cell your soul: In order to grow spiritually, we must bring our suffering and our joy through the cells of the body until our spiritual lessons are birthed. Repressed emotions are unactualized spiritual lessons.

Enrealment: The idea that a more "heightened" consciousness is not all about the light (as enlightenment implies) but is about becoming more real, more genuinely here in all aspects -- shadow and light, earth and sky, grocery list and unity consciousness.

False-path: The sense that we are walking in someone else's shoes and not our own.

JAB: The Jealousy, Abandonment and Betrayal emotional trigger. A powerful and often unhealed wound area obstructs many individuals who are attempting to move forward on the path.

Lite-dimmers: Individuals who have a tendency to undermine positive intentionality and good energy in others.

Nervous breakthrough: A profound (and courageous) emotional cleansing, a collapse of the false structures that have ruled our life, a breaking through to a more genuine state of consciousness.

Self-distractive behaviour: Any behaviour done with the intention of avoiding our true self and authentic felt experience.

Spiritual bypass: The tendency to jump to spirit prematurely, usually in an effort to avoid various aspects of earthly reality.

Truth ache: A form of sacred grumble, a nudging sense of falsity, a palpable hunger for true-path. It contains the seeds of our transformation.

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1 Comments

POSTED BY: **null**
FEBRUARY 16, 2010 AT 2:21 PM

A well written article by one who understands clearly the author's inspiring and unique approach to balancing our self

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