



THE TAOGIRL GATHERING

A Celebration of Taogirls Everywhere

November 1, 2006

The Taogirl Gathering

Issue Number Six



Welcome , Taogirls

I'd been at the computer contemplating my opening paragraphs to you in this issue of The Taogirl Gathering when I found the following sitting in my Outlook inbox. It was sent to me by a long-time and dear girlfriend. She didn't know that I had been waiting for some sort of "inspiration" to come my way, yet come it did, in the form of the email she had just sent to me.

So, with many thanks to my friend, Diane, for her insight in sharing this wonderful piece with me, I give you "Perspective"

The other day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, she was immediately

embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let her know.

Old Age, I decided, is a gift.

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometimes despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror (who looks like my mother!), but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avante garde on my patio. I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 a.m. and sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love ... I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set.

They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when a beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day.

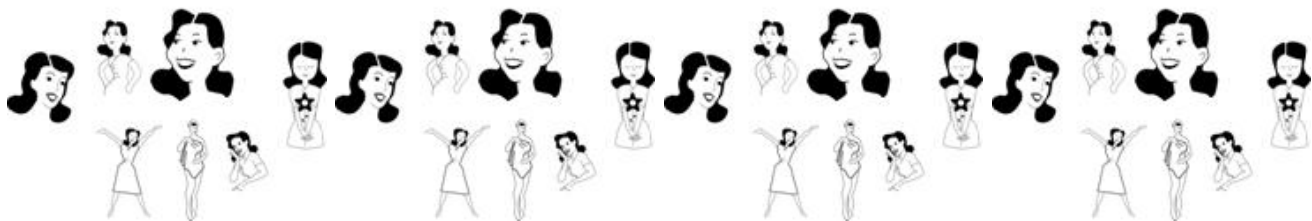
Author Unknown

I love this piece and will refer to it often. I hope it offers the same inspiration to you that it does to me.

CJ

This month's Taogirl Gathering will feature:

- ✚ Introducing...the The Cape Cod Taogirls
- ✚ The Taogirl Wisdom of the Month
- ✚ A meeting with a most amazing Taogirl
- ✚ Our question and answer section
- ✚ A listing of my November travels – I would so love to meet you when I'm in your part of the world
- ✚ "Let's link"
- ✚ The Taogirl Boutique





In last month's issue of The Taogirl Gathering I was pleased to feature
a conversation with Sophie V. of
"The Cape Cod Taogirls."

On October 15 I was honored to participate in one of their gatherings and had best time meeting all of the women that afternoon.

The group is a lively and intelligent mix of Taogirls whose ages span several decades and come from diverse backgrounds.

As they left, eagerly planning their next meeting, I made sure my camera came out before they all dispersed.

As now.....

here are.....

THE CAPE COD TAOGIRLS.



Nancy H

Irene C

Rhoda B

Marilyn B

Sophie V

Grace G

And not in the picture - because they couldn't attend that particular meeting - not that they're camera shy Gen W, Marti W and Gretchen H

Gretchen, I hasten to add, had an extremely important reason for missing the meeting:

She was in the hospital after having given birth to her baby girl, Sophie!

Congratulations to both the proud mom and her very lucky daughter!

I love hearing from and meeting all of you TaoGirls out there and I thank you for allowing me to share your stories and photos with our readers. Keep those emails coming!

www.taogirl.com

TAOGIRL WISDOM OF THE MONTH

The first half of your life is the life you were given. The second half of your life is the life you create.

On October 1st I first heard from a most amazing and interesting TaoGirl.



Her email was so intriguing that I started a correspondence with her and now want to share her story and photo with the rest of you.

Cindy E.

Hi CJ,

I wanted to let you know that enjoy your weekly Taogirl wisdom's and I pass them on to my friends.

I have become the Defiant one when it comes to health, menopause, and age, which is an attitude in my thoughts.

At the age of 49, I was overweight, starting menopause and very lonely. My kids were grown living their own lives and my husband was in his own world of retirement.

I really felt horrible and mentally depressed. I took a tumble down my basement stairs and badly sprained my knee, that was a blessing and a wake up call to me.

I was told that my knee would never straighten, I would feel the weather all the time.

I decided after hearing the Bon Jovi Song, "Its my life, its now or never" that I needed it to be true. I really got "mad" at myself and decided to jumpstart my life.

After losing 42 pounds, just by diet and "dancing" in my basement lol! I good friend encouraged me to start to lift weights, I thought he was nuts, but I listened.

Now at 54, I have become an amateur, natural, bodybuilder and compete, for fun and to encourage other women to take "One hour a day" out for yourselves. We are so into giving to others that we really forget about ourselves. This has been a "gift" to my life, a second chance in living. I am a working woman as well, a purchasing agent for a construction company. 40 employees, mostly men. Also a member of the "National Association of Women in Construction.

The really important piece if information I want to pass along is, that going thru menopause during this time period, this exercise and change in lifestyle, made a big difference in my energy level, thinking, and positive attitude. Oh and by the way, remember I mentioned they told me my knee would never straighten? Well, it straightens and it leg presses 750 pounds!!!!

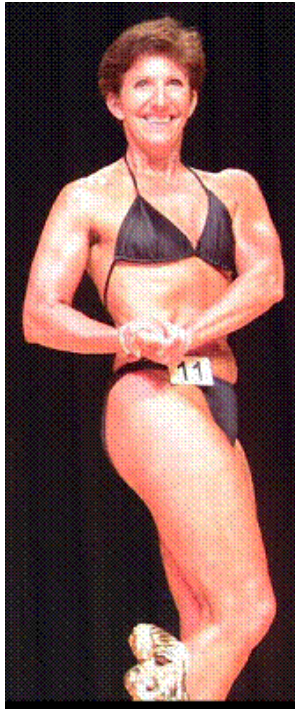
Please women, take care of yourselves!!! Remember it is our lives!!!

Regards,

Cynthia E

Cynthia personifies our TaoGirl Wisdom of the month for she took the life she was given - with all of the bumps and challenges along the path - and then created the person she truly wanted to be:

Here's Cynthia.....



WOW! You go, Taogirl!

It's ? time

FROM LISA M....

Physical activity defines me as I've always been active and love being so. Now because I'm older and have some physical issues I can't run marathons anymore. Now what do I do?

TAOGIRL'S ANSWER TO LISA...

This is an extremely interesting question and one that comes up so very often at Taogirl workshops and in conversation with many of the women I meet. It is an issue facing me at this time as I want to participate in the Susan G. Komen 3-day, 60 mile walk in early November but can't for I've done a bit of damage to my back. I mention this only because I want you to know that I totally understand the pain you are in – both physically and emotionally.

We are faced with finding another way to define ourselves, to feel good about our bodies and capabilities. Surely there is a way that you can use your athletic prowess to help others – perhaps as a trainer for those about to embark on their first marathon. And, there are other ways you can participate in various physical events – be it shorter runs, jogs or walks. You might consider a 3 or 5 mile jaunt to help raise money for a charitable organization. You could even help plan such an event. If staying physically active is supremely important to you than with a bit of thought I bet you will be able to come up with a way to stay connected.

Now is also the time of your life to explore other attributes you have – to bring them to the forefront.

Remember always that there isn't merely one activity or part of you that "defines" you. You are a sum of all of your parts and all of your abilities and senses and emotions and soul. You could, you know, ask someone near and dear to you to "define" you and I bet that person doesn't just say "marathoner" in his or her definition. Listen carefully to all that is being said about you and you'll find more than that one way to feel good about yourself!

CJ

Dear Taogirls,

When we are together at our workshops, questions like Lisa's stimulate lively conversations. I hope you will treat the Taogirl Gathering as an "internet" workshop and share your responses to the questions posted and, then, questions of your own in this Q&A section of the newsletter.

thepath@taogirl.com

Thank you,

CJ



On the road again.....

Here's where I will be in November:

Thursday, November 9

The Connecticut Writer's Conference

Norwalk Community College

I will be speaking and doing a book signing

This is a full day conference

I'll be speaking from 2:30 – 3:20

(my topic is: "Turning Your Passion Into a Book")

For more information please visit: <http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/default.asp>

Saturday, November 11

The Lead Out Loud Conference

Presented by the Esteemed Women Foundation Recovering Hearts

Newtown High School

This is a full day conference for high school girls and their parents

I'll be speaking to the parents from 9:45 – 11:15

(I'll present and explain the philosophy of Tao and defiance so the
parents can

share this philosophy with their daughters.)

For more information please visit: <http://www.esteemedwoman.org/>

Tuesday, November 14

The Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El

Poughkeepsie , NY

The evening begins at 6:30

For more information please visit: [http://poughkeepsie.uscjhost.net/\\$sisterhood.htm](http://poughkeepsie.uscjhost.net/$sisterhood.htm)

Keep checking the Travels page of the website for current updates.



LET'S LINK !

- If you know of, or have a website that I think Taogirls would enjoy seeing, let me know and I'll be happy to set up a hyperlink from this newsletter to that site. Conversely, if you would like to do the same from your site to this newsletter, please contact me to do so.

It is in this manner that we can support each other as we all strive to support women everywhere!

Alignment With Life...Andrea D. Klein, the guiding light behind this California based coaching service, is a professional life coach who is continuously moving onward and upward by saying "yes" to life and by having fun with the evolving process. "Since I am in the 2nd half of life," says Andrea, "I have a yearning desire to help women embrace the 2nd half of life by exploring new possibilities and passions."

If you're ready to: embrace the 2nd half of life; explore the opportunity of truly having fun; tap into your creative juices; move into possibilities, potential and passions then you will want to "meet" Andrea via her website. And you don't have to live in California – she'll work with you via phone and/or email.

Visit Andrea and Alignment With Life at: <http://www.alignmentwithlife.com/contact.htm>

Esteemed Woman Foundation...This amazing and important organization was founded in 2000 by filmmaker **Suzie Galler** who began conducting research about women and self-esteem which led to the making of the highly acclaimed documentary film I Am Beautiful. The film then became the cornerstone of

an outreach program designed to help women explore and strengthen their self-image.. It now includes ongoing workshops, resource materials and an outreach network that provides support nationwide. The foundation's primary focus has been to develop comprehensive programs for women of all ages and backgrounds. The programs teach that self-esteem is not a destination, but a life long journey--one that requires recognition of the sources of self-esteem, and a willingness to address those areas that impede a positive self-image.

Visit the Suzie and the Esteemed Woman Foundation at: <http://esteemedwoman.com>

Connecticut Muse... This seasonally published newsletter is the brain child of **Patricia D'Ascoli**, columnist, essayist and author of *Home Is Where the Humor Is*. The Connecticut Muse is a celebration of contemporary Connecticut authors featured in a quarterly newsletter. Each issue focuses on a different literary genre and includes book reviews, author interviews, a listing of upcoming author appearances and information on new releases. You Taogirls who do not reside in Connecticut will also enjoy reading the Muse to discover what new books are out there for us all to enjoy.

Visit Patricia and The Connecticut Muse at: <http://connecticutmuse.com/aboutus.html>

Donna Ferber ... is the author of the wonderfully supportive and encouraging book, *From Ex-wife to Exceptional Life: A Woman's Journey through Divorce*. Donna is a licensed professional counselor and licensed alcohol and drug counselor. She is also a psychotherapist and experienced speaker who has drawn on her twenty years of experience counseling women through this difficult process to create a comprehensive guide comprised of 365 one page essays that offer inspiration, insight and information.

Visit Donna at: <http://www.donnaferber.com/index.htm>

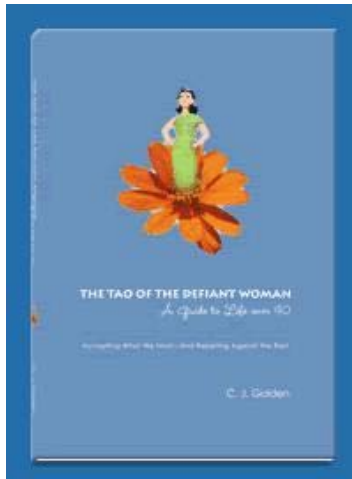
Prill Boyle ... Like the women she writes about in her book, *Defying Gravity*, Prill Boyle is a late bloomer. After graduating from college at 38, she became an English teacher. Then in January of 2000 she read an article in *The New York Times* about a 65-year old Kentucky woman named Wini Yunker who had waited 39 years to join the Peace Corps. Inspired by this woman's persistence and courage, Prill decided to write a book about late bloomers. Her book recounts the stories of 12 "ordinary" women who've done extraordinary things later in life. It is a delightful and inspiring book to read and all the more so as Prill connects these first-person accounts together with her own story. Prill is also very active on the speaking and workshop circuit.

Visit Prill at: <http://www.prillboyle.com/index.html>

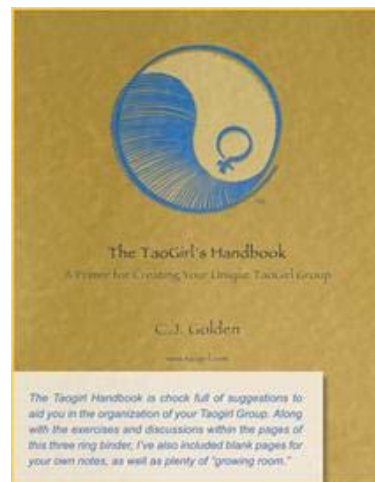
THE TAOGIRL ON-LINE BOUTIQUE IS OPEN

THE TAO OF THE DEFIANT WOMAN

A GUIDE TO LIFE OVER 40



THE TAOGIRL HANDBOOK



The TaoGirl Handbook

is chock full of suggestions to aid you in the organization of your TaoGirl Group.

Along with the exercises and discussions within the pages of this three ring binder, I've also included blank pages for your own notes, as well as plenty of "growing room."

THE OFFICIAL TAOGIRL T-SHIRT



FRONT: Tao and Defiant

BACK: the Taogirl logo

TAOGIRL GREETING CARDS



Some final words:

This issue of The TaoGirl Gathering began taking form when I heard the quote that became November's wisdom of the month and realized the truth of those words: the first part of our lives are, indeed, often that which we are given. It is up to each of us to create the second part of our lives in a manner that allows us to fill all of our potential, spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. I know that is what I am working on myself as I continue to find the best "me" that I can be. It is what propelled Cynthia to work so hard at achieving her amazing physical achievement and it is what drives Lisa to maintain her athletic life-style.

We don't have to be athletes, but we do have the opportunity at this point in our lives to continue growing and learning. Let's take full advantage of all that is out there in the world for us to discover so we may continue to learn and grow as Tao and defiant women – true TaoGirls!

My thanks to [The Cape Cod Taogirls](#) for letting me be the local paparazzi by taking and sharing your photo; to [Cynthia](#) for contacting me and allowing me to feature you in this month's issue of The TaoGirl Gathering; and to [Lisa](#) for your very timely question.

And, as always, a big thank you to all of you out there for being the wonderful, sharing and caring TaoGirls that you are.

Please email me and let me share your story with our readers in the December issue of The TaoGirl Gathering.

thepath@taogirl.com

CJ

Spread the word – share this issue of THE TAOGIRL GATHERING with your friends!

If you would rather not receive future issues please respond to this email and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

For information, or to share your thoughts and wisdom with us: thepath@taogirl.com

