

## **Into Full Flower Book Talk, Ikeda Center, March 6, 2010. Russell Boulding's Remarks.**

### **Introduction: Why Elise isn't here today.**

Many here know that Elise has Alzheimers and is confined to a wheel chair. Her short-term memory is pretty well gone. A group this large would be bewildering for her, though she continues to be able to maintain remarkably cogent conversations when a few people are present. In May, the Center is planning to have a celebration of the publication of *Into Full Flower* with her at the Skilled Nursing Facility at North Hill in Needham.

### **I. Early Years**

I grew up in a caring Quaker community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which in some ways had features of an indigenous society, where parents helped raise each others' children. It's nice to see Carolyn Hamm here, whose father Eldon taught me many things I could not have learned from my parents. It was only many years later that I became aware of how intentional my mother was in creating a family and community that would encourage in its children the qualities of independence, creativity and a commitment to making the world a better place

I came of age in the 1960s, a turbulent but wonderful time of change. My first Peace Vigil was at the Pentagon in 1960 with a relatively small group Quakers commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends Peace Testimony. This vigil presaged the later anti-war demonstrations that completely encircled the Pentagon. In high school I helped organize a 48-hour fast for peace in Viet Nam and civil rights in Alabama. I spent 10-days in jail for participating in a Quaker meeting on the Capitol steps in support of the Poor People's campaign.

In the community I grew up in all these activities seemed a natural outgrowth of the values we learned as children. It wasn't until I was in high school that that I realized how remarkable my parents Elise and Kenneth Boulding were. It wasn't always easy having such high-powered parents, but I realized how lucky I was.

### **II. Elise and Mr. Ikeda**

I helped with the final editing of this wonderful little volume *Into Full Flower*. Coming from such different backgrounds I couldn't help but be struck by the commonalities my mother and Mr. Ikeda share. Both are spiritually grounded visionaries and bridge-builders. Both have a commitment to peacemaking at an international level that is grounded in recognition of the importance of education and the empowerment of women and children. I especially liked the three transformations that will make peace cultures happen, identified by Mr. Ikeda in the essay at the end of the book, which I'm sure my mother would agree with fully. These are:

- A shift from knowledge to wisdom
- A shift from uniformity to diversity, and
- A shift from national to human sovereignty

I anticipate seeing these transformations come about in my lifetime.

### **III. Elise's Journey from Doing to Being**

It was a bittersweet moment when I read on page 33 Mr. Ikeda addressing Elise in 2005 this question:

*Your peace work has kept you busy for many years, yet you remain youthful and active. What is the secret to your good health?*

I would like to conclude by sharing a bit about my mother's spiritual journey of healing with Alzheimers, which has been a spiritual and healing journey for me as well.

In 1978 at the Quaker wedding of my youngest brother William, during the silence before they said their vows, Elise receive a message that she repeated to me many times:

*Nine years teaching  
 Nine years practice preaching  
 Nine years reaching for heaven*

She took it as a road map for the rest of her life and was quite certain that at the appointed time she would leave the physical plane, going so far as to obtain pills to end her life when the time came.

To give a little background for my part in this story, I will say that being raised in a Quaker community and with my parents in particular, I couldn't help but have spiritual inclinations, but I would not characterize my life's journey as fundamentally spiritual until I had an awakening experience in the fall of 2002 that shattered my conception of reality as a geologist and environmental scientist. When this happened I decided to use my training as a scientist to understand both my own experience and the larger multidimensional reality of which our lives here on planet Earth are a small part. The approach I developed to understanding phenomena that are not readily observed or measured the methods of physical science forced me to accept the reality of many things that had been completely outside the frame of reference that informed my life up until that time. This process also included the experience of becoming a channel for healing energies for others and for Mother Earth.

Elise was more overtly spiritual throughout her life, yet her outlook was very grounded in physical reality. When I began to share my growing understanding of multidimensional reality with her I could see it was quite a stretch for her frame of reference, but she had an amazingly resilient and open mind. I am very grateful that she was fully supportive of my journey even though some of the things I shared with her were a little too far out for her to really take in.

My new understanding of how personal healing takes places at an energetic level gave me a new perspective on the road map that Elise had firmly set in her mind. She had followed the road map for the first eighteen years without any difficulty, but when it came letting go of her attachment to changing the world and reaching for heaven, she didn't. From my new perspective the heavenward reaching stage required also an introspective turning inward for healing a woundedness whose energetic imprint had been transmitted through many generations.

After 2005, when the appointed time of the journey given in her road map had passed, Elise kept talking about being ready to go, and expressed puzzlement as to why she was still around. We had many conversations where I expressed my perception that she had not followed the road map. She had continued the "practice preaching" and not taken the nine years required to *be* ready to go. Eventually she was able at a cognitive level to accept this, but it was very hard for her to put the letting go of engagement in the world into practice.

Even before my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimers I had come to understand the condition as one that allows healing at an energetic level while still in the physical body, healing that is much more difficult when one leaves the physical plane. In my mother's case, I see her Alzheimers as Spirit's backup plan for healing that has gone even deeper than if she had followed the original road map.

I have created a web page that chronicles Elise's journey of healing, which many of you here have participated in:

<http://www.earthenergyhealing.org/EliseBoulding3.htm>. It has not been an entirely easy journey for those of us closest to her, but in the past few months it feels to me that she has completed the shift from *Doing* to *Being*. She has become a Shining One while still in the physical body, a Vessel of Light who brings healing energy to our beautiful, yet still war-torn planet by just being who she is, present in the Eternal Now.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate the wisdom shared in the conversations between my mother, a Quaker who now expresses her Buddha nature, and Mr. Ikeda, a Buddhist who, it seems to me, under different circumstances could easily have been a Quaker.