



Open the door to your  
journey...

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# The Art of Growth

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## Welcome to the Journey of Exploration and Discovery

There is a whole world, both inside and outside of ourselves, to explore, but we rarely get the chance. With so many responsibilities, lack of energy, mixed messages in our society and expectations around us, spending time enjoying, growing and exploring seems to become low on the priority list.

So what would happen if our personal journey and exploration were to suddenly jump up a few spots? What if, by trying a few things differently, the other parts of life fell in place a little more smoothly? Would the time and effort be worth it then? The door is always open and when you are ready to explore, there is a whole life out there that is ready for you...

So welcome to *The Art of Growth*. What exactly does

“the art of growth” mean?

“Art” here is best defined in broad terms as creative endeavors by humans, and we are all creative. We are creative in our own unique ways. For example, how do you communicate in the world? Your approach will be different than everybody else’s approach. You have your own *creative* way because you *create* that way. Because we are all unique, the “art” in “the art of growth” refers to our own unique way of growing and changing.

Now what about “growth”? To be honest, we don’t really have a choice on whether we grow or not. Our physical bodies change every moment as cells reproduce, food and energy are incorporated and expelled, changes happen to our muscles as we move.



Mentally and emotionally we change as we interact with our environments. Experience changes us so that there is no going back. The challenge is to grow in a healthy way.

That is the journey...

## Personally, Professionally & Playfully

There are three areas that will be focused on in this publication because together they provide a healthy and holistic way of being as well as a way of exploring.

*Personally* refers to yourself, emotionally, physically and mentally. What areas are you happy with and what areas are challenging for you or offering opportunities?



*Professionally* is the work you are doing, whether it is paid or not paid. The energy you give to others in an occupation, at home, and in your community are all forms of your professional life and because we spend so much time there, it is important to make it worthwhile.



*Playfully* is an important area that is often forgotten, but so important. How do you spend your free time and does it energize you? Do you need more play opportunities and do you know what they are?

Continue on the journey to discover more...

## Personal Exploration—Awareness

Paradoxically, spending time on personal exploration doesn't need to take any more time. It only requires a shift. That shift can come with focusing on yourself and being more aware.

Now what does that mean? Let's use the picture on the side of this page to illustrate. Most of us may look at a flower briefly and note that it is pretty. Now take a look at it again and really notice the colours. How many shades of colour are there? What are the shapes like? How would this flower smell if it were in front of you? What would it feel like? Are you drawn to the brighter colours or to the darker ones? What emotions are stirred up in you? Do you like the central focus or would you have preferred the flower in the corner? The questions can go on and on

and your answers will be unique to you.

This is the same type of attention that can be put to your everyday life. Instead of listening to the chatter and worries of your world, take a few minutes out to truly experience what you are currently doing, whether washing dishes, playing with children, walking or sitting at a computer. Allow awareness to come to you as you truly experience your moments. By using your senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste, you will deepen your experiences and generally increase your energy and sense of purpose. This level of being aware and experiencing what is currently happening is also called "**mindfulness**".

As we are mindful and aware, we realize true possibilities as

well as gain increased harmony in our worlds. This is a true gift to ourselves. The gift develops and grows over time. At first it may be difficult to stay in the moment and stay focused in a non-judgmental fashion. As this way of being aware is practiced, however, the ability to be mindful and to reap the benefits increase.

For more information about mindfulness, there are numerous books and websites. Authors such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, Jack Kornfield, Venerable Henepola Gunaratana, Thich Nhat Hahn expand on these concepts and as there are many authors and websites that are available for your journey, feel free to find information that feels right to you.

***Enjoy your personal exploration!!***



***As we are mindful and aware, we realize true possibilities as well as gain increased harmony...***

## Professional Exploration—Purpose

Generally our professional lives take up the majority of our time. Even if we don't work for money, we may still have a professional or work role in terms of caring for a family, acting as a volunteer or numerous other activities where we are contributing to others. Finding meaning or a sense of purpose in our work endeavors can increase our energy and general happiness as we figure out how we are making a difference.

Reflect on your "work" for a moment and ask yourself why you are doing it. It may be to support your family, a stepping stone for something else, a positive experience in itself, a skill-building experience, an endeavor that contributes to others...There are numerous reasons that may come up for you. Sometimes it is easy to find the answers and sometimes it is more difficult. If we are where

we want to be, the purpose is often easy to find, but it is during those difficult times that finding the purpose to our work can help us the most. Finding meaning when we feel we are stuck or "wasting time" is very hard, but it is possible.

A way to find meaning is to step outside ourselves to see who we are affecting and what benefits they may be receiving directly or indirectly. Are you providing a service or product? Do you help direct others to do a better job or are you doing the work directly? As you reflect on the results of your work, appreciate what you are sharing or providing for others.

As you reflect on the direct benefits you give, you may also ponder the indirect ways you are contributing. Is it your sense of humour or your ability to focus and complete a task

thoroughly. Are you the one people turn to for a direct answer, or the one who supports those in need. We all bring our personal qualities to work and while those qualities may or may not be directly related to the job, they influence those around us and have an impact on our professional environment. If you are not sure about how you may be providing a positive impact, ask those around you with whom you trust. You may be surprised by the answers.

Finding our purpose in work can open the door to energy and meaning. It may also open new doors as we search for ways to make our work more meaningful.

***May your efforts be appreciated by you and others...***



## Playful Exploration

Imagine a young child playing. See the focused attention they give to the activity; sense the energy and joy that child is having; use your senses of sight, smell, hearing and touch to imagine yourself engaging in that activity. Take a few moments to feel and then reflect on that experience. What was that like?

As adults, we often get so caught up in our worlds that we lose the sense of play. Sometimes we feel that we need to be “grown-up” and that kind of stuff is “silly” and so “childlike”. While “play” may not be a key component to our lives currently, there are some key benefits to incorporating some play in our lives.

Benefits of play include energy, happiness, purpose, general positive emotions, increased health, increased curiosity and

creativity to name but a few. It also often opens the door to **flow** which is defined as *a feeling of complete and energized focus in an activity, with a high level of enjoyment and fulfillment*. Take a moment now to imagine yourself doing something you enjoy. What qualities and emotions do you notice for yourself? energy... calmness... excitement... curiosity... wonder... silliness... power...

Areas of play encompass many parts of our lives and for it to be “play” for you, it should be enjoyable, time may seem to pass without you noticing, you should feel positive and possibly uplifted during and/or afterwards, and you may have a sense of increased clarity and calmness in your life. Activities to be considered can include all the senses:

**Visual:** Art, photography

**Smell:** Fragrant flowers, being by the ocean

**Touch:** Drawing, working with clay, building/creating objects, working with wood and other materials

**Whole body:** yoga, exercise, sports, dance, acting

**Hearing:** playing or listening to music, comedy

**Social:** Being with friends, helping in the community, board games

**Even professional:** creative brainstorming

**Individual:** journaling, quiet time in a tranquil location

The list can go on and on and it is for you to discover what gives your heart a lift.

*Have fun & play!!*



*Areas of play encompass many part of our lives...*

## Fall 2005 Workshop Schedule

All workshops are on Tuesday evenings from 7pm—9pm.  
Cost: \$20/session or inquire about free workshops when in addition to services.  
Space is limited to 10 individuals, so please register early at 604-916-0363.  
All workshops are held at 326—555 Sixth St., New Westminster.

### Parenting Workshop Series

*Discover support, techniques and fresh perspectives to enhance your time at home...*

**October 4th:** Communication that Counts

**November 1st:** Encouragement that Creates Positive Behaviour

**December 6th:** Discipline for Learning

### Women's Retreat Workshop Series

*Take time out to explore and discover creative areas with other women...*

**October 11th:** The Art of Growth: Discovering Your Personal Creative Path

**November 8th:** Journaling for Discovery

**December 13th:** Meditation for Women

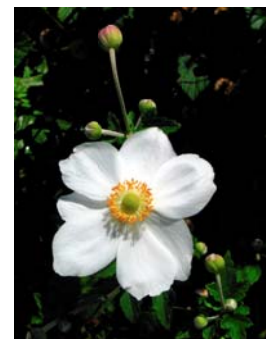
### Couples Workshop Series

*Enhance your relationship together by sharing, learning, and exploring your relationship...*

**October 18th:** Communication, the Positive Way

**November 15th:** Learning More About your Partner

**December 20th:** Celebrating Your Relationship



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## The Story of "The Art of Growth Consulting Inc."

The Art of Growth Consulting officially began in December 2002 as an incorporation that would be able to offer a number of services and programs with a focus of facilitating growth in individuals, relationships, families and businesses. Unofficially, The Art of Growth began many years earlier...

Cheryl-Dean Thompson created The Art of Growth Consulting Inc. with a reflection of her past and a vision of the future. Maintaining the focus of facilitating the strength and growth of those around her in whatever setting she was working in, Cheryl-Dean gained a broad range of work experience. From the service industry to the social service industry and to national corporations, Cheryl-Dean has worked in leadership positions and has enabled the transformation of individuals, groups and agencies since 1985. Cheryl-Dean bases her work on a philosophy of encouragement, belief in the worth of others, and empowerment of people. She has witnessed discouraged individuals regain purpose and toxic work environments transform



into energetic and passionate places where people want to be.

Currently working as a Registered Clinical Counsellor in private practice, Cheryl-Dean enjoys supporting and facilitating the growth of others through a variety of mediums.

As for the future of The Art of Growth Consulting Inc. ...

***The vision is one of growth and creativity.***

## Counselling and Consulting Services

How does counselling and consulting fit into our lives? What are the benefits? The arenas of counselling and consulting are sometimes shrouded in mystery and misconception, so lets explore a couple myths and truths:

**Myth:** *Only weak people or people who can't handle life seek help.*

**Truth:** Picking up the phone and seeking support is an act of courage and a gift to yourself and others. It is a healthy and proactive approach to seek positive solutions and to grow personally and socially. We often can get stuck in our own "boxes" and patterns and it is useful to participate in a safe environment and to explore the possibilities without being judged and to then have the support and encouragement to step out of the box and to create new patterns.

**Myth:** *Counselling and consulting costs too much.*

**Truth:** While the services offered may appear to be out of reach,



there are areas to review prior to discarding your options. One area is your sense of worth to yourself and others. The better we feel and are for ourselves, the better and more effective we are to others and what we do. In terms of business consulting, the cost is usually a fraction of the financial gain. The same is true with counselling in that the investment you make in yourself and your family is usually a small piece in terms of the benefits of emotional health, mental clarity, increased purpose and worthwhile relationships. It is also worthwhile to discuss options with your therapist in terms of packages, groups, frequency of sessions and personalized plans that fit your budget. Community resources are another option that may meet your financial budget.

Every person has a right to live a worthwhile life and we are often able to creatively figure out how to make that happen.

***All the best as you figure out your way...***