

An aerial photograph of a group of people jumping into clear, vibrant blue water. The water is splashing and creating white foam around the jumpers. The people are scattered across the frame, with one person in the foreground being more prominent. The overall scene is bright and energetic.

Social Work Gratitude

Olga Papkova

By Ksenia Kujanova
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KBYN[®]

Be the change you wish to see in the world. - Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Olga, I have heard this phrase from you so many times! You often tell that it's easy to point out the flaws and imperfections present all around us, it's much more difficult to look inward and decide to change ourselves.

The first step was always your own!



“I lost the business, parents and even the house. Olga made alive the mini-house that I used to get. Then I felt I was alive, as if my best qualities woke up inside me. I cherish all the things that she did by hand for me.”

- Amedeo, Turin, Italy

“Olga always found time to take care of us. During the pregnancy I had no time or strength to cook and she cooked tasty things for us three times a week. When our child was born she came to us with a dozen boxes of baby things and special food for breastfeeding mothers ... I felt protected and pampered”.

- Marta, Pavia, Italy

From your CV Experience

9-2012 till today

Internet

Job/field: *Self employed in Social work*

I got work experience outside academia during my second PhD programme. We started the Blog which helps women to find themselves. It combines creative photos and the spiritual words of my experience, knowledges, my sense making. The art work features some of the relationship around spirit, beauty, poetics in which our project developed. My writings are for a non-specialist audience, a skill I'll need outside of academia. By writing of spirituality I uncovered ways by which I see my new work and myself.

09-2014 - 12-2017

The Little House of Divine Providence - Cottolengo of Turin, Italy

Job/field: *Volunteer*

I got work experience outside academia during my PhD Program. Discretion is dead without spirituality. I cooked and visited those who are sick, or who are in trouble, especially those who are needy by age, who are in poverty. It was important to understand that our conception of spirituality is undergoing enormous change. Talk about women's rights has given way to women's spirituality. The schedule was flexible.

11-2012 - 08-2014

Italy, Pavia, one family

Job/field: *Volunteer*

I got work experience outside academia during my PhD Program. My theme is vacuum without spirituality. I was Volunteer for young family with the newborn to cook for them and to give the psychological support during pregnancy and after. I am experienced mother and suddenly, I understood that I could help to young mothers. Volunteering was flexible, but I made a contribution and grew my skills at the same time. By listening and also hearing, I reframed how and what both 'me' and 'work new' could be.

09-2011 - 06-2012

Elderly Home, Lenno (CO), Italy

Job/field: *Volunteer*

I got work experience outside academia during my Visiting Professorship. Discretion means spirituality. I felt some call to being involved alongside the sweetness and sweat of human lives. I was Volunteer for the elderly, performed a number of functions, including helping older adults adjust to life in their new residence in Lenno (Como), advocating for their clients' needs and rights. The schedule was flexible. I have the photo of the disabled elderly man I helped.

Your spiritual writings are not simply the gathering of your thoughts, but the fruit of years of meditations and spiritual practices, profound well being studies, personal experience. That's why they are precious and effective, it makes real the spiritual and psychological help people receive from your letters and posts. Here are some of them, answering on the question about **your part in their life**:

I felt like I've found an angel. No one knows how they are - but now I am aware of it. Olga helped me to understand many things, she was near in the darkest period of my life and thanks to her I passed it without falling into depression.

- Filippo, Desenzano del Garda, Italy

She wrote to me every day. Because she wanted to help me, I felt it from every her letter. She wanted to be there to keep my inner flame during the hard time I spent in the hospital. I'm the poet and I write what I feel - Olga made me feel the best things I was capable of.

- Artem, Moscow, Russia

I don't know why, but Olga started writing to me. I did not understand many things of my own life, I was tired and spiritually blocked but the dialogue with her opened my heart and my eyes.

- Diego, Padua, Italy

Some posts from **KBYN femina essentia**

Sacrifice of oneself: healthy heroism or absurd altruism, virtue or stupid denial of oneself?

To love your work with passion, to love your family with passion, to love nature with passion ... to love everything with passion. Living life with a passion is having self-denial ... the spirit of self-sacrifice ... dedication to the good of others or to one's duties, often accompanied by a conscious renunciation of one's own interests.

The choice to deny one's self for love is a sacred choice, the love above us, poor earthly beings attached to our selfishness, to our fear of not being important, and when we meet a heart that loves unconditionally we think:

"Poor, this is not love, you must not give up yourself, it is not right, you do it because you do not know what to do better ... etc." I wonder instead, would I be able to do it?

I lived 30 minutes near a person, more "old" than me and saw in her eyes peace, tranquility, pain, acceptance, feeling her clear and crystalline energy like spring water, it calmed my heart in turmoil because of the emotions I had at that moment.

I don't say her name for respect and privacy.

If she had not had the passion, self-denial ... the spirit of self-sacrifice, she would not have written two books, one of which was recognized as the best in her field !!! If she had not had the passion, self-denial ... self-sacrificing spirit, she would not have given birth to a son with a great ovation of doctors..etc. If there is no passion in love, "loving" can become a great test. The flame must be maintained.

The two, man and woman, you and your profession, who are in connection with the energy that many call "love", is love, of course, but with the other words it is the raw material with which it was created the universe. Energy is in itself neutral and pure. It is a kind of primitive energy, a creative energy that we all have within us, a kind of sacred energy. This energy cannot be manipulated, it guides us gently, in it all our apprenticeship for life is concentrated. If we try to direct it towards objectives



chosen by us, we end up at the mercy of despair, frustration, illusion, because it is free. This energy, which is inherent in us, is so great that it creates miracles !! However, the same energy that creates miracles can also be very destructive. The way we use it determines the result. Living is an art that lasts a hole lifetime. Staying passionate is something really special. Life is a garden. To grow luxuriantly it must be watered regularly. It needs special care depending on the season and climate. In a similar way, to keep the magic of love alive it is necessary to dedicate adequate care to the special needs of love itself.

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Technical support #Kirill Naumov

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What do you imagine when you think of ideal conditions? Food at will, medical checks, plenty of space and no predators ...? "Generally you think of expensive cars, magnificent villas and, absurdly, people who dive into a pool of gold coins like Scrooge McDuck would do" - a personal motivator reveals. The same results obtained with mice also provided an obscure omen about humanity, put in ideal conditions (in heaven ..:) - food at will, medical checks, plenty of space and no predators ...:)

It is of the famous experiment, in which a small electrode was placed in the brain of mice, in a structure that regulates the production of dopamine and it is the region that "lights up" when gamblers win a bet, addicts take the cocaine, or when you have an orgasm. It is called the center of pleasure. A lever in the cage allows mice to send a small electrical signal to their nucleus accumbens directly. The mice liked it so much that they didn't do anything else. They have completely forgotten about eating and sleeping.

Long after they were hungry and ignored the tasty food in exchange for the possibility of pressing that little chrome lever; they also ignored sex. The mice just pressed the lever over and over again, until they died of hunger and fatigue. Do they remind us of something? In Japanese culture there is the concept of *ikigai*. It is a difficult word to translate, according to it all humans have a reason to live, something that guides them on this long journey that is life, but some are aware, while others are not ... You know, I thought if Gustavo Rol's family wasn't what it was, what would become of Gustavo? If your family hadn't been such what would have happened to you? If Joseph had not been the dreamer he was, what would have happened to Mary? And what courage these two lovers have, Joseph and Mary: they fully believe in their love and in a God within this love at the cost of being pointed out by everyone, at the cost of being marginalized.

I listen carefully to the words of the angel to Joseph: "Son of David" ... everyone of us is a son of his own father .. We do not choose the family where we were born and simply we come in the world from the lineage of the father. Jesus was also of the lineage of David, but he passes by from the greatest king in the history of Israel to the simplest of carpenters! Here is the first announcement of the rebirth that I feel in my heart: God does not need power, honor, glory, money, celebrity ... but only someone who takes care of life ... of the life of the little God ... who wants to adopt Jesus and make it grow .. And we? Did you think that we could? Many modern women and many modern men do not want to learn this art: raising children ... they do not want to have children .. But Joseph wants it! He has his *ikigai*, he is aware of his reason for living ...

It's Joseph's job, it's my job, and yours too (?): Taking care of a small life ...

"Do not be afraid to take Mary with you": almost all the announcements of the Bible, the one to Mary, to Zechariah, to the shepherds ... begin like this: "Do not be afraid"

Someone says that "do not be afraid" is repeated in the bible **365** times: one a day, like a good morning of God!

It is as if God told me every morning: "be quiet, I am here too, if I ask you it is because I trust you, you can do it, you have all the abilities..."

It is nice to think that saying yes to God is like welcoming one's spouse, as they say in marriage: "I take you as my bride", and set up home together. God makes home with you as you do it with your partner.

With his yes, Joseph marries God, his wife and "marries his own life", that is what he is called to, from fulfillment to his mission.

I end with the most beautiful words, those of my Tonino Bello who writes them in a letter to Joseph: "I think you had more courage in sharing Mary's project than she had in sharing the Lord's project. She has staked everything on the Creator's omnipotence. You bet

everything on the fragility of a creature. She has had more faith, but you have had more hope. Love has done the rest, in you and in her. " If Joseph had no such reason to live, if Mary didn't have it, what would have happened to us ..?

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Our time is time of problems. Almost of people we see around us, who we listen to are a little more alone and full of worries and various problems. It is a time that killed responsibility and awareness and gave us fast and crazy and wrong rhythms. The human tendency is to complain, to share one's problems with others or to remain tet-a-tet with one's problems. It depends on the nature of a man.

It would be better to think that problems are a great opportunity to save beauty and tenderness. Nelson Mandela used to say "The greatest glory of life is not in falling, but in rising every time we fall". Sometimes I said to myself: "Let you never be overcome by worries, problems, depression ... :) If you want someone to welcome you, be the first to welcome him. If you want someone to love you, be the first to love him, someone to approach you, be the first to approach him". If I expected others to accept me, to love me, I would not have come anywhere.

Overcoming your own limits and discovering new dimensions is the way out ... Yes, because the encounter with diversity is useful to everyone.

I can say that people who are most active are people who have great injuries. We must learn to see beauty in wounds, in problems, in worries and see our own limits and see them as opportunities.

Those who have lived can not fail to have scars ... problems, worries .. but beauty is not whether you have bigger injuries or less, bigger problems or less, bigger worries or less, but how you carry your wounds, your problems etc trying to draw from what you live all the beauty that you can. That was my experience which now I see reflected in you, who read it.

In this regard I really like the image of the almond tree. The almond tree is the first that makes flowers and the last one that bears fruits. One day I said to myself: if I wait for the situation to change, I'll die first. Instead of waiting for the fruits I start to bloom, I start to change. In this moment of problems, of worries, instead of waiting for someone to change, the situation changing, the world changing, everything changing ... we must start from ourselves, start from minimal things, from inner freedom, because only God reopens the future and is the strength of our human weakness.

To live blessed we need to have a heart open to genuine forgiveness in the face of a world in which evil is showing its most diverse and worst faces. Pope Francis said it this way: "Blessed are those who bear with faith the evils that others inflict on them and forgive from the heart".

To live blessed we need to "look" directly in the eyes of the discarded and the marginalized people showing their closeness to us "when our world tends to marginalize the weakest from the social fabric by pushing them into an abyss without a net and throw away the most fragile" as if they would objects with a date of deadline."

To live blessed we need to renounce "one's own well-being for the good of others" when a materialistic system engulfs people in an egocentric and consumerist life.

To live blessed we need to protect and care for common goods: the common home, ecology when our home, our planet is under threat. Living blessed is living free.

The word blessed has often been badly translated as happy, but it is not so. The Hebrew term is standing upright. The most beautiful thing is when someone manages to turn his wounds from a curse into a blessing, he manages to stand up straight, in his dignity. I believe that there is nothing greater than an injured person, who has problems and concerns, who succeeds instead of cursing to bless. These are persons who save the world, who rule the world. In the conclusion I would say this: in this world you have to live firmly, living like in the paternal home. Believe in wheat, in Nature but above all in God. Love man, but first of all God. Love the cloud, the book, the car, the

game but first of all God. Feel the pain of heart who suffers, of the branch that dries up, of the star that goes out, of the wounded beast, but first of all the pain of God. Enjoy all the goods of the earth, the sun, the rain and the snow, winter and summer, darkness and light, but first of all enjoy God.

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More than anything else children need to feel that they are loved by us when we stay with them. They are so lovely!

You do not know yourself and you will never know yourself, fully. You are wider, deeper, lighter, more beautiful, more courageous, more loving, more alert, ... more ... than you, whom you know today.

You are like the pendulum clock, where you are time itself and you are the pendulum, also, the amplitude of oscillation of which it is not static and increases, always.

In life the good opportunities happen when you don't expect it, from the great love met by chance, to that unexpected vacation that you remember as the best in your life.

Don't say "that's the way I am", don't protect yourself, don't run away, don't hold siege, don't boast of. Get up! Know yourself! Who are you really? "Know yourself" is one of the Delphic maxims. There is only way to get to know you: "Know God and you will know yourself".

Love and you will know yourself!

God is that part of you, that you don't know now. He is the amplitude of increased oscillation, he is the unknown, he is the unexpected, what you did not even know existed in you. And he doesn't exist really, until you do him alive, until you increase the swing amplitude of your pendulum clock. You have no other time but yourself. You have now and here.

The amplitude of oscillation increases, does not decrease and it is not static. Don't diminish yourself, know the new parts of yourself now and here and always! Meet God! Welcoming God is welcoming yourself unexpected, new, unknown to you now, it is the key to knowing who you really are, to know your limits here and now, to increase your limits, to seek and find yourself. The human being you will find is you, better than before. All the best never happens according to our plans.

If you think about when you were happy, when you met someone better, when you had the best holidays, you realize that the best is an unexpected, a novelty, a stranger, a surprise that catches you when you are open to meeting with these novelty, unknown, unexpected, when you are open to the encounter with God.

At our disposal there is a power that a science could not have.. God is a force greater than our poor wish that tries to make you know Him and yourself, a force that shows you that you are there, more wide, deeper, more beautiful, more courageous, lighter, more loving, more awake, ... more ... than you, whom you know today, and you only have to increase the amplitude of the swing of your pendulum clock. And it's a fortune!

Without God, the unexpected, the new, the unknown, in fact, you will always and only meet what you already know: yourself for how you are... And you will not ever know God. You will never meet Love.

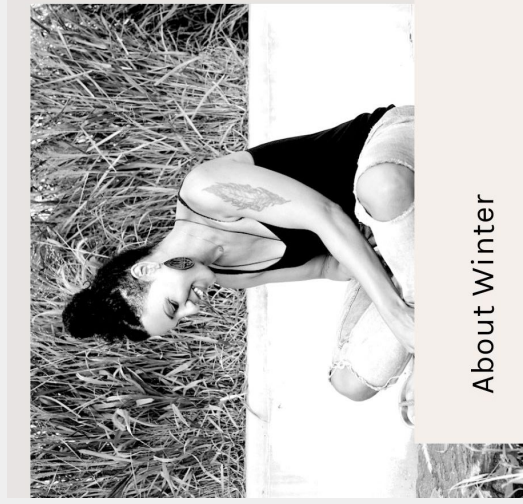
Raise the head. Unarmed. Indulge God who wants to make you deviate from the established paths, from your "that's the way I am", from your siege, from your shield, from your ego: He wants to lead you to unexplored spaces to make you discover their riches, to make you know God and yourself, the best.

Be open-faced. Also accept in an open way the oppositions, the obstacles, the crises: like a pruning, they serve to bring out new shoots, to let you know yourself and God and to make you grow them. Go ahead, grow them, increase them, find out who you really are...! Even if for the reason of this choice you are put to death all day, you are considered as a slaughterer sheep (as it is written) ..! Go ahead..! Even if you feel the tribulation, the anguish, the persecution, the hunger, the nakedness, the danger, the sword ..! By yourself you cannot be a winner, but in all these things you are more than a winner thanks to God who pushes you to love yourself, because he wants you to meet yourself and Him! And when God is all in you, he will be for you in the place of everything, you will know Him ..

You must give your "Fiat"! You have your freedom ...

"It is better to help someone who fights, and not a starvation, as in this you will not find gratitude" so they say.
"Blessed are those who have not seen and believed!" - so said Jesus ...
God is your share of inheritance. Your inheritance for your children are not vile, material thing. No!
God himself is your inheritance ..!

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About Winter

Source + Stone is the practice of what I do; retrieving information and messages from the ether (source energy) and bringing it into the tangible, accessible form of the physical for you to use.



Dear Friends, dear Souls,
Let me introduce you *Winter Clark* from Colorado, an Usui Reiki Master, an ordained interfaith minister. She also leads the New Moon Goddess Circles at Lakewood Community Acupuncture and is the author of *Goddess Grows Up: You are the Gift!*
She hosts "KBYN femina essentia" in her spiritual journal **Source + Stone**. We guess it will be a fruitful friendship!

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR: KSENIA KUJANOVA



For the next three months, I've opened the Journal to a guest contributor, Ksenia Kujanova from Russia by way of Italy. I love collaborating with other spiritually-conscious, strong, talented

women! She is an artist in the mediums of photography and drawing as well as writing. In her own words...

"I make photographs, draw and write, exploring the roots of female nature. I am engaged in the development of the author's project, revealing the feminine essence, its connection with the universe, spirituality, the laws of nature.

I work with a permanent model who helps me to reveal these images. Her help is unique because a simply beautiful young girl wouldn't catch this role - these images reflect exactly the Woman full of wisdom, spirituality and experience. My model is 50 years old, she is a scientist, an international professor

and holder of two PhD diplomas, the last of them was obtained recently in one of the northern universities of Italy.

Well, I can say that she helps me to discover and show the Unconditional Woman - let me call her in this way, UW. Because she lives and loves using her sensibility, she studies using her mind - so I can say she uses her every instrument. She moves through the world like a Dream that God used to have during the creation of a Woman.

UW is ancient in her roots and femininity.. and so casual with Marc Jacobs bag in her hand. By the word "my model" now is fighting to wake the spirituality in the European legal science - her well-defined purpose is

the spirituality in the European legal science - her well-defined purpose is born from her appetite for learning, always new things, new ways. Her view of life, way of thinking are deep and extraordinary. I combine the photographs and my drawings. For each work a small text is written, it carries the thought and spirit of the image. This stream is special because of a non-standard approach to female nature, to her role in the world, far from both bored feminism, and from the blind obedience to man."

Please welcome her and enjoy her art :)

It is for you, dear friend, who repeats every day "Pater noster, qui es in caelis ..."

Love is in the heavens.. Love is what we are not yet, but we could be, always unknown, stranger, never repeated and never sterile ..

It is for you, dear friend, who tries to be attentive to the little things of every day .. God hides in little things ..

"We ask extraordinary signs of an illusory God and we do not notice the daily signs of the real God. His simplicity is so simple that sometimes we cannot see" - writes Ermes Ronchi ..

These are the little things that speak of God: a drop of water, a pinch of yeast, a mustard seed, a shoot, a shoot, small details that often go unnoticed.

We are simply asked to be able to recognize the life that lives around us ... Close your eyes and breathe the meditation:

I am a five-pointed star lying in the water. I hear the peaceful rumble of the lake. Above me there is the evening sky. Endless, bottomless, colored like a cornflower. I see three young translucent clouds. They drift slowly to the east. I can see the tips of platan's branches. Must say that the color of their leaves is always autumnal, I call

these trees “the symphony of the fall”. They are self-absorbed and wince occasionally from wavy warm wind.

To see something else, you need to raise your head and move your feet. I do not want to move. I'll lie here and become a local lake's star.

With some luck, I will learn to glow in the dark. If I get bored, I could slowly rotate on the spot, just moving my hand. First right, then left. I will listen to the whispers of undercurrents and grumbling of the waves discontented with passing boats.

I won't be lonely. Before dawn, the sky will entertain me with its

turquoise, almost green color, and I will give him some funny nicknames. At night, sky will propose me his star puzzles, and Eternity in a dark-blue veil of mystery will stroke my wet hair that will be always free of pins.

Numerous ducks, hysterical gulls and pugnacious black divers will get used to me, and white-winged swans will be peacefully swimming beside, without paying any attention to me.

When the sky will cry and hide from the autumn under a gray blanket of clouds, I will console him and read aloud a poem about the sun.

Strophes will become hundreds of solar rays, and then fall into the lake's water. She will swallow them and lick her lips like a well-fed black cat.

When autumn will get into the white prison of winter, I'll close my eyes and see warm caramel dreams until spring, I will be a frozen five-pointed star on the surface of the lake.

Consciousness & model

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In spite of studies and taking care of your children, life in **Turin, Italy** was full of social practice for you, not just like a point from your schedule, but with heart, with tears and a wish to help. It took time, quality and brought you your **own changes**.

This is Angelina, she lost her husband and soon fell and shattered the femur. You were the only person able to break her inner wall and make her feel better



These are Nadia and Andrea, parents of two splendid children, one of them was a classmate of your younger son. At only 39 years old Andrea fell into the bathroom, having a cerebral stroke. For two years you helped them in all possible ways, from cooking to giving juridical advices. Even after you left Turin, you continue to support them by your writings.



Love, and do what you want.

- Sant'Agostino

Also Turin and the entire territory of the Metropolitan City are home to the **homeless**. And it has a substantial number. There is no need even to become a member of any community to practice volunteering in Turin - homeless people are simply sleeping on the streets, despite of the season.

Three years of your staying in this town you participated in their life constantly, cooking for them or bringing medicine and warm clothes



You wrote to a man who were in the crisis of consciousness: "It's easy to give when you have a lot. Try to do it when you have only the bare essentials". These biscuits are priceless, because you cooked them in the most difficult time for you. Wrote your wishes on handmade postcards and gave them to "your homeless" on the streets, to celebrate your birthday in this way.

— These are *Marta and little Damiano*. You did your best to them during your stay in Pavia!
Often it happens that we stop being active, for family or health reasons, and we feel alone, abandoned because everyone else continues to run, they don't have time to stop and help out. So happened with Marta, when you stopped by her.



It was a real transfer of knowledge from you, experienced mother of three children.



After the visit of Residence for lonely elderly people (Lenno, Como Lake) you told that lonely old age smells of medicine and absence of hope. There you met Aldo, ill for all his life. After a month of your meetings, Aldo began to bring you home flowers he took directly from the garden of the Residence, making all nurses smile



Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.
- Mother Teresa

VALDOCCO
MARIA AUSILIATRICE

*With the present letter Community of Valdocco
Maria Ausiliatrice, Salesians of Don Bosco expresses
the gratitude to Olga Papkova and her dear family
for the works of charity carried out voluntarily and
constantly for the last three years.
Your solidarity, made of concrete presence and real
sharing, moral and psychological assistance of our
major lords, children and the poor, allowed us to
respond adequately to the needs of reception and
help to many people.*



Don Giovanni Bosco
(1815-1888)

*God bless you on your journey,
With heart,
Don Michele Giulio, Community of Valdocco
Turin, 2017*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Giulio". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the typed name.



The happiest people I know are those who lose themselves in the service of others.

- Gordon B. Hinckley

Dear Olga, this social work journal I leave it open on this page, because your love does not end. Everyone can add a new chapter.

God bless you, Happy Woman!