

The

# Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

*Karmic Comments From Good Karma Publishing / Archived Columns  
Editorial Announcements & Guidelines Originally Published in The Vital Force*

*May 2011*

## ANATOMY OF A NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE

*The New York Times* health blogger, Tara Parker-Pope, wrote an article in March about T'ai Chi Chih. It was based on recent UCLA research studying the effects of TCC on easing depression (among other things) in the elderly (among other populations.) There have been grumblings that there was only one mention of TCC in the article, and that it didn't even get *that* one mention right: "The study used a form of tai chi called T'ai Chi Chih that uses 20 simple exercises that are nonstrenuous and easy enough to be performed by older adults." But if you're not aware of how the media world works, this can seem insignificant and disappointing. But it's quite the opposite.

I've been working with a media specialist since early 2011 to leverage the exposure that Roselee Blooston secured in the November-December 2010 *AARP* magazine. *The Vital Force* was given an outreach donation a few years ago, and it was set aside until the "right time" – and the *AARP* article offered the perfect opportunistic springboard.

Our media specialist contacted Ms Parker-Pope a few times in early 2011, seemingly to no avail. But then the UCLA results were published in mid-March, and we sent another press release to Ms Parker-Pope (among other outlets), and she, having been introduced to *T'ai Chi Chih* twice over two months prior, picked up the significance of *T'ai Chi Chih* in the UCLA study. (The UCLA press release from 16 March 2011, by the way, only once mentioned *T'ai Chi Chih* – as opposed to *T'ai Chi*. It also inaccurately describes *T'ai Chi Chih* as "a gentle, Westernized version of 'tai chi,' a 2,000-year-old Chinese martial art." Further, the official bio for researcher Helen Lavretsky, MD, on the UCLA website, says her research is being conducted on "tai chi.") Is it any wonder why *other* media outlets are getting it wrong? Thus the assertion that it's a significant victory that ***The New York Times* got it right**. *Time* magazine picked up UCLA research, too, but it would not issue a correction when we contacted the reporter.

The other major point is that **the article directly hyperlinks** to <http://www.taichichih.org/overview.php> – which simply does not get any better. Period. If the article offered nothing else, this would be a huge win.

As a result of the NYT article, an alternative health editor at *Metro International* (circulation of 17 million in over 60 online editions worldwide), who thought she'd heard of every practice under the sun, was intrigued by the word *Chih* tacked onto *T'ai Chi* and contacted us. She'd found a new hook, and she needed an interview and photos within 24 hours. Although I spent a few hours gathering high resolution scans from my files, she still ran stock T'ai Chi photos that were more glossy. Since then I've asked teacher and photographer Andrea Cole to build a portfolio that we can have available for these purposes. Andrea has generously offered to donate her time to this cause.

There have been other placements, too, like:

- A feature recommending Justin's instructional DVD in *Community Health* magazine (readership of 500,000 in the Midwest and South) as one of the five best "workout" DVDs for the new year;
- An article featuring teacher Maya Caudill, discussing how TCC relieves her arthritis symptoms, in the *San Jose Mercury News* (circulation of 575,000 in the Bay Area and syndicated). Maya graciously met a typically-intense reporter's deadline around New Year's Day.
- Syndications of (or variations on) the NYT article in dozens of other media outlets;

And at least two more high quality placements – places we pitched, and again leveraged from the NYT article – will unfold over the next few months. Stay tuned.

*May 2010*

## SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY: SELECTED WRITINGS 1985-1997 (2ND EDITION)

Justin Stone's best selling book (okay, well, after the instructional photo text) has been reprinted, redesigned, and features one of his favorite paintings, *Mu*, on the front cover. *Mu*, by the way, roughly translates as the key to a Zen koan. When the master was asked if a dog had Buddha nature, the master answered "*Mu*." Did the student understand?

In working closely with the text to bring this edition to fruition, it's abundantly clear for the umpteenth time that this book is loaded with ripe

fruit ready to be picked by eager students. If you haven't picked it up lately (or, gasp, if you don't know it), it's time to go out on a date and get reacquainted.

#### CLIMB THE JOYOUS MOUNTAIN: LIVING THE MEDITATIVE WAY (2ND EDITION)

A virtual reading group has formed on the T'ai Chi Chih Facebook page where quotations from this inspirational and illuminating book are being shared and commented upon. Join us for a daily dip into Justin Stone's journey toward becoming the vessel through which T'ai Chi Chih was born. Quite simply, to fully understand TCC, you need to have read this book. Get the new second edition to best follow along. It's the one with Justin's painting *From The Mountains to the Ocean* on the front – the painting of a profile of Justin looking down from the snow-covered Himalayas (to the unseen ocean).

## February 2010

### ~ AMAZON.COM ~

This e-commerce behemoth is a double-edged sword for GKP. On one hand, it has a huge audience reach and we want our products featured on it – in order for as many people around the world to discover T'ai Chi Chih as possible. But on the other hand, amazon.com demands a 55% discount and free shipping from GKP, so in the final analysis, GKP basically provides books via this channel as a service and with no profit to GKP. The bigger issue is that whatever GKP offers on amazon.com is available to students at a lower cost than teachers offer in class – except when considering the shipping component, which brings teachers back to being competitive with amazon.com.

*\*\*We offer books (and the instructional video) through amazon.com that we cannot get most teachers to promote or carry on a regular basis. GKP does not, however, sell our most popular product – the instructional dvd – through amazon.com because we want to preserve the re-sale market for our teachers, to support them in their teaching.*

Unfortunately, multiple sources (including those going under the names of "TCC of Central California," "InnerSelfMarket" in Florida, "Livamed" in Texas, and "Emerald Market" in Pennsylvania) are reselling Justin Stone's instructional dvd and photo text on amazon.com as third-party retailers. And this directly undercuts every other teacher out there. So on behalf of GKP, I am sorry that some people ordering from GKP are hurting the incomes of other teachers by reselling those discounted dvds via amazon.com. *All I can say is this:* when shipping through the re-seller is factored into the final price, the dvd ends up costing students the same – whether they bought it from a teacher in class or from amazon.com. *The only way for students to get a dvd through class, though, is for teachers to keep it in stock and sell it at class. GKP is trying to help teachers by not selling the dvd through amazon.com. We hope you'll help by promoting Justin's dvd and offering it to your students directly in class.*

### ~ SPEAKING OF AMAZON.COM ~

A number of Justin's fans have reviewed his books on Amazon recently and it's really helped get the word out. Feel free to add your voice on amazon.com. Here's a random sampling:

"The single most striking aspect of this little book [*Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion*] is the depth of its overview of Indian, Chinese and Zen Buddhism as well as the elaboration on Taoism and Yogic practices. It is a delightful blend of both the author's scholastic knowledge, embellished with a brilliant glossary, defining Sanskrit and other terms, and his personal insights and stories stemming from his time pursuing Self-knowledge in the Orient. Of special interest is the wide-ranging bibliography culled from Stone's library, which could be used by Eastern Philosophy Departments to structure their degree program. – ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

"Just read *Spiritual Odyssey* by Justin Stone again. ... There is so much to learn and I learn a little bit more each time I am ready to listen to what the author has to say. Each writing is short, making it perfect for bedtime. I turn off the light feeling like I have just taken a sip from a bottomless cup of wisdom. As the author says, "Only the one drinking the water knows if it is hot or cold." I strongly recommend that you read *Spiritual Odyssey* and see for yourself."

– SHERYL ADAIR, ATLANTA, GA

"[*Abandon Hope*] is a must-read for anyone who desires to explore the meaning of life. No matter what your religion or spiritual practice might be, the book offers countless treasures of eternal truths. My attention was captured on the very first page and subsequently drawn deeper into Mr. Stone's perspective as he compares and synthesizes how and why we look for and find meaning in our individual lives. It's quite likely that the reader will refer back to the book's pages often, gleaning Wisdom for everyday living." – JUDY CHANCEY, ATLANTA, GA

## November 2009

### ~ VIDEO CLIPS OF JUSTIN ON YOUTUBE.COM ~

Every two weeks, GKP posts another never-before-seen clip of Justin explaining how to do a certain movement. (If you are a member of the T'ai Chi Chih facebook page, you receive notice of when these are posted. If you are not a member – it's free and easy to sign up at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) – you can still find them by going to <http://www.youtube.com/user/tccabq>.)

Says teacher Jim Shorr of Portland, Oregon: "Congratulations on getting Justin on YouTube. The video is superb; I understood most of his suggestions and avoidances. I've already watched and listened to him (three or four times) moving and articulating tips on Working The Pulley, Joyous Breathe and Bass Drum. I picked up several points on proper teaching and stressing the circularity. .... We learn something new every time we watch Justin Stone "in action." For Six Healing Sounds, he clearly articulated the nature of the aspirating sound versus the spoken word, emphasizing the hand moves firmly but not hard. (I see some folks forcing that forward motion of the hands.) We also noted that he drags out the *chewwww* - *eeee* sound, and he says that people with kidney issues can do the entire Six Healing Sounds and enunciate *chewee* the whole time. Keep up these helpful points from Justin."

## - HOT OFF THE PRESSES -

The 3rd edition of the *T'ai Chi Chih Photo Text* is hot off the presses, and its cover price remains constant at \$15.95. Why purchase this edition when your old one is all marked up with notes? One reason is not to confuse your students when you offer them the new, gradient blue-to-green cover. But more significantly because it contains important adjustments that make consistent what Justin teaches in his DVD and what he's teaching at Tuesday morning practices in Albuquerque. For example, we do not hold Cosmic Consciousness Pose for four minutes; we hold it for one. We do not ground between movements for 20 seconds; we do it for four or five seconds. And more. We hope you'll reinforce the new edition by purchasing it and studying it closely.

## August 2009

### - NEWLY RELEASED CLIPS OF JUSTIN STONE DEMONSTRATING MOVEMENTS -

There is a newfound cache of Justin Stone demonstrating how to teach and how to move in the Good Karma Publishing archives. Justin has been captured on video at teacher conferences (thanks to hosting teachers) and through greetings he has sent to conferences when he was unable to attend in person (thanks to Brock Brocklehurst). Previously, if you didn't attend a particular conference, you wouldn't have been privy to these offerings. Now, if you join the T'ai Chi Chih Facebook group (it's free and easy to sign up; see *The Vital Force*, February 2009) or scour YouTube, you will be able to benefit from them. They're priceless little gems, and through them, you'll see that the principles haven't changed one iota over time.

Twice monthly, we are releasing short clips of these Justin Stone teachings. If you're a member of the Facebook group, you'll be the first to get the announcement. (We don't send general email notifications because *The Vital Force* has a policy about not using your contact information for purposes other than emergencies.) If you're not a Facebook member, you can, of course, still find the videos on YouTube. On the group T'ai Chi Chih Facebook page, scroll down to the video section to see links for the clips all in one place.

The first day the first clip went live, Chris Norkus, a Facebook T'ai Chi Chih member and teacher, wrote to say what perfect timing it was. Chris had been working with Working The Pulley just that morning, and Justin's comments directly spoke to an element around which he'd been trying to get clarity.

### - GROWTH OF CERTAINTY & COMMITMENT -

I moved to Albuquerque four years ago to be in Justin's presence more. And when I'm not traveling, I see him at the Tuesday morning teacher practice, at his house for meditation three days a week, and I take him to lunch on Saturday (since he relinquished his car). Of course he's constantly testing students, and he needles me at times about why Good Karma isn't selling as much material as it did seven or eight years ago. I have many responses, but these days I usually simply say, "I'm only one person." To which he says, "That's right."

By spending time with Justin, my faith has increased and my impatience (though still present) has decreased. I have a growth of certainty in the growth of T'ai Chi Chih and a faith in it remaining free of other attachments. Sales are down about five percent from last year, but I remain committed to doing my part. A Goethe poem was given to me recently that addresses this subject head on: "Until one is committed there is always hesitancy / The chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness / ... / The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. / All sorts of things occur to help that which would never otherwise have occurred. / A whole stream of events issues from the decision, / Raising to one's favor all manner of unforeseen accidents and meetings / And material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way, / Whatever you can do or dream you can begin it. / Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

I am grateful for to the opportunity to do one person's part. I know each of you is also – whether it's through a sincere daily practice, offering Justin's teaching materials in your classes, spreading the word about TCC, and/or keeping TCC free of commercialization and other affiliations.

## May 2009

### - LINKING T'AI CHI CHIH WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES -

As Justin Stone says in *Spiritual Odyssey*, published by Good Karma Publishing, "If T'ai Chi Chih is hitched to other activities, no matter how worthy, it will, in time, fade. To use TCC as the key to opening the door to pushing other matter is wrong. Keep them separate. It's best to examine motives – at rock bottom level – for this type of activity."

### - TRADEMARK LICENSING AGREEMENT -

This agreement, which Good Karma's copyright and trademark attorney has long suggested that teachers sign in order to protect against trademark infringement, will no longer be required. Justin believes it sets the wrong tone – to ask newly minted teachers to sign these kinds of legal documents.

GKP does respectfully request, though, that you continue using the registered trademark symbol ® – after the first use only of T'ai Chi Chih in any article that you write for print or web publication.

It is also still important, as much as possible, to use T'ai Chi Chih as an adjective – as in the "T'ai Chi Chi practice." Why? Because when a trademarked name stands alone it becomes generic, and its value eventually becomes watered down. For example, it used to be Kleenex tissues and Xerox copies and Coca-Cola soft drinks. Now it's "Please xerox this for me" even if it's being copied on a Canon copier. Or it's "May I have a kleenex, please?" when it's actually a Charmin tissue.

- LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR TEACHERS –  
SET UP BY MARIE MYSZKIER, ALBUQUERQUE, NM -

Teachers in need of liability insurance may contact the Fitness and Wellness Insurance Agency (not Marie), where applicable policies are underwritten by the Philadelphia Insurance Company (tel 800-395-8075). Visit the website ([fitnessandwellness.com](http://fitnessandwellness.com)) and search for Liability Only > Select Your Association > T'ai Chi Chih – Joy Thru Movement > Select Your State and continue. If you are leasing a business space or have employees, see the “Business Application” section. As of this writing, the cost for \$2 million worth of coverage is \$145 annually (if you teach part time or less than six hours per week.) If you are teaching full time (i.e. over six hours per week), the cost for \$4 million worth of coverage is \$205 annually. Thanks, Marie for sharing. This information will be posted on the hidden teacher URL under [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org). (Contact Lorraine Lepine if you don't know it.)

## February 2009

### WE'RE THROWING A PARTY & EVERYONE IS INVITED

Considering our far-flung internet exposure with Wikipedia and YouTube, T'ai Chi Chih is continuing to embrace the 21st century – this time by creating a group on Facebook.com, the wildly popular friendster and social utility site that lets users connect with those with similar interests. How can it work for TCC? Let us count the ways; the possibilities are truly infinite. To start things out, we've posted links to articles referencing TCC and to a few TCC-only websites. Beneath those links are places for folks to comment – students and teachers alike. It's incredibly powerful software; the basics are easy to use. For instance, under the link highlighting “T'ai Chi Chih May Help Elderly Sleep” (which links to a story on UPI – United Press International), you can comment about how TCC has helped *your* insomnia. Share your experience; it'll help others become convinced that TCC may help them. You can also answer a question posed by a teacher or student to keep the thread (or conversation) going. And you can share links to related web sites, post calendar items, add videos and photos, write notes, and more. You can invite friends, students, and teachers to participate. The more the merrier.

### GROUNDSWELL OF GRASS ROOTS

This method of developing communities is referred to as “Web 2.0.” It's all about harnessing social media outlets to spread the word out about a movement, group, or idea. The thinking is that the best endorsements for something come from its community of adherents and loyal users. Instead of relying solely on Good Karma Publishing, for instance, to tell you how great Justin Stone's DVD is, folks who've used his DVD can tell you with their own voices. These days, this seems to be the most trusted form of spreading the word.

It offers a vibrant, healthy, and transparent way to connect, and it offers itself as an egalitarian place for equals. It's also a way of attracting a younger group of users and having a centralized and richly layered place for media and others to learn about TCC.

### HOW DO I GET CONNECTED & JOIN THE CONVERSATION?

Go to <http://groups.to/taichichih/> and if you're not already a registered user of Facebook (which is free), you'll need to create an email address/account to log on. To do that, click “No thanks, take me straight to...” which will take you to the basic T'ai Chi Chih page. You can scan the main page without joining the group. But if you'd like to join the conversation and post, click the green button in the upper left corner to sign up for Facebook. Then you're good to go.

### AN IMPORTANT CAVEAT

There are basic guidelines we need to adhere to, the most important of which are similar to those advocated by *The Vital Force*: It's about keeping T'ai Chi Chih pure and simple, just the way Justin Stone wants it. Please do not mix postings about TCC with other practices. There's plenty to say about TCC – and one's personal experiences with it, and the effects and benefits of it – all by itself. Additionally, if you are posting photos or videos, please consider if they depict the movements being done correctly. There's little use in spreading TCC if we're setting an incorrect example by not paying utmost attention to its principles. Done with integrity, we have the ability to attract an infinite number of new practitioners with this “service to humanity” and this “form of love,” as Justin Stone, the Originator, so eloquently reminds us.

## November 2008

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

At the July teacher conference, GKP reported its year-to-date activities, including the fact that:

- Justin's *Climb the Joyous Mountain, Second Edition* was just published – note the cover painting by Justin, entitled “From the Mountain to the Ocean,” which is a self-portrait of him looking down from the top of a snow-covered mountain;
- Justin's *Spiritual Stories of the East* was published as a 2-disc CD;
- Justin's 1994 instructional video was converted to a DVD – we refer to it as “Justin Stone Unplugged” since its production values are simpler than the 2000 filming and since Justin himself is the one who conducts the practice after the instruction;
- We switched to daily shipments using UPS in order to provide speedier and more reliable service;
- We printed a new 2008 catalog with lots of new information – so please throw out all prior catalogs.

### SLIP-SLIDING AWAY

GKP also presented the sales figures (from 2007 through year-to-date 2008) for each of Justin's books, instructional DVDs, and CDs. Although we hesitated to bring it up, since we prefer to affirm the highest, we thought it necessary to reinforce the truth: If things continue the way they are going, Justin's words will soon be lost. In short, Justin's materials are not being utilized by teachers and students as well as they could and, dare we say, should. It was not a sugarcoated presentation; the transparency and numbers shocked most teachers in the room – if post-presentation comments were any gauge. More and more T'ai Chi Chih practitioners (teachers and students) are losing their connection with the originator of T'ai Chi Chih because fewer and fewer of them purchase, read, use, and understand his materials.

#### A NEW PERSPECTIVE

That is why GKP asked three teachers (Sheila Leonard, Vicki Schroeder, and Dan Pienciak), who sell more of Justin's materials than anyone else besides the GKP teacher distributors (Carmen Brocklehurst, Sandy McAlister, Pam Towne, Sue Bitney, and Chery Ann Hoffmeyer), to write about how and why they are so successful in reaching out to their students with Justin's materials. (See pgs. 12-13.) Please consider their words carefully. The connection to our originator depends on it – and you. Thank you.

## May 2008

#### ONE DEGREE OF SEPARATION – OR SIX DEGREES?

In talking with a T'ai Chi Chih teacher friend recently, I came to clearly understand a fundamental choice or position that we all have to make as teachers and students of TCC. This teacher believes that it's inevitable that T'ai Chi Chih, one day, will morph into something that doesn't really resemble Justin Stone's TCC. His analogy went something like this: take an original to the Xerox machine and make a copy. Then make a copy from that copy and another from that copy and so on. By the tenth generation of copies what you see will only faintly resemble the original. It's just the way it is, he said. But I disagree about the inevitable outcome because of one important reason: *We have a great DVD of Justin Stone doing TCC*. No one need ever be more than one generation removed from Source. Ever. Imagine having a video recording of the Buddha teaching meditation under the Bodhi tree. It's as simple and clear as that.

A 15-year veteran teacher phoned GKP recently to order photo texts and I asked her why she never ordered the DVD. She said she'd never seen it so she couldn't recommend it to her students. I gently suggested that she might want to check it out. Now that she has, she orders it for her students.

#### RE-NAMING THE MOVEMENTS & THE PRACTICE?

When referring to the movements while teaching or as a student, please retain the original full and proper names. Please don't say "Wrist Circles" when it's really "Pulling Taffy, Variation Two, Wrist Circles." Please don't say "The Daughters" when it's "Daughter On The Mountaintop" and "Daughter In The Valley." Please don't say that TCC consists of 20 movements when it really consists of 19 movements and one pose. Why? Because before you know it, twenty years down the road, no one will recall the proper names or how you really do them, and perhaps someone will come along and call the movements T'ai Chi Chop. When we don't act from the highest integrity with intention, we're usually on a slippery slope in the wrong direction.

We all know what problems arise when T'ai Chi Chih isn't referred to as T'ai Chi Chih in the press. The studies out of UCLA using T'ai Chi Chih can't seem to get it right, and when the press breaks (even more than it has) it's not going to do teachers and practitioners of TCC any good – unless we stand firm in insisting that "Chih" be used. Please do not drop the "Chih" when speaking or writing about TCC.

## February 2008

#### NEW PRODUCTS

We have converted Justin's earlier teachings, filmed in 1994, to a DVD, and it is now available for \$32.95. If you want another perspective on the practice, this invaluable resource is now readily accessible. If you own the 2000 DVD and are a dedicated TCC practitioner, you owe it to yourself to learn from the 1994 DVD, too.

We have also converted the out-of-print Spiritual Stories of the East to CD, and the double-set CD is now available for \$19.95. Pop it in your car and cruise to another world and realm.

#### NEW CATALOG & UPS

Yes, the new catalog features three new products (with one surprise published in June 2008), but the real change is a switch to shipping with UPS. In addition to package tracking, GKP also has daily pick-up. Note: if you currently use a PO box for shipping, you will need to supply GKP with a street address.

## November 2007

#### DIRECT TRANSMISSION FROM THE MASTER

How many of *you* have met Justin Stone? How many of *your students* have met Justin Stone? How many of your *student's students* have met Justin Stone?

As time passes, fewer and fewer among us will have ever interacted with Justin in person. (And even many who *have* interacted with him have not plumbed the depths of his writings.) Materials by Justin Stone offer a window into, a direct link to, the originator of T'ai Chi Chih. It could be said that you can't know T'ai Chi Chih without knowing about Justin's life and experiences. His works encourage you to do the work for yourself.

Ask yourself: do you owe it to yourself, your students, and the practice to know the entire oeuvre of Justin Stone? Do you owe it to yourself to work with his instructional dvd on a continuing basis? Do your students – in order to get the most out of T'ai Chi Chih – deserve to receive a direct transmission through his DVD? (Yes, this is a strong pitch to staying firmly connected to the originator.)

Web Site: [www.gkpub.com](http://www.gkpub.com)

As hopefully you know, the new Good Karma Publishing web site is up and running. It includes a complete e-commerce section for ordering DVDs, books, CDs, audio tapes, and Justin's poster. (The first time that teachers log in to create an account, the site will verify that you are indeed a teacher. During the check out process, your order will reflect the teacher discount.) You may also request a catalog or download an order form.

The web site contains many more elements, too. Choice morsels include two video clips from Justin's instructional DVD; transcriptions of talks given at conferences over the years (also available as free downloads); press clippings; previously published articles by Justin from *The Vital Force* and the *New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News*; and wallpaper graphics. There are also informational sections on T'ai Chi Chih, Justin Stone, Good Karma Publishing, and *The Vital Force*.

Feedback is quite welcome and encouraged.

## August 2007

THE GOOD KARMA PUBLISHING WEB SITE IS UP AND RUNNING

Thank You For Your Patience.

Visit [www.gkpub.com](http://www.gkpub.com) for more details.

## May 2007

CIRCULARITY: SUBJECT AND OBJECT CEASE TO BE SEPARATED

Among other things, I'm a freelance Acquisitions Editor for The Countryman Press. I was recently in New York meeting with dozens of authors who were pitching me ideas they had for new travel guides. In the course of talking to them, I learned some were well established health writers. So I pitched T'ai Chi Chih to them and they were eager to take classes so that they could write articles for magazines.

I was then pitching my stable of authors to magazine editors so that these authors could get high paying magazine work, since we can't pay them what they're worth. During the course of those exchanges, a few editors hired me to write for them.

Then, I was at a meeting with the Sales & Marketing Department and the Editorial Department at WW Norton, in my capacity as Acquisitions Editor, and I pitched Justin's DVD and photo text to them (so that we could have a bigger distribution channel). The Editorial Director suggested I contact his friend who produces and sells swimming DVDs on her Web site and gets hundreds of thousands of hits a month.

The synergy was beautiful. And the longer I stayed working, the more the circularity went round and round.

HIGH AND LOW CEASE TO BE DIFFERENTIATED

I was in Manhattan recently and had just come out of a meeting with the managing editor of Trump magazine on Park Avenue South. And my cell phone rang. It was a Good Karma call that had been forwarded. The teacher, who had no idea where I was, placed an order and asked me to calculate the postage for sending her package media versus priority. So I got the GKP catalog out of my briefcase and calculated her order while standing on the sidewalk.

It reminded me of the story about the Zen master who sweeps the garden, makes the tea, and cooks in the kitchen. It's all the same. What could have been a high falutin' meeting was brought down to earth by the postage calculation. The stark difference was humorous. (I felt even more grateful, though, that the Trump meeting never even reached that level of headiness.)

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