Liz Murray grew up with two drug-addicted parents who she began supporting at age 10. Homeless at age 15, after the death of her mother, Liz overcame incredible odds to finish high school in just two years while living on the streets. She was subsequently awarded a full scholarship to Harvard. Liz, a Process graduate, recently shared her story with Light News editor Ellie Weiser.

To learn more about Liz, please go to www.washingtonspeakers.com. To write to her directly, send email to Liz.murray@yahoo.com.

From Homeless to Harvard to Hoffman

A discussion on Love, Survival and Forgiveness with Liz Murray

by Ellie Weiser

ELLIE: Liz, having seen the movie “From Homeless to Harvard” based on your life and having met you, I consider you a leader and a true visionary. Nothing in your childhood was in support of your success. Where did you find your strength?

LIZ: Thank you. The answer, in one word, is love. I was deeply loved growing up. While my parents were addicted to drugs, and they often chose drugs over their children, I was constantly embraced, endeared, kissed all over the face, told I was precious and that really stuck with me. I was loved not only by my parents but by my Uncle Arthur, who was a surrogate father.

ELLIE: Did you feel their love during your toughest times?

LIZ: When I was homeless, when my parents died, there were moments where I’d be out there and I’d remember the love I grew up with and the love of my friends, who’d become family to me. It felt like nothing was more important -- I could go without food, I could have nowhere to sleep but I knew somewhere my friends were waiting for me, and their love was very much like the love I had with my parents.

ELLIE: You lacked even the bare necessities, but you had love, and it pulled you through.

LIZ: Sometimes people grow up with a lot of ‘stuff’ but they don’t have the knowledge that their parents are there for them no matter what. What I’ve found is that neglect is neglect. My parents weren’t around because they were getting high. Other people’s parents aren’t around because they’re in a career and their children come second. Neglect is neglect and if you turn that inside out, love is love, and we would be smart not to get too fixated on the circumstances.

ELLIE: As a child a neighbor gave you a set of encyclopedias that she retrieved from the trash. Did that start your love of learning?

LIZ: My neighbor Mary would go through the garbage and bring me hideous sweaters and things that were so endearing to me. She brought me the encyclopedias, but I was already a reader because of my father, who earlier in his life had been a Ph.D. candidate in psychology at NYU. He had this great life on the outside, then crashed and burned and went to drugs.

Continued on page 2 >
LIZ: Through my dear friend Dick Simon, who’s a graduate. Also, as a speaker with the Washington Speaker’s Bureau, I travel all year meeting people who speak at conferences that were hosted by some of the people whose books I had stolen. I said to many of them, ‘I think I owe you $25,’ and we kind of laughed about it. I kind of grew up on personal development. When I was homeless and I didn’t have the guidance I needed, I would shoplift self-help books. I look back now with an endearing feeling and I’ve forgiven myself for taking the books. The irony is that when I was featured on 20/20 and then the movie came out, I was asked to speak at conferences that were hosted by some of the people whose books I had stolen. I said to many of them, ‘I think I owe you $25,’ and we kind of laughed about it.

ELLIE: Talk about a well-timed confession.

LIZ: Yes! (laughs)

ELLIE: A premise of the Process is that everyone’s guilty but no one’s to blame. Have you been able to forgive your parents?

LIZ: I did a lot of forgiveness work with my parents before the Process. Both of them passed away before I went to Hoffman, as did my beloved Uncle Arthur. Due to circumstances, there was never a ceremony around any of their deaths. At the Process I had a chance to say goodbye to them in a proper way and to let them go, which gave me access to forgiving them further.

ELLIE: What else did you get from the
Continued on next page

LIZ Murray
Continued from previous page

But his love of knowledge was always strong. He would take me to the library and check out stacks of books that I read, which he never returned. Because my father read them, books helped me feel connected to him, so I became a lover of books, including the encyclopedias from Mary.

ELLIE: When did your parents become addicts?

LIZ: They were addicted before my birth; my mother used drugs when she was pregnant with me. They were into the “scene” in New York City -- the disco, party loving, cocaine scene. My father sold my mother drugs at a party and they became a couple from there.

ELLIE: How was your transition from a street smart, homeless kid in NYC, to a scholarship student at Harvard?

LIZ: It was a question of “what do you do when you get everything you ever wished for?” I wanted so badly to be successful, to go to Harvard, to have a scholarship from the New York Times. I got everything I wished for and then suddenly I was sitting in my dorm at Harvard and the loneliness hit me very hard. It was not an easy transition.

ELLIE: You had left NYC, the only ‘home’ you’d ever known.

LIZ: It wasn’t until I was removed from where I’d grown up, and I sat in my dorm, having finished with the accomplishments that lead to this success that I realized success without fulfillment is failure. I had a feature with Barbara Walters on 20/20, I had billboards across America, I had royalty and Presidents calling me -- giving me awards. In theory this should’ve been my time to be happy, but I got to Harvard and realized that you can attain a lot but if you’re trying to fill a hole inside yourself, it won’t happen until you look at your stuff.

ELLIE: Did you ever fear that you were going to repeat the mistakes of your parents?

LIZ: I didn’t fear that I’d have their life because I’d never been high and never wanted to be, but I feared that I would fall back to the Bronx -- that perhaps I was destined to return to my roots. There were a lot of people expecting things of me – I got letters from across the U.S. asking, “How are your grades? What will you major in? In that environment it was difficult for me to feel that as my authentic self I was enough. I felt like I must have gotten this far because of the good luck around me. It couldn’t really be because of who I am as a person.

ELLIE: What initially drew you to do inner work?

LIZ: I did a lot of forgiveness work with my parents before the Process. Both of them passed away before I went to Hoffman, as did my beloved Uncle Arthur. Due to circumstances, there was never a ceremony around any of their deaths. At the Process I had a chance to say goodbye to them in a proper way and to let them go, which gave me access to forgiving them further.
Continued from previous page

Process?

**LIZ:** The amount of release I got from finally internalizing that I am not my patterns was probably the highest level of healing I have experienced in my life. Also it was at the Process that I connected with my spirituality.

**ELLIE:** What part does gratitude play in your life?

**LIZ:** If my life were a play, gratitude would be the lead character. I don’t know how, but gratitude came easily from as far back as I can remember. Maybe listening to my parents’ stories of how tough they had it made me realize that every single thing I had, if it was a hot meal, my parents together for the time they were, a bedroom to sleep in, I was blessed to have it.

**ELLIE:** Perhaps knowing that things might get worse at home made you grateful for what you had in the moment.

**LIZ:** I must have had an instinctual sense that my family wasn’t always going to be together; I would constantly tell my parents how much I loved them. Then when my mother passed away and I had no place to sleep or eat and every moment was a task in survival, especially in that state, I remember being grateful realizing that there are people all over the world who have so much less. Plus I had my mother to think of – whether it was her schizophrenia or HIV, then AIDS and all her suffering, I looked at myself and said ‘if I have my health, if I have this life, if I have air coming in and out of my lungs, I am exceedingly blessed.’ Gratitude, more than anything, is the foundation for my joy.

**ELLIE:** Liz, we love having you as part of the Hoffman family. Thank you for sharing your amazing story with us. You are a true inspiration to so many.

**LIZ:** Thank you! I often think, “God bless Bob Hoffman and every teacher and staff person who makes the Process possible. Thank you all for providing the safe, amazing place for people to know that we’re not alone and we’re not our patterns.”

The Process Scholarship Fund

**Now More Than Ever, the Need is Great**

Do you know someone with a strong commitment to take the Process, but who lacks the financial resources? If so, we encourage them to apply for a scholarship.

The Process Scholarship Fund provides more than $400,000 in partial scholarships annually, ranging from $250 - $1,200. This fund is made entirely possible by the generous support of Hoffman graduates. In 2008, the Scholarship Fund supported 225 people in taking the Process.

Requests for scholarships are evaluated based on financial need and a person’s readiness to participate in the Process. Scholarship applications are reviewed when they are received, and funds are allocated until the scholarship dollars for a specific Process are used. For this reason, we encourage people to apply early.

Our current economic times reflect a mindset that is often based in fear. As graduates of the Process, you are taking part in the transformational change that is so crucial to our world. Now more than ever is the time to stand for and invest in a shift in consciousness – a shift that values love, peace and harmony. We invite you to make a contribution to the Scholarship Fund and support others in doing this transformational work.

“**The opportunity in this global economic crisis is that it’s forcing us to rethink our relationship to money and life. This economic recession is like a “recess from excess” that is long overdue. Pay attention to and foster what you love, not what you fear. Be in gratitude for that which you love, take care of the people you love, and deepen the taproot of your commitment to community.”**

Lynne Twist, Process graduate; author of *The Soul of Money*; co-founder of The Pachamama Alliance

**How To Give**

The Hoffman Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Organization. The Hoffman Scholarship Fund exists through the extraordinary generosity of Hoffman Graduates; people just like you! Your tax deductible gifts make many of our programs possible. To make a donation, please call 800/506-5233 ext. 103 or mail your check to Hoffman Institute Foundation, 1299 Fourth St., Ste 304, San Rafael, CA 94901. To donate on line, visit at [www.hoffmaninstitute.org](http://www.hoffmaninstitute.org) and designate the program you wish to support.
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The 2008 MINI Cooper raffle for the Scholarship Fund raised $48,500. While raffle donations are not tax deductable, we thank everyone who participated in supporting the fund.
Barbara Comstock

During the 21 years that Barbara Comstock has been teaching the Hoffman Process, she has shared her love, support and deep wisdom with thousands of students. “I find it deeply rewarding to be fully present to another person and to help them learn to accept and love all parts of themselves. A gift of teaching is that through helping others, I’ve become more present and loving towards myself.”

Barbara grew up in a suburb of New York City, as the youngest of four children. Growing up, she found fun, solace and connection in acting and had a dream. “I didn’t want to be a star, I just wanted to act – it was fun and freeing to be somebody other than myself.”

In her family intellectual pursuits and creativity were high priorities, so Barbara turned her attention from theatre to East Asian studies at the University of Wisconsin. “I thought in exploring different cultures, I’d find a more fulfilling way to live.” After college she turned back to her love of creative expression and earned a MS in textiles and a MFA in sculpture.

Barbara’s path to the Hoffman Institute is full of colorful twists and turns. Starting in 1978, she lived in Nepal for five years with her first husband, Rick. “While there I recognized that life isn’t about stuff, but about my relationship with spirituality, creativity and community. My time in Nepal was simple, fun and really lovely.”

As her marriage was ending, her brother, Craig, completed the Process. In seeing how he changed, she decided to enroll. That started her involvement with the Hoffman Institute, 23 years ago! Over the next decade in addition to teaching, she was active in the administration, creation, and directing a teacher-training program. Her host of passions; art, dance, theatre, travel, relationship, community and her own spiritual practice contribute to her skill and love of teaching the Process and coaching graduates.

In recent years the creative impulse moved Barbara to collaborate with fellow Process teacher Sharon Kennedy in designing and producing workshops that focus on self-discovery through movement. “Our workshops fit beautifully with Process teachings and are open to everyone. Using improvisational movement, body centered insight, visualization, drawing and meditation, participants become present to themselves and their deepest knowing through the movement of their bodies.” To learn more about the next workshop February 21-22 in Kansas, contact Barbara or Sharon at fourwingsinstitute@gmail.com.

Last year Barbara also became a newlywed when she and Jim, her partner of over 20 years, married in a simple ceremony! When asked what she likes to do in her spare time, she responded with a laugh, “I hang out and do what I feel in the moment!” With a life this full, that sounds like the perfect response. ☺

Welcoming Hilary Illick to the Faculty

After spending five minutes with Hilary Illick, it’s clear that she was destined to teach the Hoffman Process.

Hilary’s mother is a therapist and her father has always been a passionate seeker. As a child she was exposed to compelling ideas and discussions around art, history, religion, spirituality and psychology.

Hilary earned a degree in philosophy from Stanford University, and an MFA in creative writing from San Francisco State. She’s the published author of books and short stories, and the winner of several prestigious writing awards. She is also a playwright. Hilary and Process grad Jennifer Krier co-wrote (and, in an earlier incarnation of the play, co-starred in) Eve-olution, a critically acclaimed off-Broadway stage production designed to empower women.

Hilary took the Process in 2000. “At my Process I learned to accept and love myself for my imperfections and to go public with both my light and dark sides. It was incredibly freeing to not have to try to be perfect.”

During her Process Hilary knew that she wanted to teach. “I feel in alignment as a Process teacher because a lot of the things I’ve done in my life are being put to good use.” When asked about her students she says, “I’m moved to work with people on this transformational Process. There’s nothing more beautiful than watching a person blossom into who they are…I’m blessed to be witness to it.”

When she’s not teaching the Process, Hilary runs “LIFE MATTERS,” a life coaching business. She and her husband Pierre Valette, a Process grad, married in 1990. They live outside of Boston with their four children, Zoe 16, Esmé,14, and ten year old twins, Nico and Téa. ☺
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First Time Offering: In response to many requests, we’ll hold our first-ever Women’s-Only Q² Graduate Intensive this July at WSS! Round up your female friends and sign up today! 😊

2009 Q² DATES & LOCATIONS

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Register Now: Call 1-800-506-5253 or Register online at [https://www.hoffmaninstitute.org/register/general.html](https://www.hoffmaninstitute.org/register/general.html)

Tuition is $1,295. A $250 non-refundable/non-transferable deposit holds your space. Please register early — many Q²s fill quickly.

Graduate Group Facilitators, 2008

Amazing Facilitators of 2008
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Anne Pollock
Beth Estock*
David Weinberg*
Brenda Brown
Brooke Gaab*
Bryan Stafford
Carmen Fuentes-Williams*
Cary Sheldon
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Cynthia Cummins
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Sharon Lea*
Shmuel Spiegelman*
Tamie Mills
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Tracey Lake

*Indicates 3 or more years service to the Graduate community. Blue indicates retired this year.

Special Acknowledgements for a variety of reasons to Michal Spiegelman, Maddie Weinreich, Hilary Illick, Marni Battista and Elaine Boucher!

A Warm Welcome to the new Facilitator Community Leadership Class, Fall 2008: Cynthia O’Leary, Robert Radnoti, Judi Elliott, Mike Elliott, Sally McCue, Shannon Coyner and Marcelle Pick
Graduate Teleclasses
– Sign up for a Hoffman Teleclass and Reconnect with your Light, your Wisdom and your Joy –

Join Process graduates from coast to coast on any of our insightful, feel-good teleclasses; live audio conferences on life-subjects, particularly relevant for Process graduates. Each Teleclass is led by a Process teacher. Cell phones are welcome and the dial-in number is toll-free! Classes fill early so please register today!

Deepening Joy and Happiness in Daily Life with Mary Amrita Arden
Thursday, February 19 at 5:30-6:30 PM PST / 8:30-9:30 PM EST
Honor what life has to offer and return to deepened states of joy and happiness. Become practiced in accessing resiliency during challenging times, and learn practices to maintain health and nourishment of your body, mind, emotions and spirit for overall well-being. (Register by February 18)

Still No Partner; Are You Sure There’s Nothing Wrong With Me? with Sharon Kennedy
Tuesday, April 7, 4:30-5:30 PM Pacific/7:30-8:30 PM EST
Come into right relationship with not having a relationship by dispelling your underlying dark side messages. This class focuses on self-love, self-kindness and reconnecting with your innate value, while remaining open to the mystery of how life unfolds. (Register by April 6)

Landing your Vision--Making it Real with Ginger Buckley
Wednesday, April 29 at 5:00-6:00 PM PST / 8:00-9:00 PM EST
If your vision is clear but you’re having difficulty manifesting it, there are steps you can take to attain the results you want. In this class we’ll examine where you’ve been successful in bringing your vision to life, and where you find yourself stuck. Then, with some help and new steps you will become empowered to get through the transition and into living your vision! (Register by April 28)

Each teleclass is $29 (non-refundable/non-transferable).
Please call from a quiet location.
All Teleclasses are recorded.

Hoffman Calendar

FEBRUARY
February 12  Ceremony of Integration – CA
February 19  Graduate Teleclass; Deepening Joy and Happiness in Daily Life
February 20-27  HQP – California
February 26  Ceremony of Integration – CA
Feb. 28-Mar. 1  Special Graduate Course at White Sulphur Springs “Celebrating Joy in Everyday Life.”

MARCH
March 3  *Process Intro Call 5:00 PM PST: 866/322-7998, password 86157#
March 6-13  HQP - Massachusetts
March 6-13  HQP – California
March 12  Ceremony of Integration – CA & MA
March 20-22  Q2 Graduate Intensive – CA
March 25  Graduate Teleclass; Tools for New Grads
Mar. 27- April 3  HQP – California

APRIL
April 2  Grad Groups & Facilitation Intro Call 4:00 PM: 866/322-7998, password 4936161#
April 2  Ceremony of Integration – CA
April 7  *Process Intro Call 5:00 PM PST: 866/322-7998, password 86157#
April 7  Graduate Teleclass; Still No Partner- Are You Sure There’s Nothing Wrong With Me?
April 17-24  HQP – California
April 17-19  Q2 Graduate Intensive – MA
April 23  Ceremony of Integration – CA

*Process Intro Calls are a great way to learn more about the Process. They’re free, and open to all. No registration or RSVP is required. If you are already a Process graduate and would like to share your experience with others on the call, bring a friend and dial in!

Times listed above are Pacific Standard Time (PST).

Process grads, visit our graduate website at www.hoffmanlightnews.com for the most up-to-date Hoffman happenings.
Do you remember speaking with someone wonderful when you first called the Hoffman Institute? If so, you connected with a member of the Hoffman Enrollment team, an extraordinary group of loving professionals, who are the entrée to the Hoffman Process for thousands of students.

Each Enrollment team member is highly trained to meet prospective enrollees exactly where they are, and to provide a safe, caring environment in which people can explore, one on one, whether the Process is right for them. Once the decision is made, the team guides each student through the pre-Process paperwork and assignment, addressing any special needs that might arise.

At the helm of the Enrollment team is Liza Ingrasci, the Institute’s VP and managing director. She’s been welcoming new students for almost 20 years, so if there’s a Process-related question out there, she’s addressed it! For almost 10 years Linda Klein, the department’s director, has touched the lives of more Process grads than we can count. Linda leads Ariana Bushati, Lillon Bandalin and Julie Daley, and the department’s administrator, Lizza Kitaen, who extend their unique gifts to Process enrollees each and every day.

This Year, Empower Yourself and Someone you Love!

For a limited time, we’re offering cost savings for the Hoffman Process and the Q² Graduate Intensive. Take advantage of these discounts and recommit to your own growth, happiness, and sense of purpose, and help the people you love do the same.

**Hoffman Quadernity Process - $250 Off**

Last year we issued a $250 Process gift certificate for grads to give to their friends and family. That certificate is expired, but due to its resounding popularity, we’re extending it! Your friends and family may use the $250 discount certificate below toward the cost of any Process in 2009 if they register with a $500 deposit by March 1, 2009. Feel free to spread the love -- give a certificate to as many people as you like.

**Q² Graduate Intensive - $95 Off**

Process grads, we invite you to apply the $95 discount certificate below toward the cost of any Q² Graduate Intensive in 2009 if you register with a $250 deposit by March 1, 2009. Register for a Q² now and prepare to experience compassion, feel empowered, and live with greater joy as you deepen your original Process experience.
IN THIS ISSUE!

- Read the inspiring story of Process Graduate Liz Murray, who overcame profound obstacles to find herself.
- Hoffman Institute 2008 Donor List
- 2009 Schedule of all Hoffman Programs
- Meet Process teachers Barbara Comstock and Hilary Illick
- Money saving coupons for the Process and the Q² Graduate Intensive

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