

CALLED

A Memoir of Becoming



DR. NINA MEYERHOF

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INTRODUCTION

If you are someone who might be struggling with your path or feel that you have much to offer and just don't know how to begin, consider starting right where you are and believing that you just need to be curious enough to step into opportunities that might be in front of you but you haven't noticed them. People often ask me how I knew what I was meant to do with my life. The truth is, I didn't. Not at first. I simply followed the thread.

Sometimes it looked like heartbreak.

Sometimes it looked like a dream.

Sometimes it showed up as a child's face, a war zone, or a whisper in the night.

I wasn't given a map — I was given a question: What does it mean to live a meaningful life in service to humanity?

My whole life has been a series of adventures. This is not a book of teachings. It is a book of becoming. You'll read about my Jewish roots and the shadows of the Holocaust that lingered in my bones. You'll meet my mentors and my lovers, my children and my global family. You'll see my

efforts to bring children of the world together — not just to “tolerate” one another, but to understand that they are already One. You’ll glimpse the spiritual path that lit my way, even when the world felt dark. And you’ll feel, I hope, the immense love I carry for this planet and its people.

I have traveled to over one hundred countries and won many prestigious awards. I’m a Queen in Ghana. I’ve had dinner with Mikhail Gorbachev and hung out with Michael Jackson. Not because I’m special, but because I am a “spiritual warrior.” As I reflect on my life, I never thought I would write a book. I didn’t seem that interesting. But apparently, the things that I have done were pretty out there! I want to share with you that if I could do it, then so can you.

No matter how tough things got, I always asked, “What’s next?”

There is more.

You are more.

We are more.

And the time is now.

May this book awaken something true in you. May it remind you that your life, too, is sacred.

With deep love,

Nina Meyerhof



CHAPTER 1

From Me to WE to ONE

A Philosophical Overview

This is the end of an era dominated by hierarchical power. Figures emerging symbolize the end of a time in which an individual authoritarian leader — the sort springing up all over the world — can be the ultimate controlling figure for an entire nation. They represent the pinnacle of self-serving, their behaviors focused almost exclusively on the “I.” But the “I” must give way, allowing itself to become “WE,” if we are to become a truly global world and eventually come to conscious awareness that we are One Humanity. The journey is from I to WE to ONE.

It is not just our leaders who feel the need to acquire and control and rise to the apex in their personal and professional lives. Individuals far outside the political sphere have gotten caught in the same ego trap. Authoritarian leaders are simply an extreme example, easy to learn from. They do not bring people together. They create walls of separation. But these walls are structurally fragile and temporary.

We need to dismantle those walls as fast as they go up. This is a time for cultivating healthy, organic change. New systems will arise, systems

with enough room and intelligence to let us understand one another. Those systems will show us how our planet engages in its own evolution, and how we can participate. Seizing power over the Earth and its peoples, whether by persuasion or force, is a tactic that cannot endure. Hierarchical domination is a concept of the past, and it should be relegated to the past, not bolstered as our future. We need to withdraw from the old structures, so they collapse. But what new systems are emerging, and what is the new thinking they represent?

We are entering a new age. Old beliefs, institutions, and ways of life are losing sway, and a new way is trying to enter the world. Thanks to ego and the lust for power, this dismantling is happening with a needless harshness. But the emergence of the new is fresh and necessary and creative nonetheless. It is an evolutionary unfolding of the path humankind is meant to take.

How do we stand in this time of turmoil? Who *are* we, that we were born at this time to participate in this changing of the guard, this transformation of culture and society? Because right now, as we are pried away from all the institutions and ways of being that once comforted us, we have a choice. We can let the old goals of power and greed impose themselves on the new order, or we can create a different, stronger way, one of peace and gentleness, cooperation, and sustainability. It is our duty to cleanse ourselves of our cultural norms.

Never did I dream, absorbed as I was in the chaos and resistance, that I would take time out to write a memoir. But one day, Christine Burych announced that my life was interesting and asked if she could interview me. Hours and hours of conversation followed. Then Lori Lustberg heard

of all the interviews and offered to transcribe them. Now all three of us were working together, reading over the notes, which led us into all sorts of deep and unusual discussions. As world events evolved, the project began to seem urgent, so as is my way, I dove in, still not fully understanding why. With Jeannette Cooperman's help, I gathered all those pieces of my life into a single story. Now, more than a year later, I've realized what the real purpose of all this was. I'm writing to show what a spiritual life looks like in the modern world.

Spirituality is usually presented with fluffy words like “abundance” and “compassion” and geared to explain how we can all smile and love one another. And that's wonderful, but a spiritual life is a work in progress — forever. We all have histories and scars and issues to work through, and they pop up again just when we think we have vanquished them. Love is hard work, whether it's self-love (the real kind, not vanity) or intimate love or love of one's supposed enemies. A spiritual life aims to transcend all the meanness and pettiness humans are heir to, but that means constant learning, not ethereal smiles.

If we had nothing to learn, we wouldn't be here on this planet. We incarnate for the purpose of learning. Self-knowledge, followed by spiritual knowledge — that is the purpose of our lives, whether we admit it or not. The reason a soul incarnates is to tackle the issues that still need to be addressed. Which is why we have to address every issue that comes up, so our soul will sense that we have an understanding of how to consciously improve ourselves. Addressing those issues is the work of a lifetime.

I have devoted most of my now eighty-three years on this planet to the spiritual path. Like you, I've been given gifts and ease along the way. But I've also tripped and fallen many times, and I've experienced heartache, agonizing uncertainty, and darkness. Whenever I fell, though — and I

believe this is the key to living an authentic spiritual life — I would get back up, put one foot in front of the other, and continue along the path.

Two questions burned bright. Why was I here; what was the purpose and meaning of my life? Also, why was I Jewish; what was the lesson of that identity?

Seeking was the first step on my spiritual journey, looking here and there, casting about, turning over rocks in the path to see if I could find the answers to those questions. I think I was born an old soul; I came into this world acutely conscious. When I was quite young, I had a dream in which I saw a group of people in the sky, all linked together in what I would later realize was a holographic form. That was the beginning of my understanding of oneness and how we are all connected. As I grew older, that dream kept flashing into my mind. Sometimes it would fade into the background, while at other times it would pop into the foreground, demanding my attention. Definitely, it was a marker.

My parents had no knowledge of this inner life I barely understood — but they must have glimpsed it, because they called me Little Buddha. I remember having this sense of understanding, this window into life's inner workings, at a very young age. But then I released that knowledge, because I wanted to be part of the Earth experience, and that raised yet another question: Is birth death, or is death birth? Which place is really our home?

Home, you'll see, is a thread that runs through this book. I hadn't expected that. But again and again, I found myself describing the people I was drawn to as feeling like home to me, feeling like family. Both my grandmothers were murdered in Germany during the Holocaust, and my parents carried that pain. The home they created in the United States was fierce with protective love, but it was not joyful, and they did not know how to guide me as I came of age in this new country. So I set out to figure out the world for myself.

Once again, it seems that those years were purposeful. My quest to learn and to be loved would open the way to my destiny. At the time, though, all I knew was that I hungered to explore. My grandparents' deaths had scared my parents into timidity, which then pushed me into recklessness, because I did not want a life as small and safe as theirs had become. But the risks I took taught me human nature, and in time, they taught me how to love. I created home for many people, looked for it in my travels around the world, recognized it even in strangers, and at a certain point, I was able to stop seeking. What I found is that inside each of us lives and breathes our soul essence, our authentic self, the self that is here forever. That self, that essence, can touch the higher self, the higher energies — of consciousness, God, Creator, however you name that Source — and bring them through the body. When that happens, you discover that peace, joy, and happiness do not come from the outside. They are within you.

That is where my wandering brought me. I think all our wanderings are for a purpose, and if we are sincerely seeking, then it almost doesn't matter where we turn, because somehow, we will find ourselves back on our destined path again.

The spiritual experience is embracing and warm. It places all that you need within you — with extra to share. We look to lamas, Buddhist leaders, rabbis, and others who live in the understanding of the spiritual quest to teach us. But in the end, we discover that we are our own teacher.

Please don't put pressure on yourself to be perfect. Spirituality is a dynamic process of consciousness and an ever-evolving path. Perfection is not the goal. Evolution is the goal, evolution on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. The soul looks for avenues of expression and

opportunities for learning, because it understands that the purpose of life is the evolution of consciousness. As the only species with this purpose, humans become the liaison between the higher realms and the material plane. We hold the two together.

Along the path, meditation is helpful, but the real work is getting clear, accepting our weaknesses and strengths and seeing them for what they are, knowing you can release, and no longer identify with, those aspects of yourself you no longer want. And you can nurture and manifest more of those aspects of yourself you do want. In so doing, you make your life the expression of your inner self.

Spirituality is the consciousness that brings us into deeper touch with ourselves, with one another, with our diverse ecologies, the Earth, our wider cosmos, and the eternal source of all. It is the essential basis of all being; the planetary consciousness; and the connectedness, interaction, and alignment of humanity, animals, nature, the economy, and the cosmos. When we can see how all that ties together, we are introduced to ethical, holistic, and responsible thinking, and we are compelled to reach beyond personal, national, ethnic, or religious boundaries.

Ultimately, we are energy forms that can unite with other energy forms and experience oneness, because in energy, there is no separation. The separation comes only from our physical container. Spirituality transcends those borders and brings us into a world of meaning and positive action, inspired by the love of life itself, and by the understanding that all is interconnected and, at every moment, we are co-creators of our own realities.

The other thread in the book, running in the opposite direction, is the impact of being Jewish. Why that lineage, that heritage? Judaism carries the

concept of a chosen people, and what does *that* mean? For some reason, my soul chose to live that life. My Jewish identity, though more cultural than religious, weaves its way through my story, teaching me what I needed to learn and what I could represent in the world. That's why it's important. Not because Jewishness is so great, or only a few people are "chosen," but because of who I am in that role, representing that lineage. Being Jewish has meant more to me than I ever thought it would, because of what it symbolizes. It taught me about courage, community, and solidarity. It taught me to treasure knowledge, art, and culture. It taught me *tikkun olam*, the gradual, committed repair of a broken world.

Contrary to the usual stereotype, being Jewish also helped me refuse the cultural version of success. We were ethically Jewish, concerned with living a fair, good, and generous life, but we were not religious. Untrammelled, my spiritual search led me all over the world, and deep into the esoteric knowledge, the wisdom of the masters and gurus who came before us — along with several wise people who were still living and had attained enlightenment. I became convinced of the truth of reincarnation, which puts us here to learn specific lessons, and karma, which gives even the smallest act or thought consequence. In Thailand, people say, "I rejoice in your merit." In other words, every time you do a good deed, you are preparing yourself for your next life. You are building for your future, and all the other futures that will intersect with it. As these beliefs grew in me, I came to see that each life has a true path, a destiny that can and will unfold — if we do not force ourselves into shallow conformity.

Success is not about money and the acquisition of stuff. It is not about becoming a credentialed professional or a famous performer. Success is about coming to Earth and losing your ego, so you can be in touch with a soul that recognizes what life is really about. Once you understand what matters, you have to trust it and follow wherever it leads. Life is about

observing and experiencing and allowing and giving and trusting and going forward, as if you are a pilgrim on this planet.

The gentleness of that kind of observation is so often lost, and cruelty jammed into its place. The bookends to my story are the Holocaust my grandparents suffered and the current conflict in the Middle East. This massacre really happened, contrary to the neo-Nazi conspiracy theories, and it is happening again, torturing Palestinians as well as Jews. Hatred and fear are again being used as excuses for cruelty. Somehow, we have to come to terms with this dark side of human nature — and resist it. The whole world is on fire, caving in as each country reaches a pinnacle of authoritarianism, soaked in greed, power, and destruction. Those dark forces are never stable; they cannot stand. But they can destroy us, bit by bit, until they collapse.

I'm especially interested in young people, especially young women, understanding that we are entering a new age, one in which the traditionally feminine characteristics have growing importance: birthing, nurturing, embracing, unifying, holding, soothing, bringing into wholeness what surrounds us. That emphasis will change the world. It is about unity, about unitive thinking instead of dis-integration. But the transition is, has to be, a gradual process, and there's a fight going on now between the old male dominance and these "feminine" traits, which need to belong to all of us. Every woman could have been a man in a past lifetime, and vice versa. The rigid categories of gender need to soften. What I am talking about are female energies, and the need to bring them into consciousness in the public sphere, to finally find a balance.

To the men who might feel lost today, not sure how to “be” men anymore, I want to say: Focus on your soul presence. Your soul is, historically, both sexes; it holds the sum of many lives’ experiences. There is no need to identify so strongly with only one way of being.

We are born to take care of this planet. We are the only species that has consciousness and can share our deepest insights with one another. If we relax all our striving and focus on that, think about how amazing this planet could be!

I hesitated before writing this book, maybe because I was not sure why. I feel like a human traversing this Earth. I, too, am cursed with the same ego needs as every other human being. I look at the world through my own eyes, with my own wishes and cravings and biases. I want to be seen and heard and known, all those things that every human being wants. We are tiny figures in an overwhelming universe, and we hope to be somehow relevant, recognized as mattering, as having an obvious purpose. How do you accept that but get away from ego? It’s an art, hard learned. You have to be in the world and of the world without accepting its terms. Understand, always, that you are playing a role, and before you go to sleep, you will remove the costume and scrub off the makeup and be your naked self again.

I’ve worked hard to release ego; I have a healthy dose of it! Sometimes I need it, in presenting projects and inspiring enthusiasm for change. Then, it helps that I enjoy the process of being recognized and don’t shy away from it. Ego helps, too, when I need to take control of a difficult situation and be in charge. I’m good at administration and putting things in order and demanding the best from others and pushing a project forward. These are very useful characteristics — but they are ego driven. And ego can also

get in the way, so that I become its victim. “Release, release, *release*,” I tell myself, so that I’m not imposing false understandings on life.

I don’t see myself as a spiritual teacher, dispensing answers for everyone else. My hope is that my story can help people question themselves — and as they question themselves, they can become who *they* are, whole and singular.

I was given great fortune: loving parents, good looks, and a good brain. I’ve stayed, emotionally and physically and mentally, in good shape. But all that was given to me as opportunity, not a deserved bonus. It’s not who I am. It’s a set of tools. We are not the bodies we inhabit. We are not our minds or our emotions or even our personalities, with all their varied traits. All of that goes into our toolkit; it is there for a purpose, but it is not identical with our soul.

What do I mean by toolkit? Even negative thinking can be readjusted and turned into a positive experience. When we feel pain, we can look at it as a chance for learning, become detached from it, and grow in compassion as a result.

Strip away my past, my gifts and flaws, my struggles and quick, restless thoughts, and what is left? A soul. In my case, a soul has a strong connection to the inner world, burns to see a better world, and understands that young people are the future.

It’s time to leverage the wisdom of our ancestors. Their insights have been lost, smeared, buried, but they can help us transition away from the transactional, market-driven norms that have stained the educational system and encouraged a “What’s in it for me?” mentality. Instead, we need a way of learning based in reciprocity and focused on how we can help one another succeed, for the good of the whole. That kind of educational model is holistic. It uses intrinsic motivation, rekindling curiosity and

social connection so we will care about what we learn and support one another's education and life pursuits.

It's a different way. Does it sound too radical? Our existing models have led to a fragmentation that is destroying our collective well-being (and the health of our planet). We need to let go of the old structures that divide us. Only then, when we have remembered our wholeness and our unity, can we reimagine how to learn, act, and interact. Unity is dressed in diversity, a word that has become anathema to many. I hope they can lose their fear and release past trauma. Differences should not threaten us, because beneath those differences, we are all one.

To reach that insight, we need leaders who use their hearts and their minds, rather than grabbing for power and ego rush. We are at a collective moment of choice. Either we transform society, or we watch it disintegrate.

Reflecting and writing this book has meant following golden threads, detangling a few, and seeing, as I step back, the patterns they have woven. One thing has led to the next and that to the next, all of it very purposeful, though I had made no master plan. The more dedicated I became, the more the road narrowed. Externals had less and less impact. Another metaphor, overused for good reason — “A life's journey is like climbing a mountain. Now that I'm getting to the top, I can look down and see where everything is, where those threads glint in the sunshine, and what paths they make when they connect.”

I've been so busy doing, in different ways every decade, that I didn't realize it would be interesting to know who I was. I was just being me, taking what that meant for granted. But reflecting on your life gives you

answers to so many of the deepest questions, carrying you far beyond the limits of your own life.

What did this crazy life come to mean? I was here to live the most spiritual life possible, to go as deep as possible, and to find ways to share what I learned about unity and consciousness with young people, who would then share it with the world. My purpose at this moment is to be a pioneer and bridge, helping people understand what is occurring and resist it. As many of us as possible need to work to usher in the new, so future generations can live peacefully as one humankind.

And back to my second question: Why was I, at least this time around, Jewish? Because being Jewish led me to realize that Auschwitz was the antagonistic opposite of what humanity needed to become. “Never again” has to become a reality, not just a fervent hope. This is how an issue becomes a solution. We transform our historical lineage. Sensing that we are One Humanity, we bring new life to the ideals that will honor and preserve that unity.

As you become fully yourself, you will trade petty ego for that larger sense of oneness. How do you find *your* path? Hold on to your compassion and your curiosity. Hold on to wonder and creativity. All that is fed by experience, and I’ve had rather a lot of experiences — wild, cross-cultural, esoteric, profound. I hope this honest retelling of the way one spiritual path unfolded will prompt you to think about, and embark upon, your own.

Children and teenagers have been my life’s focus. I’ve worked with children in special education, set up a summer camp in Vermont where kids could be carefree, run global leadership programs so the youth could change the world. I worked first on the development of self-esteem, then on Global Education and Education for Peace, then on Character Education. And then I co-developed Holistic Education and moved on to what I call Soul-Authentic Education. Through it all, my method stayed

the same: accept each child as they are and go into questions deeply with them, listening. I never taught tolerance, because that is nothing more than compromise. I taught them, “Be who you are, in harmlessness, dedicated to serving all of life.” I stressed the inner life, because without it, you cannot have a rich external life. Once you know who you are and how to accept others as who they are, you can move from a stable inner life to the outer world, reshaping the reality around you into one that is more peaceful and humane.

The work on Soul-Authentic Education brought me to Holo-Education, a way to recognize that we are all one, not separate competing selves, and apply that insight to lifelong learning. We need to honor our deep yearning to belong, to feel at home in the world. We need to become resilient and make our planet resilient, a sacred planet rather than a site of destruction. Every aspect of learning reflects the whole, and every lesson we teach or learn is multidimensional, not flat and linear, right or wrong, black or white. Too much education has been about molding, squeezing us into compartments, making rational a world that is far richer than what charts and spreadsheets can contain. Holo-Education includes the cosmos as Home.



CHAPTER 2

Pandora's Box

It is 2011, and snow is falling in great drifts; through the window, I can see it icing the mountains. My sister and I have flown to Switzerland, and we are crying a little as we box up our dead mother's books, perfumes, and cashmere sweaters.

And there it is. Pandora's Box, we used to call it. The box of letters she kept hidden from us in her bedroom. The box she refused to open and warned us to never, ever touch.

Slowly, Mona lifts the lid. Inside is a stack of brittle, airmail-thin sheets. I pick one up and squint at the graceful swoops of faded ink. The words are incomprehensible; the letters were written in Old German.

We sigh. Pandora still guards her secret. The next day, we take the box to a university in Switzerland, and one of the professors agrees to translate the letters into modern German. Then we have to find someone to translate the German into English. Then, at last, we can find out what the box contains.

It feels almost wrong, like a joke too dark to be funny. Our mother never wanted this to happen. Or did she just not want to be here when it did? She could have burned the letters long ago. But here they are, and how can we ignore history, let alone that old curiosity? We grew up in silence,

our mother wrapping us in its safe, warm blanket. She wanted her girls to stay innocent and joyful, to have a carefree childhood. But I used to tiptoe and listen whenever she and our father spoke, in lowered voices, with other grown-ups.

Less than a year after the war ended, they gathered with other parents every afternoon in the waiting room of our Children's Colony preschool. The families there were all German Jews who had been prominent back home and who now clung together. Hannah Arendt and Lotte (Charlotte) Beradt are examples of people who sat in our home. Their success at assimilating — making money, earning degrees, and achieving status — had sealed their fate with Hitler. Now they were refugees, the rug pulled out from under them. Wobbly, they held each other up as they fought to regain their balance.

I knew nothing of all this, of course, but I caught snatches of their tense, urgent whispers, murmurs in a language my parents refused to teach me. I heard *Deutschland* and *tot* (dead) and *shoah*. They lowered their voices to speak about “the Holocaust,” and every time someone said that odd, sharp-angled word, my mother started to cry.

On our own, Mona and I picked up enough German to decode what our parents were saying to each other. By the time we went away to school, they suddenly *wanted* us to learn German, so we could understand their (and our) culture. They were a little further from the pain by then, but my mother still wept without warning. Something as simple as an apron might remind her of her mother's house, and memories would engulf her, taking her away from us until at last they receded.

My father was a bastard. By this I mean that his parents, Ferdinand Meyerhof and Kathe Levy, were not married. Their only child, Hans Meyerhof, born in 1907 and uncircumcised, was automatically cast out of the Jewish religion.

Ferdinand was successful in business — that stereotype so often used against Jews — and made millions of Marks. But he died of syphilis in 1911, when little Hans was only four years old. It is hard to think of my imposing, debonair father as a toddler and harder still to think of how he felt two years later, when his mother married a Jewish banker who grabbed and squandered what would have been my father's inheritance. Worse, for my father, was the way his new stepfather whipped and mocked and scolded him, as though that would make him a parent.

Luckily for me, Hans grew up to be nothing like his stepfather. Warm and eager for adventure, he was handsome, with dark hair and green eyes that trapped the light. He was interested in people, fascinated by anthropology and cultural difference. He could charm anyone. In his early twenties, he moved to Czechoslovakia and started a promising import business. As the political situation intensified, he also smuggled money, stuffed into socks, from Germany to Holland, helping Jews who were stuck in Germany and trying to either assist their families or prepare their own way out. Once he was yanked off the train and searched by the Germans, but they found nothing and let him go.

On another, even luckier day, Hans boarded a train and my mother, sixteen and slender, with dark blond hair and a quiet elegance, entered the same compartment and sat across from him. She always wore dark colors, never anything flashy, but she had beautiful bone structure that drew attention anyway (she was a model for Aryan race photographs before they found out she was Jewish).

She and Hans talked for the entire journey. My father was so taken with this Gerda Schendel that he went back to the train station at the same time every day, a bouquet of roses crushed in his arms, hoping to see her again.

Finally, Gerda showed up, and that began a dreamy, film-montage sort of courtship. My father was smart in a worldly way. He read eight newspapers every day and taught himself Japanese so he could buy and sell with more savvy. But my mother was an intellectual. She read Goethe and Plato, listened to classical music, and loved to discuss literature. When they married, each was sure they had found their *bashert* (our Jewish term for a soulmate, one's ideal, predestined spouse).

My mother had the childhood my father could have had. She was born in Chemnitz, Germany, the day after World War I began. Her father had also made money, and the family's life was easy. When a new political party emerged six years later, in 1920, no one thought much about it. Apparently, a little man named Adolf Hitler had drafted a manifesto for the National Socialists, nicknamed the Nazis by their opponents ("Nazi" was a derogatory term for a peasant).

Nothing much happened for the next nine years. These were Germany's Golden Years, a time of economic prosperity, improved diplomatic relations, and a cultural flowering. In the 1928 elections, the Nazi Party received less than 3 percent of the vote.

Even in the Golden Age, though, my mother knew that not everyone enjoyed her family's privilege, and this bothered her. "Drop me off here," she would urge the chauffeur when they neared her school. "I want to walk the rest of the way." Not that she was eager to reach school. Traditional academic subjects bored her, though she read hungrily and adored poetry and philosophy.

Tired of forcing her brain into boxes, she eventually dropped out of high school and took up photography, which would become her life's passion. Once she married, she and Hans frequented the cafés where Berlin's Jewish intellectuals drank coffee or beer late into the night, discussing politics, theater, painting, books, and ideas.

Those years would have been idyllic if the Great Depression hadn't shaken the world's economies. The fallout snatched jobs from millions of Germans, and Hitler's party took advantage of the panic. Making false but shrill allegations, they demonized Communists, Jews, and anyone insufficiently Aryan. Soon the Nazis were Germany's largest political party, and in 1933, Hitler was named chancellor by Germany's eighty-five-year-old president, Paul von Hindenburg.

Despite private reservations about the little house painter's political ideology, von Hindenburg had thought Hitler would be charismatic enough to stabilize the rising chaos. A year after appointing him, von Hindenburg died. Hitler's idea of stabilization was to swiftly abolish the presidency and declare himself Führer of the German Reich and supreme commander of Germany's armed forces. The laws were turned upside down. My parents were no longer German citizens. They were not allowed to fly the German flag. Had they wanted to be journalists or public servants, they would have been barred. Had they written books, those books would have been burned.

That stack of letters inside Pandora's Box held the chronology of the war.

END OF EXCERPT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nina Lynn Meyerhof, Ed.D.

Dr. Nina Meyerhof, one of the most prolific change makers of our time, has influenced aspiring youth leaders and guided influential peacemakers alike.

~ Rev. Patrick McCollum, chronicled in the documentary, "The Man Who Saves the World?"

Dr. Nina Meyerhof is Co-Founder of One Humanity Institute and President and Founder of Children of the Earth (COE). Nina is considered a visionary thought leader recognized for a life of advocating for children and youth, and her renowned organizational work is dedicated to

awakening young people to their inner leadership. She is the co-author of books *Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom* and *Pioneering Spiritual Activism*, an educational curriculum for peace, multicultural, global and spiritual models. She has held workshops, seminars, and training sessions on her innovative teaching for youth and adults. Nina also wrote various chapters in books on Authentic Education including *Our Moment of Choice: Evolutionary Visions and Hope for the Future* and *Shift 2000*, anthologies consisting of future thinking luminaries, and has worked with numerous notables such as Mikail Gorbachev and Michael Jackson as lead person on their educational projects. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her work (see Honors, Awards, Books & Publications section in this book) as one of our world's most dynamic and important evolutionary educators.

Prior to establishing COE, Nina's work included being a school administrator of 10 schools with a doctorate in Educational Policy, Research and Administration, earning two Master's degrees and a C.A.G.S., as well as establishing the notable Heart's Bend, a children's summer camp on her farm that she operated as an inspirational pioneering values program with democratic living skills in a "home away from home" for 30 years.

A U.N. NGO for the past 20 years, COE is active in the U.N. Summits and programs as well as the International Day of Peace activities. The programs were developed to inspire, connect, and empower youth working for peace both locally and globally. This innovative work in peace and sustainability for a world of oneness through educational methodologies has reached young people throughout the world and continues to grow. Nina designed a model of learning – Reflect, Connect, Act – which constitutes a process designed to consolidate spiritual growth and societal actions for sacred activism. Nina is recognized among educators for having developed two major constructs called Conflict-Transcendence, which goes beyond

conflict resolution and conflict transformation, and Lateral Leadership Governance Structure for potential of working in a collaborative group model. COE youth projects have reached over 15,000 individuals and have brought youth together for 35 years, providing community and networking opportunities to young leaders who are committed to positive global changes. COE's goal is to support and link a network of young leaders as a global family committed to actualizing their personal intention, becoming inspired to altruism and weaving a web that bridges all personal, cultural, national and religious divides.

Nina is a passionate, committed world peacemaker and world server. Her focus is on the realization that peace must come from recognizing our interwoven unity. Nina believes, as we move through our individualism of the I, we will move to understanding the WE in the collaboration and interdependence of all of life and begin the process of becoming a unitive thinker to experience the ONEness that is inherent in life.

Nina's One Humanity Institute, a City of Hope, is adjacent to the Auschwitz Museum, a place of renown historical horror with 2 million visitors a year. For almost ten years, Nina worked to bring life to this facility, offering local people and youth from conflict areas such as Ukraine an opportunity to release trauma and build new systems of peace for their future.

In addition, COE has housed approximately 30 YOUTH Hubs and Chapters in Thailand, Nepal, Romania, Canada, Ghana, Togo, and Switzerland, among others. Projects are carried out in the pursuit of building a world of unity where peace begins from the awareness and inner understanding that we are a global family. Some examples include helping to establish the first Children's Peace Center in Ghana, fostering the building of schools in Nepal, teaching the making of bead bracelets for refugee children to sell in the U.S., supporting a youth group's work on

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the Niger Delta, and bringing hundreds of bears to war torn and natural disaster areas through the Teddy Bear project.

Additionally, Nina has served on global efforts such as the drafting of the Universal Peace curriculum of Costa Rica, as a Council member of the Evolutionary Leaders, as a board member of India's Children's Forum, and many more.

Her CALLING as strong as ever, Mama Nina or Dr. Nina, as she is called by young people all around the world, continues her work, as there is always more to do. So, "What's next?"