

***Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself
and know that everything in this life has a purpose.
Elizabeth Kubler-Ross***

My passion for meaningful films and a recognition of their value started when I was around 7 years of age. It was 1957, and my father took me and my siblings to see the movie classic, "Old Yeller." The story highlights a young boy, Travis, who befriends a stray yellow lab, who becomes Travis' faithful companion. Old Yeller risks his own life numerous times defending Travis, and places himself in harm's way to keep a rabid wolf from assaulting Travis' family. This film made an indelible mark on me, impressing upon my young mind the beauty of a child's relation to his dog, a dog's loyalty, and learning that wisdom can be gained from tragic life experiences, bringing with it soulful lessons on compassion and self-forgiveness.

My love for films has not waned, as I am more fully aware of their ability to be a catalyst for change, and the effect they may have on the psyche bringing insight, inspiration, emotional release and self-understanding. I recently presented a program entitled, "Reel to Real Therapy: Therapeutic Benefits of Integrating Cinematherapy into Psychotherapy and Counseling of the Bereaved." After presenting an understanding of research done on cinematherapy, I then showed a film entitled, "*Rebirth*," a profoundly intimate, moving and uplifting film that follows the 10-year transformation of five people whose lives were altered by the 9-11 tragedy. Those attending the program were provided a "Questions for Reflection Handout," and after taking time to respond to questions they chose to answer, formed dyads, sharing their responses and insights on the film. The overall result of those attending this program indicated an awareness of the power of using film as an adjunct to psychotherapy, and the perception of how, in the wake of human tragedy, this film clearly demonstrates transformation and healing can result.

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