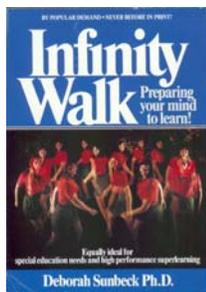
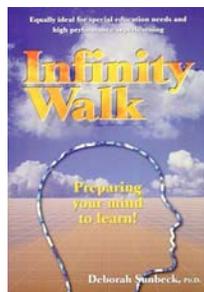


# Announcing the Third Edition of **Infinity Walk: Preparing Your Mind to Learn**

Anticipated Publication date is late 2006



1991



1996

Infinity Walk:  
Preparing  
Your Mind to  
Learn  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
  
(in press)

2006

## **Infinity Walk: Preparing Your Mind to Learn**

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition books out of print

### **2007 Training**

**Dr. Sunbeck is scheduling training workshops and in-service clinics using this new text starting January of 2007. Contact her at [sunbeck@infinitywalk.org](mailto:sunbeck@infinitywalk.org).**

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Infinity Walk: Preparing Your Mind to Learn, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
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## CHAPTER 1

# The Illusion of Learning Problems

Now you see them

Now you don't

Sometimes a single event, a single connection with another human being can change your life's direction for years to come. Not in my wildest dreams had I ever imagined I would be writing a book.

My life had grown comfortable – a successful psychotherapy practice, a relaxed home life in a country setting, and lots of adventuresome travel. Then along came Michael. Actually it was Michael's mother, Rosemary, who fits my contact lenses who started this whole thing. Michael was 14 at that time and distraught over some problems at school. His mother, who was feeling her teenage son's pain as deeply as if it were her own, couldn't help but talk about him during one of my eye appointments.

Michael had been receiving special education assistance in school since first grade. Rosemary had been told in those early years that his learning difficulties were serious enough that he may eventually require placement in a special school. Nothing about school came easily for Michael – nothing, that is, but art class.

Michael always had a special talent for drawing. It was also his primary source of self-esteem, and that was the cause of his present crisis. He had just been told that he was not going to be able to take an art studio class the following school year because he had to take a remedial reading class, and the scheduling of the two courses conflicted. The extra reading class was a requirement because he had recently failed the New York State Reading Competency Test. The school's hands were tied unless he could pass a re-take of the exam to be given in a few months. This, of course, seemed impossible to Michael.

Michael cared about doing well in school and didn't understand why it was so hard. He had learned not to show how much this bothered him, developing an image that outsiders might mistake for underachievement. Losing this art class was just too much for him. He couldn't contain his upset over

having his one joy and success in school taken away. Rosemary instinctively knew how serious this loss was in her son's life.

As I sat getting my eyes examined and listened to Rosemary talk about Michael, I began to sense the growing presence of the power of Rosemary's maternal instinct electrifying the room. This woman was speaking from the depths of her being. She was talking life and death, not of the body, but of the spirit of her child. She knew his spirit would suffer if his art talent was ignored. She knew it would wither a little more every time he sat through that extra reading class, continuing to fail at what he believed he could not do, while feeling punished by the loss of the one class he loved and in which he could excel. Rosemary was radiating an incredibly powerful combination of rage over the helplessness of the situation and total love for this boy. I had to offer to help.

Up to this point my clinical interests had focused on psychophysical health – that is, body-mind beliefs and habits that affect our physical health. The field includes such a vast array of clinical challenges that I never dreamed I would branch out farther. A single week might include stress management for an anxious executive healing from bypass surgery; pain relief imagery for a person in the final stage of cancer or for a migraine sufferer; and helping a person find an emotional source of their body's physical discomfort when doctors could find no medical cause.

I loved my work. People who were referred to my private practice were ready to learn to befriend their strengths and to develop a sensitive relationship with their inner needs. They wanted to claim their given right to be self-directed, and break free of limiting habits that blocked success and drained joy from their life.

It was the mid-1980's and the "self-empowerment – human potential movement" that had started a decade earlier on the west coast was just beginning to find its way into the clinical practices of respectable New York licensed psychologists. Interest in altered states of consciousness had already been professionally legitimized, partly through the efforts of a biofeedback research lab at the prestigious Menninger Clinic. Duke University was researching psychic phenomena. Stanford University was busy analyzing the hypnotic experience. And, some of the most exciting professional conferences being offered were taught by first generation students of the late Dr. Milton Erickson, founder of modern medical and clinical hypnosis.

I, like many clinicians, was in hot pursuit of the elusive power of the “unconscious.” A vacation in the typical sense of the word’s meaning paled in contrast to attending new seminars and workshop offerings in “psychosomatic medicine” (now an outdated term). These professional continuing education glimpses into “the possible” were only the beginning for many of us. Longer vacations became experiential field trips to the source of phenomenal stories of healing. Many went to India, Nepal, or the Philippines in hopes of witnessing human potential actualized through psychic phenomena and spontaneous healing. Insider reports on the questionable legitimacy of certain far away psychic and healing practices were already circulating word-of-mouth among my colleagues by the time I had built up my clinical practice enough to afford such indulgent adventures. Duly cautioned, I shopped around carefully and decided to limit my vacation time and funds to healers who allowed a patient’s doctor to be present in order to validate spontaneous healing through a comparison of before and after medical test results.

By the time I was sitting in Rosemary’s contact lens examining room hearing about Michael’s crisis I had already made two life changing journeys into the heart of Brazil’s central mountains. I had also spent a month in the backwoods of the United States observing a mind-boggling intensive spontaneous healing method. My own clinical therapy experiences included clients who had received the medical label of “terminal” before experiencing spontaneous remissions. My knowledge and experience of “the possible” in medicine was heightened.

The thought of applying this fresh accumulation of understanding to academic learning blocks had never occurred to me. Now looking back over the last two decades it is so simply obvious to me. Whatever level of experience we are blocked from enjoying, be it physical health and comfort or learning and performance success, the blocks must be uprooted from the same source – the same brain-mind fortress that stands between our goals and our ability to make the changes necessary for success.

Rosemary and I planned a Saturday meeting with Michael at my home, wanting to avoid any discomfort on his part. My first impression as he walked through the door was a lack of physical integration. I am a daughter of a chiropractor and had, myself, trained in numerous body and movement therapies. It was through those eyes that I saw a lack of ownership of his body. His walk lacked direction and purpose. His arms hung limp from his shoulder sockets. His lower body seems unaware of where his upper body was going. His eyes appeared unavailable and unimpressed. This young man had not been

developing the natural integration of physical, sensory and attention skills that must keep up, year after year, with public education. That is, he wasn't just behind in his classes; his brain was behind in developing the neural integration that it needed BEFORE successful learning can be possible.

As we settled into a comfortable space to sit and talk, my thoughts turned inward for guidance. I was use to helping people make positive shifts in how they thought and felt. These positive mental and emotional shifts could happen in a flash, given the right insight. I knew that shifts in beliefs and emotions often preceded spontaneous physical healing of the body. However, the idea of using these same healing concepts to successfully remediate (catch-up) and even accelerate normal stages of sensorimotor (sensory and motor) and cognitive development was foreign to the field of education. *Development, human development, brain development, early childhood development. Everything I had ever read about the stages of natural human development flooded my own neural circuits.* The natural progression of physical and cognitive development is known to occur in slow sequential stages of predictable growth. There was no expectation among professionals that remedial physical and cognitive training would happen any faster. Yet spontaneous shifts in physical health could be very rapid. Why not expect the same of “cognitive health?” Was not the root of cognition also in the brain-mind interface?

My momentary mental absorption must have signaled to Michael that he was temporarily out of the spotlight. From the corner of my eye I caught a sparkle in his eyes as he took the liberty of surveying the interior architecture of my living room. There was a fire inside him waiting to be channeled. He had not intended to share its existence with me, but I glimpsed it, and it gave me the drive that I needed to push forward.

I decided to throw out traditional clinical approaches to a first session and get very real with Michael. I told him about my own childhood memories of school, and how difficult the early school years had been for me. He seemed to listen with interest, so I continued. I shared the worst of my school memories, holding no childhood embarrassment back. Rosemary found her way into the conversation too. She had her own unpleasant memories of academic fears and failures. A lively three-way exchange of school related “war stories” led to laughter. We were sharing in a mutual understanding that cemented our bond that day, and began our commitment to explore the possible together.

We next talked about how our brains felt when they were not learning. Michael said his felt “fuzzy” in

school most of the time. Rosemary's word for her memory of the feeling was "spacey." I had felt "in trance" many of my early school days. Sitting in front of homework brought on these same feelings for all of us. Something in our heads wasn't ready to do whatever it was suppose to do when students learn easily and naturally.

I also asked Michael and his mother to remember times when learning something had been easy. We all seemed to know the feeling of when our brains were really "clicking" and "humming along". When everything inside seemed to flow and things just came out right. Michael said it felt like diving into a cool swimming pool inside his head. We all agreed that when our brains were feeling fully awake and pleasantly excited, it seemed easiest to learn. Michael had a body memory of what it felt like when things came easily; he just didn't know how to create it or sustain it. Our task became clearer as we talked. Years of putting curriculum in front of Michael had been fruitless with his mind feeling fuzzy in its presence. Instead, I needed to concentrate on creating a way for Michael to learn to call forth the feeling his brain was capable of experiencing that felt like diving into cool refreshing water. I knew that if he could access this feeling when presented with academic challenges his capacity to learn would develop naturally and rapidly.

Making this happen would require not only a complete overhaul in how Michael thought and felt about school: it would also require real developmental growth in the neurological functioning of his brain. I was confident, after meeting Michael, that he could do it. I reasoned that if people can have major health breakthroughs and direct and accelerate their own physical healing process, then accelerating the necessary brain's development and mental outlook to catch-up in academics should also be possible.

Michael, Rosemary, and I met for 7 one-hour weekly visits in my home. By the third week Michael was reporting changes on every level. He received his first test score ever of 100% correct on a spelling test; he reported that his concentration was improved; and his oral reading was improving so rapidly that I began tape-recording him for documentation. Michael also reported feeling more athletic in gym class, and even his drawing was showing more sophistication. The proof his school needed however, would be determined by a single exam. He got that proof. He passed the re-take of the New York State Reading Competency Test well above the cut-off. He had his first taste of life from the vantage point of the comfortable middle bulge of the statistical bell curve that told him he scored as well as most New York State students in his grade. Michael experienced the end of the "impossible" in his life.

Michael earned back his art studio class. However, he didn't stop there. That spark that I saw in him the first day we met had become a roaring blaze of momentum. The next school term he made honor roll for the first time in his life. He joined the art staff of the school newspaper, and with a renewed confidence in himself, was elected as a representative of school council, all in the same year. As Michael began to enjoy his body working with him and for him, he developed an interest in martial arts and became quite skilled in body-mind mastery of intention. Michael's art talent also continued to flourish, and upon graduating from high school he entered an art college on scholarship. After that, he was off to Orlando, Florida, for a career start in computer animation and graphic design. Today, Michael enjoys painting original wall and ceiling murals of staggering dimension, detail, and artistry; and, Rosemary who is still my contact lenses specialist is one proud mother. Examples of Michael's current works end this chapter, as well as a sample of his illustrations from the original 1991 Infinity Walk text. To respect Michael's privacy please direct inquiries about his availability as an artist through Dr. Sunbeck's office.

Fourteen years ago, in the first edition of *Infinity Walk: Preparing Your Mind to Learn* (1991), I ended this first chapter with the following: "Your very existence is already a miracle. Your brain has infinite potential. I am placing in your hands the owner's manual." Though the language is very 1980's, the message still applies.

We all have extraordinary potential. Our brain and mind are the resources with which we have been given to work. They are incredible resources, but we have to claim their power and decide how they will be used. The practice of Infinity Walk can help teach us how to gain authority over our brain-mind-body resources and master their power. To do so, however, is an act of personal courage; because, a much truer understanding of ourselves and our life choices will also be revealed. Once this happens, we can never again be satisfied with habitual thinking or mindless actions. We will not be able to settle for less than mindful intention directing a life of purposeful action.

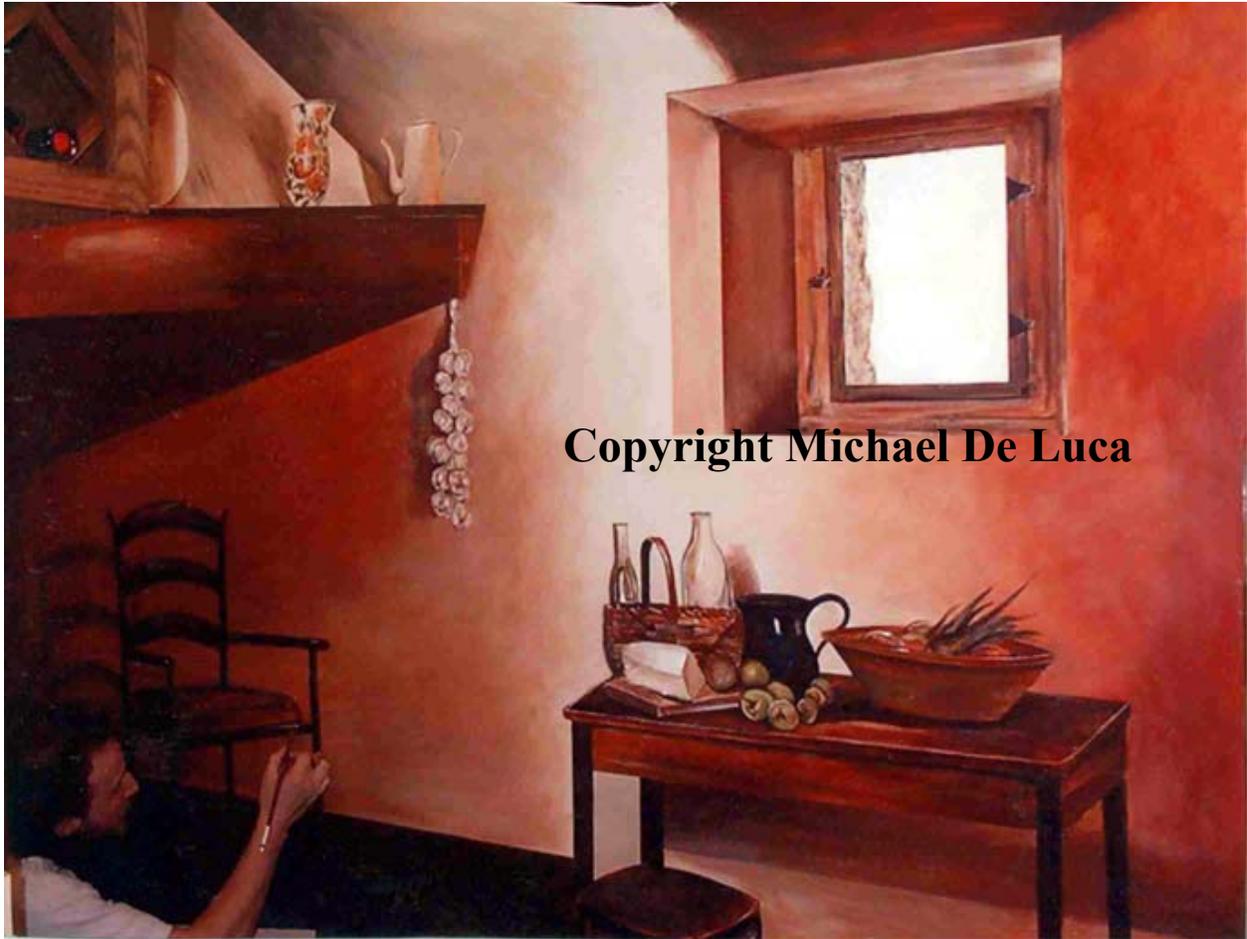
I hope you enjoy and prosper from this 3<sup>rd</sup> updated edition of the original text on Infinity Walk.

## *REFLECTIONS*

### *CHAPTER 1*

#### *THE ILLUSION OF LEARNING PROBLEMS*

1. Think back over your early school years. What subjects came easily? Which were more difficult? How have your successes and failures in school shaped your interests, profession, and self-esteem as an adult? What areas of intellectual pursuit, creativity, and relationship-building have you ignored since your school years?
2. List the things you wanted to learn or master, but never felt you could, or thought they would be too difficult to bother trying?
3. Is there any reason you have come to believe that would prevent you from developing creative, intellectual or relationship excellence? If so, from where did this belief come?
4. What limiting beliefs have you been carrying around with you since your early school years? List everything you think you cannot do as an adult because you didn't show potential for them as a child.
5. Michael's most successful days at school were times when his brain felt refreshed, like "jumping into a swimming pool." Describe how you feel when your brain is working at its best. Do you believe you have any control over when your brain feels at its best?

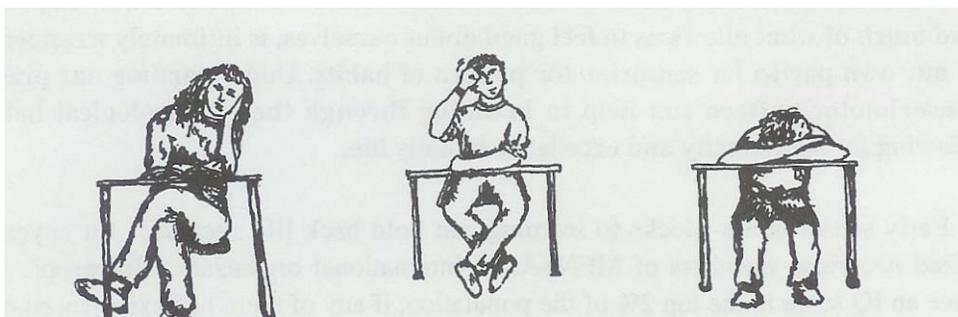


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*Tuscan Window* 2003

Michael De Luca

Wall Mural 8 x 13 feet. Private Home- New York



From *Infinity Walk: Preparing Your Mind to Learn*

Michael De Luca 1991

**Michael's Development of Art Talent from High School Years to Now.**