InPresence 0004: Life and Death
with Jeffrey Mishlove

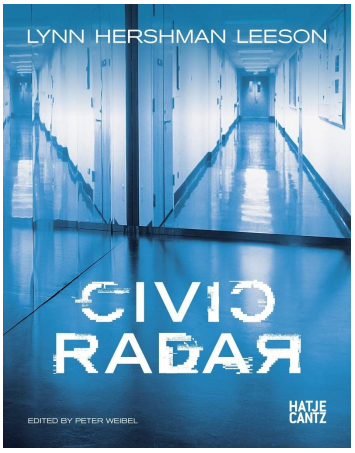
Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove
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(00:32) Hello. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. This is the fourth episode in the new "In Presence" series on the *New Thinking Allowed* channel. Today's theme is death and life, life and death. Once more, I would like to encourage you, however, to start this series from the very first episode. If you look in the upper right corner of your screen, right now, you'll see a link to the first episode [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzt_VubhK6A]. If you go to the listings, and now you'll see a link for listings, you'll be able to find hotlinks to everything on the *New Thinking Allowed* channel [www.newthinkingallowed.com/Listings.htm]. If you go to my name Jeffrey Mishlove, you'll see the links to the series called "In Presence." [www.newthinkingallowed.com/Listings.htm#InPresence]

(01:24) Life and death. I'm reminded of a time back in the early 1990's, as I recall. Perhaps it was the late 1980's. I attended a popular seminar at the time called *EST,* Erhard Seminars Training. In that seminar there was a man who stood up and spoke very eloquently. I was moved by his words. A black fellow, his name was Henry Wilhite. I later learned he was a dog trainer. He stood up and said he can feel the wind blowing through his bones and it made him feel like he was absolutely at one with nothingness. I was really touched by the profundity of his words. He said it with such authenticity that I befriended him. We got close. I learned that he was suffering from bone cancer and he knew that his death was inevitable and it was near.



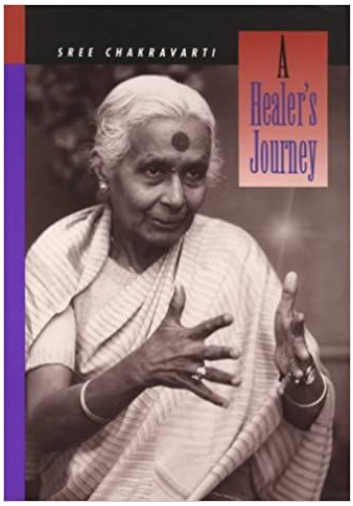
(02:35) As we cultivated our friendship in the last months of his life, I happened to introduce him to another friend of mine, a filmmaker and artist, Lynn Hershman Leeson, who has now achieved a great reputation for her avant garde work in art and film. And in particular, her series, "The Electronic Diaries," where she took some of the most intimate and personal stories of her life and turned them into an artistic video format. I believe you'll find her videos are part of the permanent collection of places like the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York.

(03:20) She actually made a film about Henry and his death. What I didn't know, until the film was actually shown, is that it wasn't just about Henry, it was also about her.

Because Lynn Hershman, my close friend, a visual artist, was suffering from a brain tumor and she was dealing with cancer just as deadly as Henry's at the time.

(03:49) Now, Lynn managed to make the acquaintance of a shamanistic psychiatrist, named Barry Grundland, who at that time lived in northern California. He worked with her doing visualization exercises and her tumor actually disappeared. She was given a choice, they could operate on that tumor, but because it was attached to her optic nerve she would lose sight. I don't know if it was in one eye or in both eyes. But, as a visual artist that was not an acceptable alternative. So, she sought something in the holistic realm, shamanistic visualizations to cure herself.

(04:35) And indeed, she did. I know of other cases as well. Of people who have been cured of very serious, deadly diseases because they applied holistic healing methods. The power of suggestion, that we dealt with earlier, as well as other forms of healing and meditation. So, healing is very profound.



(05:00) One of the interviews I did many years ago with a healer, Sree Chakravarti. She was very clear about it. She said we can heal anything, we can heal everything, but we cannot heal everyone. Because people have to live out their own karma, so to speak. Sometimes the forces of karma are more powerful than the forces of healing.

(05:27) In the movie that Lynn Hershman made - the video - is called *Shadow's Song*, published in 1995 [correction: 1990], about her experience and Henry's. It had to do with how she survived but Henry died of his cancer.

(05:45) Now, not long before his death, Henry came to visit me, he stayed overnight at my home. He was upset. He said that it's frustrating for him because he knows he doesn't have much time left. And yet, when he's with people, they don't want to interact with him in a deep and meaningful way. A way that he considered deep and meaningful. That things were kept on a superficial level and he didn't have time for that anymore.

(06:22) So, we chatted and he slept. He stayed overnight at my home. In the middle of the night, I guess I had a waking dream, and it was about Henry. It was what I would have to call a tantric dream because it was as if we were connected at the heart chakra in a very visceral, loving embrace. It wasn't erotic, but it was, I guess I would have to say there was an element of Eros, not in the sexual sense, but in the sense of openness, and love, and heart flow connection between us. And in the morning, before Henry left, I asked him: was he satisfied that his time with me met his own desire for a deep connection? Because, well we had chatted the evening before, but the really deep connection occured in that dream. And he said yes, he was very satisfied.

(07:34) That was the very last time I saw him before his death. And, so we have Lynn Hershman, who is still very much alive and active in the art world. And, my friend Henry Wilhite, who died over twenty years ago. Life and death. I guess the point of this all, is that I think Henry died with great integrity. Even though he wasn't healed and Lynn Hershman was healed, at a spiritual level his life was a healing experience. And it was that for me.

(08:15) So, I'm sharing that with you now. We, who are on a spiritual path, are going to find ourselves confronted with life and death situations. Not everyone will be healed. Each of us will die. And I certainly will have much more to say about death in future episodes.

(08:40) There's a sense I'd like to share with you, it comes from Buddhism. The idea of nirvana, the idea of the Buddha, is a person who has achieved such a deep sense of awakening that it doesn't matter if he's alive or dead. What matters is the awakening of consciousness. Because, I guess, it's an ironic point because at one level we die and we are dead like animals. At another level, we transcend death entirely. I'll leave you with that thought. Thank you for being with me. (09:30)

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