

# **Lessons I learned from two years as Dr. McGee's assistant in Puerto Rico**

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# Why are you here with us?

- “What do you do for a living?”
  - and my answer is “I BREATHE!”
- Expectations of this presentation?
- Why are you here with us today?

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# Our true nature!

- I've learned that one of the many secrets to happiness is to start hearing and trusting your heart, learning to delight in each moment of life.
- Happiness is the natural result of feeling, acting and being aligned with our ***true nature*** as humans, which is experienced when we are fully present in the moment noticing and being thankful for all of our blessings.

Any questions before we begin?

Write down any question on a piece of paper (**with your name and e-mail**) you would like to ask me about being Dr. McGee's assistant and I will answer it to the best of my ability

# I knew Dr. McGee for two years...

- Even though I knew Dr. McGee and Gentle Teaching for two years it seemed to me I got to know his best side!
- He embodied GT when he was with me in our visits to participants, court, homes, meetings and institutions.
- If you have stories of “bad behavior” from Dr. McGee think again about why you would want to tell it and don’t!

***In this presentation I will talk  
about how I now perceive  
lessons learned from my  
experience of two-year before  
his passing as his assistant in  
Puerto Rico.***

# I begin enjoying life again in 2014

- It's not until I quit my job in 2014 as Joint Compliance Coordinator for the Federal Government in the case 99-1435 government of USA against the government of Puerto Rico (looking after the civil rights of adults with disability diagnosis).
- **I started realizing ALL that I had learned before, during and after being his assistant for only two years.**
- During that time we exchanged e-mails, texts and phone calls almost weekly and he visited Puerto Rico at least one week per month.

# ***To me Gentle Teaching is...***

- Gentle Teaching is about **taking the time to see all the good that there is in the other** so that we can love ourselves and others unconditionally so that we all feel accepted and welcomed.
- Of course, it first entails being safe first with your emotions and your physical wellbeing, **“it takes one to know one”**.
- Once we feel comfortable in our own skin, we will be able to see others with a clearer lens and with an open heart.

# This adventure began in 2010

- In 2010, I had the confidence to **take bold steps** in my life and they always led me to even more unbelievable experiences and growth processes, so I quit my job as a Psychology Professor after nine years and four different positions.
- As a Certified Life and Business Coach I was offering meetings to people and helping them move towards their dreams, and I did this exercise myself and got everything I asked for!

# A Beauty or a Challenge!

- Visiting with people diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities is a beauty to some and a challenge to others because it takes:
  - more heart than brain,
  - more time and less money,
  - MORE self acceptance and self love and less knowledge and statistical information
  - more of our insight that our physical efforts and we have in some ways to remember how to be human,
  - how to live in community and how to create a space of security for ourselves and those around us.

# ***Exercise #1***

## ***How do I want my LIFE TO LOOK LIKE:***

- ***What would I like to do every day?***
- ***Which qualities would I like the people around me to have?***
- ***How would I like to live?***
- ***How do I want to feel in this life?***
- ***What do I would like to get from life?***

***\*PLEASE TAKE 5 MINUTES TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS and then share with your group***

# Choose a life style or a job!

- Many people these days literally “Run” their lives according to their “Job” instead of choosing the life they would like to live and THEN choose the means towards which they would like to earn the money to pay for their “things”.

## Your lessons learned from Dr. McGee

- ***Take 5 minutes to write down*** what first comes to your mind about any lesson or lessons that you **have learned** from Dr. McGee **through life experiences** if you met him or through **videos or stories** that you have heard.

How many of you are currently in a job you LOVE?

- How many of you are currently in a job you LOVE, your co-workers, your satisfaction, the pay, your commute, your daily routines at work?
- Is there MORE for you to do in this life
  - I've always trusted my gut feelings which have led me to live a MOST AMAZING LIFE...including being Dr. McGee's assistant for two years in Puerto Rico.

## ***On my first day ...***

- I almost didn't make it through the first day, I must be sincere... I only survived in the beginning because I had no other option, or so I thought.
- I wanted this experience and everyone of these people in my life to help me appreciate MY AMAZING LIFE and ALL MY BLESSINGS!
- When I thought about leaving the job and thinking about what would happen to so and so...

Dr. McGee always told the ***story of how he remembers Gentle Teaching to begin...***

- He saw how the staff treated people in a psychiatric ward in 1971 he oversaw and wrote a **Memo** about what people shouldn't do: no yelling, no pushing, no making fun of people, no hitting, no putting people in the furnace room, no pulling them around etc.
- One of the staff members came up to him and asked about **what they "Should do!"** and here is when everything began.

These are just a few of my Life  
Lessons from these two years as  
assistant to Dr. John J. McGee

# Training at home and as a psychologist

- It was more important to take care of others' needs first.
- While working with McGee (as with my mom) I saw how he would put his life aside (health, sleep, eating etc) to help others.
- Some might think this to be a self-centered approach to life, I saw it first as a survival tool and now I've come to understand it as a ***“It is My Right to Enjoy Life to the Fullest”*** Model of Living!

# Enjoy LIFE...

- It is only when I am enjoying life and feeling happy that I am of any benefit to others.
- During my four years working with Dr. McGee (two) and two more as Monitor of the case (the position he left behind), **I had devoted myself to others and forgotten about myself and My Life...** I don't regret it because I see it as a much-needed stepping stone to where I am now, and **I have many weirdly amazing funny memories of those times too.**

# “We are All the Same and One”

- Dr. McGee made references to different religions and their beliefs, how everyone has a body, mind and spirit that make up who we are and how we live
- When I began to **“See Myself in Everyone Else”** several years ago (2017) I began to understand how we are all connected, the same and one.
- **It’s about finding the best in others and not about empathy or pity.** It’s more about compassion for our human condition, where everyone is where they are supposed to be and we either accept this and let everyone take their path or try to change them and change our path to lead theirs.

# “Everyone is perfect!”

- When we see ourselves as imperfect is only because **we are seeing ourselves from someone else’s perspective, someone else’s expectation.**
- When we see ourselves from the perspective of ***Our Inner Self, We Are ONLY PERFECT IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY!***
- Our participants, clients, family members, spouses, children, neighbors, we are All Perfect if we were to see them from their own Inner Selves perspective and ***we All Have a Purpose to be here and create the Perfect Balance of Love.***

# Abraham Hicks – You tube

People diagnosed with disabilities...

# Don't pity anyone anymore...

- When and if you pity someone, you are only seeing a limited version of themselves according to what society has taught you has some kind of value.
- ***When you take a deeper look into how others make you feel you will begin to SEE YOURSELF!***

# ***Exercise #2 Getting to know myself better by looking at others***

- ***Which qualities (3) do I appreciate more from others?***
- ***Which qualities (3) of others do I dislike/are bothersome to me?***
- ***Write down 10 qualities I LOVE about myself?***
- ***3 qualities I would LOVE to acquire for my daily life?***
- ***What do I would like to get from others that I'm not getting?***
- ***Who makes me feel the BEST and why?***

***PLEASE TAKE 5 MINUTES TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS and then share with your group***

“Science will take humanity away defeating Gentle Teachings’  
main purpose...KEEP HUMANITY ALIVE” SMFC



“They are doing the BEST THEY CAN!”

- We had signed Federal Court Agreements between governments and for me it was unacceptable that some people didn't follow them.
- Dr. McGee kept saying to me “***They are doing the BEST THEY CAN***” and I didn't understand him then. We are all doing the BEST WE CAN...ALL OF US!

# “BE PATIENT AND SEE THE BIG PICTURE!”

- ***What’s happening is the BEST NOW HAS TO OFFER!***
- Seeing the BIG PICTURE of it all was a new concept for me that Dr. McGee was always emphasizing and it’s now that I’ve come to understand this concept better.
- The BIG PICTURE for me now is to see how everything is how its supposed to be, that ***I don’t have to fix anything or anyone and that I have to enjoy life and feel grateful for all I have***, for all there is for contrast is but a “menu” from which to help us make our own determinations of what we want or don’t want.
- The same way differences have been beginning to be ***celebrated in the last century so should diversity*** for it allows us to understand our preferences in a clearer way.

“Jose is the most patient of all of us...”

- Thank you for joining me in this journey towards the LIFE I NOW LIVE AND LOVE and how being Dr. McGee’s assistant helped me figure myself out much better.
- It might sound corny, but it’s as if he was sent as my guardian angel, my best friend, my Jedi, my boss, my big brother and my father all rolled up in one!

# GT “tools”: your eyes, our hands, our presence and our words

1. Learning about Gentle Teaching (GT) can help us all remember to ***breathe deeply before talking*** to others and to make choices that will help you and others feel safe. Make an effort to ***choose spending most or all of your day surrounded by people or things that make you feel nourished and comforted***. Sometimes deciding this can be life changing because it means changing jobs, neighborhoods and even countries in some cases, but these will all be very positive moves.
2. We can ***choose either to respond in peace or react*** without thinking and the first is always the most beneficial emotionally and physically speaking. When we consciously respond to others attacks with peace we can maintain centered in our humanity and ***perceive how others dissatisfactions and anger are coming from their own issues and have nothing to do with us***...something is happening to them that doesn't allow them to use their abilities to enjoy life or they simply don't have these abilities.

# GT “tools”: your eyes, our hands, our presence and our words

3. We should take the time to ***take care of ourselves*** so that we can be there for others. We need to make time to really breath and enjoy all the blessings we have in this life, instead of rushing through life. ***Stop for a moment each day and think about what is it that makes you happy, what do you need in life, what is your passion, how can you be of help to others, what do others need from you?*** Look for ways to combine your commitments and responsibilities with your passion and helping others with your gifts and time for a more balanced and happy life!

4. The greatest gift you can give someone is to LOVE YOURSELF and then offer some of your time. I invite you all to look for at least three ways in which you can be more loving towards your family members, be it with words, in writing, with gestures of appreciation or even with a hug and a “good morning” every day!

# Unconditional Love

- After a while Dr. McGee taught me how to ***“see” the participants in a beautiful light and how to get “close” to them. After a while I realized I WAS LEARNING ABOUT myself.***
- Dr. McGee also taught me how to learn unconditional love, patience, tolerance and friendship, from the participants...among many other beautiful attributes they possess.

# “He taught me to see”

- I got to see how Dr. McGee transformed their pain into feelings of safety, laughter, acceptance, understanding, smiles, friendships, handshakes, and hugs with him, with their caregivers and amongst themselves.
- I was fortunate enough to ***hear blind participants call out his name after him visiting only one time*** and many times after his passing, trying to receive some of his “light” or “abundant energy”.

# Their needs are clear once I take care of my needs first!

- Dr. McGee taught me how to see people's needs before they even spoke, it's as if they could talk to me without words and finding what they needed made them feel safe and part of something... community. ***SOMETHING WE CAN ONLY DO WHEN WE LOVE AND ACCEPT OURSELVES.***
- Visiting some of the participants time after time without expecting any kind of emotion from them led me to see their happiness, how they memorized my name and said hello with a warm smile or a huge hug every time they saw me. This led me to believe they felt comfortable and safe with me.

## ***Some of the readings about how Gentle Teaching has been developing throughout the years:***

- 1. *A Community-Based System for the Mentally Retarded: The ENCOR Experience.*** by [Kevin Casey](#), [John J. McGee](#), [Jack A. Stark](#), [Frank J. Menolascino](#), [Michael Albert](#) (Foreword by). Published April 1st 1985 by University of Nebraska Press ISBN 080324147X (ISBN13: 9780803241473)
- 2. *Gentle Teaching: A Nonaversive Approach for Helping Persons with Mental Retardation.*** by [John J. Mcgee](#), [Frank J. Menolascino](#), [Daniel C. Dobbs](#), [Paul E. Menousek](#). Published January 1st 1987 by Human Sciences Press. ISBN 0898853575 (ISBN13: 9780898853575)
- 3. *Gentle Teaching Workbook. Japan Society for Gentle Teaching.*** By John J. McGee. Published 1995 in Osaka, Japan
- 4. *International Handbook of Community Services for the Mentally Retarded*** by [Jack A. Stark](#) (Editor), [John J. McGee](#) (Editor), [Frank J. Menolascino](#) (Editor). Published November 1st 2013 by Routledge (first published January 1st 2013). ISBN 1306046793 (ISBN13: 9781306046794)

***Some of the readings about how Gentle Teaching has been developing throughout the years:***

- **5. *Beyond Gentle Teaching: A Nonaversive Approach to Helping Those in Need.*** by [John J. McGee](#), [Frank J. Menolascino](#) Published April 24th 2013 by Springer.  
ISBN 1475794142 (ISBN13: 9781475794144)
- **6. *Gentle Teaching: A philosophy of life for a culture of peace.*** (2015). Sylvia M Fernandez Colorado Editor.  
Available [www.planforamiracle.com](http://www.planforamiracle.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**\* *Mending Broken Hearts: Companionship and Community. A handbook for those who care for and about others.*** (19..) Can be downloaded for free in the Web site of Gentle Teaching International ([www.gentleteaching.com](http://www.gentleteaching.com)).

# Thank you again!

- Thanks for sharing this time with me and sharing your ideas and love here in this presentation.
- Remember to write to me or talk at some point with me about your interest to participate in a book or movie about Gentle Teaching!

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