

Time Out.

by Steven M. Swersky.

You need them, I need them. We all need those special bubbles in time to hide away in.

Last week, Friday, in afternoon I found myself in possession of the most valuable commodity a person could ever hope to scoop..... a free weekday afternoon. I had completed the week's work at one o'clock, and had nothing lined up for the rest of the day. My wife was not expecting me to be home. My kids had their afternoon all arranged for them. Nothing at home was broken, no holes in the garden needed digging, no phones demanded answering.

So I wound my merry way to Del Mar Beach. Remember, it was a winter's day, even though there was a freak Santa Ana wind blowing in the warm air, and the sun was toasting the whitewashed sand of the one of California's premier beaches. It did not surprise me that the place was almost deserted. There were just a few opportunist sunbathers dotted here and there on the vast stretches of seasand. It's funny how big that beach is when there aren't a dillion people crowded on it.

Workmen were busy everywhere with remodels on about twenty of the shoreline homes. The millionaires were all preparing to make the rest of the world envious of their incredible pads, so majestic and visible right there on the seasand. Balconys and decks were being added on, varnished, tiled, and painted. Jaccuzis were being installed. Every square inch of property was being exploited to its fullest.

So I plonked myself down somewhere and drew a square around myself, cordoning off the world from me. I took off my shirt and shoes and shut my eyes while the sun streamed down on my face, warming me and drifting me off into a space bubble where I could cleanse my soul.

I was on my own private island. My own private sea lapped up against my feet, and my life was my own. The nearest phone was a thousand miles away, and I had no promises to keep. The chains of the everyday hustle and bustle of everyday life melted away. The mortgage I have to defend somehow evaporated; medical insurance, car insurance, house insurance, workmen's compensation, life policies, disabilities.....

My bubble in time was strong and flexible. Suddenly I was that world-renowned psychologist I have hiding in my genes. I was the one who had discovered the Mystery-Force that REALLY drives us. Found out the key issues of life, why we are born in the first place, and where we go when we die. And who is responsible for each and every life.

As I expanded, I slowly became aware of the big pit fall in the capitalist system. You just cannot stop the flow of your life and stand back to view where you are going. The flood of possessions and easy credit drags you through all those long hours of work. And there is just simply no time for the spiritual things in life.

That's why we need these bubbles in space.

Where you can go, all alone, and be the person you long to be.

I have a prehistoric ancestor who lived in a cave somewhere on the plains of central Africa. He was a Neanderthal man, and he went around painting all his plans in the darkest recesses of the underground grottos. He needed to get away from it all too. I feel the rumblings of his personality in my veins sometimes.

You want that place where you can let your stomach out, where you can do some of those real disgusting things that are really such fun. Like pick your nose, worry a scab,

Sometimes you want to be a baby and cry. Cry for all those lost people. Those sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends, idols and icons who have been stolen from you in the prime of their life; in the prime of your life. Cry for mommy and daddy, for the help you need to get you through the tough life you lead, through the hollow bones of the society you must comply with, for the putty you are in the hands of the inevitable.

And cry like a baby for the joy of being alive, for the smell of that Del Mar sea, for the taste of the beef jerky you brought along, and for the shape of the white friendly clouds floating above you in the magical sky.

And simply cry for the sound of your own voice against the traffic, the gentleness of the waves, or the clanging of the building and breaking of the structures that comprise modern life.

A bubble from which you can block your own personal history, and into which your own personal shortcomings and failures cannot penetrate. Where the social errors and financial flops which plague your memories can finally be locked out for an hour or two. Where you can rework history to make the things you tried to accomplish prosper and come to blissful fruition.

We need that special place where we can go to switch off our brains. And I don't mean with drugs, alcohol, religion, T.V. or fervour. I mean a magical space bubble. Often, after a hard day, I wish I could put my brain in the freezer thereby putting it on hold, much like I do to people on the phone. To nail down the hatch of new ideas and plans, to keep out the advertising that succours me towards more financial committment. But oh! California is ever so seductive.

They have car washes that do a number on your car. You drive up, your vehicle filthy and smelling like smut, and ten minutes later it's renewed liked a resurrection. If only we could go and get all the poisons of our lives washed away like that. And I don't mean a trip to the Betty Ford Center. I mean a place that can cleanse away your negative ions and wipe clean away your slate of expectations.

I see in my mind's eye a machine that 's like a human washing machine. A padded soft box that spins you slowly and massages your very essence as it sings to you in the voice of flawless lifebreath. Perhaps entrepreneurs could locate these machines in shopping malls, just like they do with the electronic games arcades. Deposit your silver coins and have your psyche rejuvenated.

One inspiring way to find out who you are is to snuggle up into a little ball, in a warm secluded place. Then you mentally go back into your own personal history, year after year, year after year, until you stop at the time you were six or seven years old. Then you get re-aquainted with the little person that you were. You imagine all the hopes and joys that were in your life. The people you loved and who took care of you. The teachers who taught you, the friends you played with, the people who bullied you and who you bullied. The siblings you played and competed with.

Then you introduce that little boy or girl to the real you, the person who you are now. Yikes!!!! Look what became of me. Look how big I am, look at my scars and wrinkles. Look at how wise I am. Look at all I have, and how much I've achieved! Look at all these people who love me, like me, care even a little for me. Look how I've managed to swim in this wild dangerous ocean full of predators. Can I really be the same person? Is it ME????

I'm thirty six years old now. The winds of change have blown me hither and thither, but I've got a shelter, a place to go. My life is a plan and a programme; needs and drives and committments and the people I love dearly shape my minutes. Luckily, there's somewhere else to go where once in a while..... my space bubble.

One characteristic that most people who have grown up in a capitalist society admire the least is quitting. People look down upon quitters. You SHOULDN'T give up. Don't throw in the towel, keep pushing, keep pushing, keep pushing. I say, find a place where you can hide, then quit. Give up. Throw in the towel. Chicken out. The relief is fantastic. Admit to yourself for once in your life that things are simply too much for you to cope with. It's like breaking a constipation.

Boy! The music will make you hum and vibrate in the cosmic dance. Every molecule in your system will be in harmony. That lost something that Beethoven and the Beatles touched on will make you reverbrate with the freedom. Force your head to stop for a while. Get away. Find some secret minutes tucked away behind an afternoon routine and cover up your eyes. Close off your ears. Drift away. Don't let 'em get ya!

Meditation is supposed to do all this. But I found meditation was just another thing stuffed into my head. Mantra, Mantra, mantra all minute long. It didn't pull the plug on my head and let all the dirty water flow down the drain, it clogged it with more junk.

Somewhere all your previous lovers and flinters are frozen, waiting to for you to summon them and make them jump back into life. At the snap of your fingers. Each one is as young and sexy and willing as they were when you established those memories. Each one has led his or her life in the particular way it went, but you were a crossroad in their life too. They would also like to know what would have happened if the two of you had stuck together. You can only get the answer in your space bubble.

One of the prime irresponsibilites bequeathed to us by the Creator was the absence of a safety valve in our lives. He forgot to build into us a device to relieve the ongoing pressure of being. This gadget would allow us to deflate ourselves like a plastic beach ball and fold and pack ourselves away for future use. Regretfully, we are left with doing it all ourselves in artificial and unnatural ways. We have to be constantly reminded that we need to unwind; we have to be taught how to escape by teachers who are at best guessing themselves.

I'm not a teacher. I don't know any damn better than you where to go or what to do. I just know that we, each one of us, has got to find that place, and we have to do it with periodic regularity, like taking psyche-vitamins.

If I were to run for Governor of California, my platform would be the ticket of legislating twenty nine minutes of Soul-Searching Time as the mandatory minimum per week for each citizen. Furthermore, there would be a cash bonus for anyone who could verifiably raise his Alpha Wave count, before and after the twenty nine minute break.

Sleep isn't what I mean, because, of course, there are those fears and disappointments waiting for you when you wake up. Where was the \$259 000 that I won last night in my dreams???

To obey the natural law of the universe which states that all things must end, I draw a conclusion to my story. Remember the Enchanted Forest? Everyone has a form of the Enchanted Forest etched in their beings. You remember it when you're walking in a wild canyon, or visiting Yosemite, or when driving past some tall eucalyptus trees. You recall it when you see a flash of Jiminy Cricket on TV, or when you flip past the Discovery Channel. It surfaces into your consciousness for just a milli-second when you see a National Geographic magazine at the newsstand. You get a chink of a glimpse of that something wonderful which really is a part of you. But you don't have time to stop and expand the wonderous feeling. You ignore the Enchanted Forest. You're too busy. On the way to somewhere or something more important. It slips away even before you realise you had it in your mind. But you feel good anyhow.

The sun went behind a cloud and I realised that it had turned quite chilly on the Del Mar Beach. Ever so slowly I arose, dressed myself, donned my skin, bones and flesh once more, and floated to my car, realising that in winter you don't require a miracle to find a parking space at Del Mar Beach.