



A journey of self-discovery

From stockbroker
and financier to
actor, scriptwriter
and theatre
proprietor, to
experiencing a
completely new
dimension to living
since attending my
first Educo seminar
in September 1992

By Hugh
O'Donnell.

It's Sunday morning, early and cold and I'm jogging across the grounds of Malahide Castle, and then I see him, the tall bearded well-built figure running smoothly about a half mile across from me on the open meadow. That's got to be him. I try and judge his direction to shorten the distance and I quicken my pace. Now, I'm in reasonable physical shape, but it's about ten years since I last ran a marathon, so my navigational judgement is crucial, and he's fairly moving. I honestly don't think I've ever run so hard and fast, but it still takes me fifteen minutes of gut-bursting effort. I'm almost on my knees now and my breath is gasping hard. The Sunday morning strollers stop and stare. I'm just thirty yards behind, one last lung-bursting sprint causes him to turn. "Oh no! It's not him". I collapse on the grass in a panting futile heap and try to catch my breath and recollect.

Why would a reasonably sane fortyish year old do this

to himself on a Sunday morning? I could have been relaxing in Mother Redcap's with an early session pint, or lying on in bed enjoying my mid-life crisis. Well, therein lies my tale.

The man I was chasing, as you may have guessed by now, was Tony Quinn. I'd just finished a weekend seminar where my curiosity had grown to such a proportion that I had to meet him and I'd been reliably (?) misinformed that Malahide Castle on Sunday morning was my best chance. Imagine meeting a pretty girl for the first time in a city bar, you're getting on really well and you just know there's going to be a first date. Then it comes, an invitation, not to a show, or a movie, or even back to her place for coffee, but to a weekend seminar. Well, I must have really fancied her because I went. There must have been about seven or eight hundred of us at the RDS for that seminar, more than half of whom I'd guess were first-timers like myself, curious and maybe some even a little cynical. Now, you won't find anyone more cynical than an ex-stockbroker, but as the weekend progressed, the cynicism ebbed and the curiosity flowed. I was watching and listening to this guy, who had the simplest message in the world: "If you want something, believe that you have it, without any inner doubt and it's already yours". It comes straight from the Bible. I know, I looked it up. But it was more the sheer love and energy that flowed from this man, as he helped this large group of people shed their doubts and embrace life, that really enthralled me. Hence my quest.

And so to my first one week residential seminar where I finally got to talk to Tony and



Hugh O'Donnell (standing second from right) with a group of "emerging extroverts" in Howth at an Educo week-long residential seminar, July 1994

connect with him in a very personal way. I won't go into detail about how this most private of persons (myself) survived for seven days sharing a room with two other snorers and health meals with sixty emerging extroverts. I spent two days detoxing from caffeine and alcohol and five days intoxicating with life. I surprised myself by thriving on the camaraderie and didn't miss the fries or the Guinness too desperately (the truth I swear!). But most importantly, I met the most amazing person in the whole world - myself. This is a letter I wrote during that week.

Letter to Myself
July/August 1993

Hi Hughie,

This is the first letter I've ever written you. I know I should have got in touch sooner, but I was so busy being a Stockbroker/ Actor/ Father/ Husband etc., that I never really gave myself the time, but better late than never.

Hughie, you are the most intelligent, kind, loving, compassionate person I ever met, and most important you're always there to help when I get confused or lonely. Remember

those times when we really got close, like the day running and swimming naked on the beach in Donegal? Or the hours we spent peacefully surrounded by the calm lake in Gougane Barra? Those were the best of times. Or remember the night you told me to go and talk to that girl that I fancied for over a year, and was afraid to speak to, and how when she responded immediately and passionately, you discreetly held her close with me and showed me what to do?

And the day you walked with me in triumph after the greatest performance of our lives, when we made Jesus live on stage. Why do I not spend more time with you when you make me so happy? Well Hughie, the good news is that I'm coming to stay with you for good.

No more goodbyes!
Here's to life!

Looking back now on that week at over one year's distance, I realise that it made a profound change in my life. It helped me solve a lot of problems but left a few questions. It's hard to roll back forty years of conditioning and for every two steps forward, there was at least half a step back. Maybe my understanding was

stronger than my belief but even with these doubts, I'd grasped the simplicity of the message and applied it in every area. I'd realised that those previous times in my life when I was very successful and achieved most were those moments when I'd had unconditional belief in the end result, and one-directional focus on its achievement. I decided to apply this specifically - with astonishing results. A major business problem had been bugging me for over five years. I decided to give no energy to my negative imaginary concerns about it, and the complexities just faded away. Very quickly and simply the problem was resolved. Well, seeing is believing so I applied the same approach to ordinary daily annoyances, and what seemed like problems became life-enhancing moments.

This sort of change in thinking has its own momentum. People around me began at first to question, then listen, understand and believe. Change the way you think, change your life. My own mother is a perfect example. I had the great joy of seeing and helping her recover from what the doctors told her was terminal cancer and imminent death. She just changed how she thought about it and believed in her own and other people's prayers. I put her on an absent healing programme that left her in the best health she's ever had, and left doctors and surgeons scratching their heads and rewriting her medical file.

Most of the people I met on that week turned up again in Howth last month for this year's seminar, and they all had similar stories of major successful changes in their lives.

It's too close to last month's seminar for me to

write in sensible detail about it. (Truth is the Ed. says we're running out of space). But I heard what Tony said with my heart this time and I saw what he did and I was stunned into silence and all the doubts are gone. This poem says it all:

One Step Beyond

To take that step beyond/and have no fear.

To close that door behind/on all those tears.

To love and live and soar/with new born fire.

To reach and touch and love/are my desires.

Beyond that step there lies/a magic life.

Beyond that step who knows/a genius waits.

One step beyond that's all/I have to take

One step beyond God stands/and smiles and waits

Love. Hughie.

Hugh's CV

Hugh O'Donnell

Age.. 46

Address.. Native of Dublin.

Education.. O'Connell's Schools CBS

Hobbies.. Weight-training. Running. Travel.

Career.. Actor, stockbroker, writer, theatre owner, author.

Work in Progress.. Movie script.

Ambitions.. To write "the" book and "the" screenplay.