

P2AB

OBSERVER

*The Founder
The Bunny
The Vision*

July 2020



P2AB

The Founder

Where are you from?

I was born in Philadelphia, but my parents lived in West Collingswood, New Jersey. We moved to a home in a suburb of Philadelphia when I was a baby. I lived there until I left home at 17. I continued to live in Pennsylvania until I moved to Florida in July of 2003.

Did you think where you grew up influenced who you are today?

Oh absolutely. Most people from Philly, New York and New Jersey wear it like a badge 😊. It's funny if you watch two perfect strangers in a grocery store finding out they are from the same state. You won't hear them engage in a lot of conversation about the specifics of their home state, but two strangers finding out they are from Ny, NJ, or PA, will immediately start talking about the "neighborhoods," they were raised in, the teams they root for and the restaurants and diners they frequent. I am an Eagles fan by the way 😊 but shhhhhhh, I also root for the Broncos.

What famous quote(s) can describe your life or goals?

I want to be remembered for guiding people to a more peaceful way of living, so I would have to say the poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson:



"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of the intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the beauty in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that one life has breathed easier because you lived here. This is to have succeeded."

Another favorite that I can resonate with is *Desiderata* by Max Ehrmann. It's printed below.

A favorite verse that speaks to me is from the book of Philippians 4:4-10- it is a very simple description of how we should be living our lives in order to remain healthy. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

DESIDERATA

GO PLACIDLY amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.



8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Describe yourself in three adjectives or short phrases:

I would say free-spirited, childlike and “odd”.
I march to a different drummer.

Whom or what were early influences in your life?

Jesus, my grandmother, music, and swimming. I had a strained relationship with God for most of my young life; I could not imagine God could ever love me. After all, who was I? A kid from the “other side of the tracks” per se. I did not have a positive relationship with either of the men I called dad. My biological father left when I was 4 or 5, and my

stepfather was an angry alcoholic. We now know that the relationship we have with our earthly fathers sets the stage for our understanding of God’s relationship with us; so my thinking of my Heavenly Father not being able to love me unconditionally makes sense in retrospect. But then there is the person of Jesus, a brother, unconditionally loving, and fiercely loyal, who made me feel valued and secure in the face of the chaos going on around me as a child. My grandmother was my earthly rock. She was calm and firmly kind and loving. She was brilliant in my eyes and very open-minded. To me, she was the perfect lady, my hero and mentor. As for swimming, I swam as often as possible both for fun and competition. Although swimming is a team sport, it is also very solitary and meditative which fed into my deep need for peace--being an extreme introvert. Time alone to think and dream felt critical at times for my very survival when I was a child and well into my teenage years.

Best childhood memories?

My best childhood memories were always





with my grandmother and my mother earlier in my childhood. My grandmother was ever present in my life. Even though she lived about 45 minutes from house, I spent a good deal of time with her. "Nana's," house was always calm, always peaceful, and very open. There was no chaos, and she stepped me into a rich world through music and literature. My mother was kind and artistically gifted.

Your heritage:?

3% Ashkenazi Jewish, a lot of German and some English on my dad's side, Irish and English.

Socioeconomic?

My early years before my parents' divorce we would have been considered upper-middle-class. However, when my father left we were considered lower middle class to poor. I remember sheriff sales signs on the house as a threat of foreclosure, and the constant fear of homelessness. The days of no electricity, and the concerns about lack of food. When my mother married my stepfather we became monetarily richer. Yet it came with the cost of losing that sense of security I had even in the "poorer" days. That feeling helped me learn at a young age that it does not matter how much is in the bank account. It is simply love, and a feeling of security, that makes you feel more wealthy than any amount of money could.



I did not get to reconnect with my biological father until I was in my 30's. It was also unfortunately a few years before he died. I felt so fortunate to have even had the opportunity to reconnect with him no matter how long I was able to have him around. I understood so much more about who I was for that experience. Even though my father shared a very small part of my childhood, he was there for the early years. Developmentally some of the most important formative years. I would imagine that that had an impact on a lot of the things that I liked to do that my mother may not have understood, or some of my personality traits. Of course, there is also genetics. He and I share a deep love of music of all kinds. Apparently, we share the same sense of humor, as well as some core values and beliefs. I might venture to say that, I am more like my father's

side of the family, even, without barely even knowing them until my late 20's. I am still finding other family members of my dad's and connecting with them to this day.

Do you have siblings?

Well, that should be a simple question to answer. However, it feels as if any question regarding my childhood is complicated, right down to this question. I have one full biological brother, he is 3 years 2 months and 6 days older than me, (the most important fact when we were kids. If you have siblings, you know.) I have a half-brother and a half-sister that I know of...so far. I also have 4 step-siblings. I just wrote one of those complicated math word problem, didn't I?

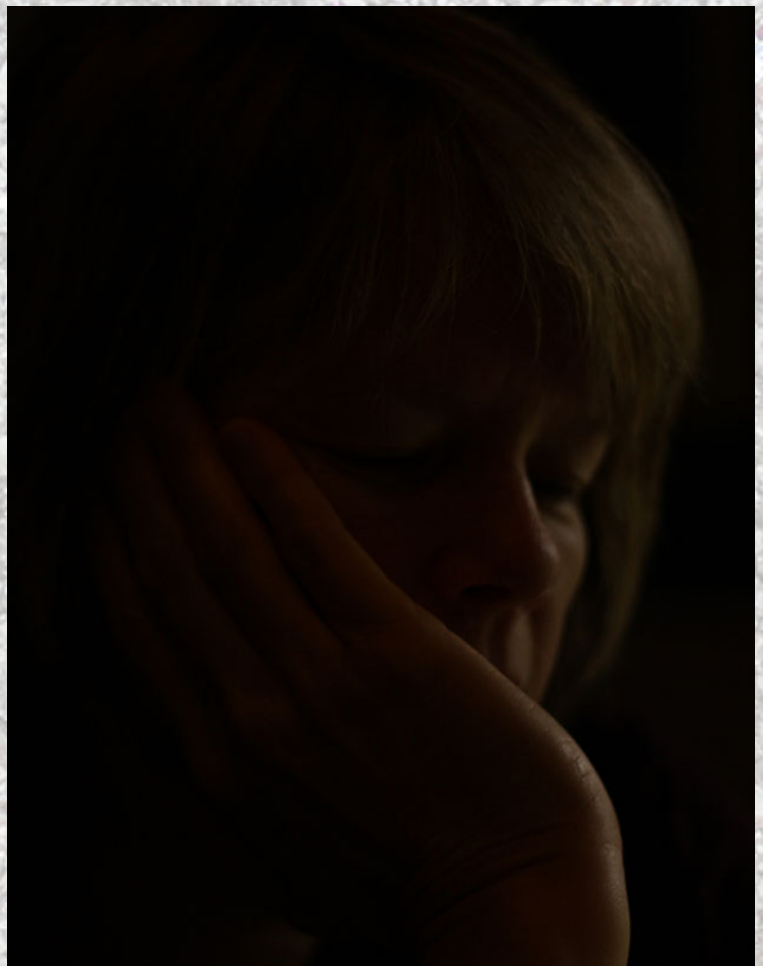
What were you like as a student and friend?

My elementary school years were a very tumultuous time for me mostly due to my homelife. I also had a hearing problem and hearing is quite crucial to learning. It was not resolved until the 4th grade. I went to a music school for kindergarten and that was a wonderful experience. I remember it fondly until this day. It was a wonderful gift given to me by my aunt. It was 5 full days a week for a full school year filled with musical instruments, music appreciation, wonderful interpretive dance, art, and storytelling. That was truly a gift that kept on giving for me. In elementary school I was shy and very insecure. My report cards were often filled with, "criticisms," like "Leslie does not use her time to good advantage," "Leslie seems to daydream, her head always seems to be somewhere other than on her school

work.” I asked my brother how he remembered me from childhood; his response: “inquisitive, helpful, quiet, worried, smart, thoughtful, funny, peacemaking, and cooperative.” From 4th-9th grade I was a good student and had wonderful friends, something that I have always been blessed with. I also became obsessed with swimming and drawing. High school (Grades 10-12), things became very dark for me. As with most adolescents my self-image became too much of a focus. I was always on the thin side, yet sadly my mind saw things a bit differently. Somehow during that time I lost a lot of joy. At home, tensions were rising. My brother left home when I was 15, and I was left to face life at home alone. I cannot really remember anything positive about those years except the times I got to spend with my grandmother. I was in many clubs and organizations in High School to get away from home, and of course I was still swimming. I left home at 17 years old, 2 months before high school graduation. Which, ironically took place outside in the pouring rain. The only members of my family who attended were my grandparents and my brother who came all the way from Alaska for the event.

College?

After leaving home I worked in a factory for a few years doing electrical wiring. Although I wanted to go to college, I never thought I would do well as a student. One day about two years into my job, I was talking to two fellow coworkers. One of them was a college graduate and the other a college student. We were discussing books and to my surprise they both told me they thought I had a degree already by the way I was speaking. Something changed in me at



that moment. A rush of confidence that was much needed to get things moving forward for me. I thought, “maybe I CAN do it.” So, I signed up for a summer class and I was a full-time student by fall. I had known what I wanted my career to be since I was 15, having to listen to the endless arguments between my parents. I wanted to work with adolescents who were living in dysfunctional homes, like the one I was in. I fell in love with the study of psychology. The factory I had been working for went out of business, so I did a lot of odd like jobs like all college students do. I cleaned houses, I worked at a pharmacy/gift shop, and had two other factory jobs. I received my Associates, and then my Bachelor's degree in psychology from Temple University in Philadelphia. I went on to get my Masters in Counseling and Human Relations with an emphasis in Industrial and



Organizational Psychology and Addictions Counseling from Villanova University, also in Pennsylvania. I am working toward getting my Ph.D. in Health Psychology. I never want to stop learning, so I have also received many certifications along the way. My most recent was in trauma counseling and holistic health coaching.

Careers:?

My first job in the field of mental health was as a behavioral health tech in a local hospital in PA. It was a great place to learn and begin to grow in my new field. I was there for about 2 years, then I was offered an amazing job teaching people how to manage pain and stress using biofeedback. This job was awesome. I grew so much there. My confidence increased, I had found a new passion--one that fit me so well; Teaching people how to manage stress and find peace. I stayed at that job until the company closed some 7 years later. From there I opened a thriving private practice and was doing a lot of community service. But something happened during this time that changed my life for a very long time. I developed panic disorder!



Thoughts of guilt and shame ran through my head. I would often wonder "how could this be? This is my field!" What I later realized was in the haste of growing in my career, I had forgotten to take care of myself. As a matter of fact, I am not sure I ever did take care of myself at all. I burned out. The panic, and even worse, the crippling fear of the next panic attack were controlling my life. At one point I thought I would never rebound. It was a very long journey to come back to a new normal. I felt wounded, even violated. I was angry at God for allowing this to happen to me. I used to think, "If I only knew why this had happened..." Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "If you know the why, you can live any how." I had lost my why. At this point, I became agoraphobic.

The struggle to survive is very strong. I had scrappy roots, and I finally found my deeply buried strength. I did not take medication to overcome panic disorder, which is a chronic disorder. Yet medication fell into my scope of fears so I prayed, grabbed anything I could read on the subject (which was very little at the time), and I worked my butt off. Not only was I going to conquer this, I was going to make sure it never happened to me again.

I had not shared what was happening to me with friends or family, I just made lots of excuses for not going places and for losing so much weight. I was always viewed as the person who always had it all together. I felt I could not share this experience because it felt like I was far from having anything together at all. I ordered a book called "the Feeling Good Handbook" by David Burns. That book helped turn my life around. I remember the first day I was able to leave my house. I walked down the street with so much fear in my heart, but that walk was the most memorable experience of my life to date. I will never take a day that I can walk outside for granted. It is truly such a blessing. It took me a while to see that this experience even came close to being a gift. I eventually attended a therapy group for people with panic disorder. The facilitator herself suffered from panic disorder. She told us something that really stuck with me,

and I hope you can find peace in. She said, "You feel you are weak people from this experience. Yet you are stronger than people who do not suffer from mental illness. You do life despite what your mental illness tells you."

The book, "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma," by Bessel Van der Kolk M.D. helped to explain what might have been happening to me. I had always suffered from anxiety and OCD, I was just a master at keeping one step ahead of it by working 80 hours a week or constantly competing with myself to do more. I was operating like a machine to keep ahead of the what the past had done to me.

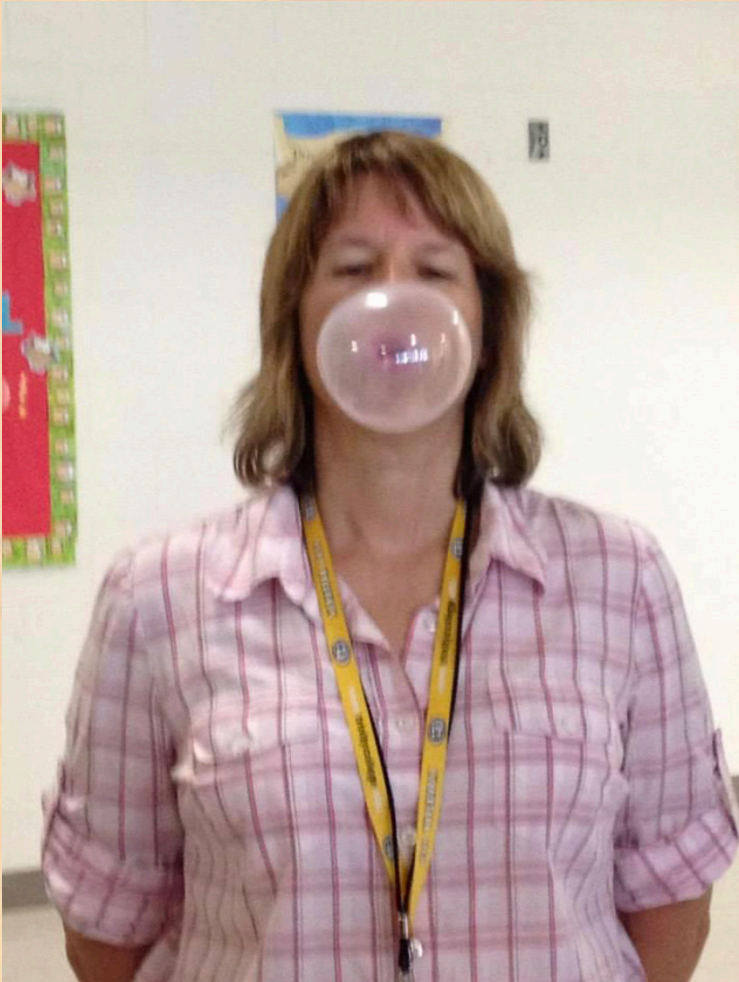
18 months after that walk down the street I became a firefighter and EMT. Why you ask? Go ahead and reread the last paragraph. I needed to know that I could, so I pushed myself into a field where you face danger everyday. Yet, I also wanted to learn more about PTSD. I wanted to help people overcome what I had experienced. Not only was I able to help the people we got calls about get through some of the most traumatic experiences, I was also able to see how the PTSD of seeing death happening right in front of my coworkers effected them and even me. I was a CISM officer (Critical Incidence Stress Management). This part of my life was so rewarding and memorable. I got to work with so many wonderful people. I was able to rise up and feel like I was making a difference again.

Currently, along with teaching, I am a counselor for a local substance abuse residential treatment center in Florida.



What about becoming a professor?

I always loved to teach. I taught as a counselor, I taught in the fire company, I taught CPR and First Aid, etc. But I wanted to be a professor. Guess what I did? I went to Manor College in PA with resume in hand and told the academic dean of the psychology department that I wanted a shot at teaching.



I told her, “you don’t even have to pay me.” Fast-forward a little and she offered me a course to teach (and she paid me). That was in 1997 and I am still teaching. I stayed at Manor College and Bucks County Community College until I moved to Florida in 2003. I continued to teach for Bucks until 2019 (online). I began teaching at Trinity College of Florida in 2004 and am currently

the chairman of the Psychology and Counseling program there.

What about your personal life?

Let’s just say I can understand the struggles of relationships. I also understand how my childhood followed me into adulthood when it came to trying to understand what, “normal” was in terms of balancing life and walking away when enough was enough. I will say the greatest joy in my life came in July of 1997. I had a beautiful baby girl 😊. Kelly showed me what love was, unconditional love... the kind I got to read about in books. My daughter loves despite all my flaws. As a matter of fact, as a little girl, I’m sure she saw me as flawless. As for my feelings of being a mother, my love for Kelly is intense and our bond has stayed so strong. I think I finally have a small glimpse of the love God has for me.

What things bring you peace?

Swimming is a sport that still brings me peace, as well as riding my bike. My hobbies such as photography are also very relaxing to me. In my every day I often find peace in listening to music, playing my instruments, and reading, where my imagination can soar. I love anything that has to do with nature, so camping and hiking are some of my favorite actives as well. I am a person who not only likes to spend time alone, I require it to recharge my batteries. I also love being with animals because they are so pure and real.



What is Peace 2 All Beings (P2AB)?

Most people have a misconception about what it means to be healthy. They see themselves as healthy if the numbers on the scale please them, or if the blood work comes back, “within normal limits.” Or they may even view themselves as unhealthy because they aren’t exactly like the people around them, or worse, like the people on social media. What they often forget are the other areas that make up our overall health. Health is made up of three components: mind (including emotional health), body and spirit. At peace 2 All Beings we take a wholistic approach to wellness, to achieve optimal health.

At P2AB we help people find greater peace through their own personal journey. Peace2allbeings.com (created for the virtual world we are currently living in), is filled with information and opportunities that will help you find peace in the world we are living in now. Remember peace is a state of mind, not necessarily a physical place. P2AB is dedicated to assisting you on a journey toward a transformation of your unique mind, body, and spirit.

*Peace
Leslie*



The Bunny

Several years ago, my daughter and I were blessed to be adopted by two lionhead bunnies; a brother and sister. Boo Boo was a handsome mixed brown baby bunny with deep loving brown eyes. Jo Jo was a beautiful grey baby girl with a white chest, paws and a white spot on her nose. When we first met the pair, they were alone in a large glass aquarium, they were both too small to be taken home, but it was love at first sight. We knew that Boo Boo had some special needs, he was blind in one eye and he had seizures, but he was scrappy and bold.



Over the years Jo Jo and I became almost inseparable; she was a companion and confidant; her patience during some of the darkest times in my life reminded me of the often told stories of loyal dogs who are ever present by their best friend's side. Boo Boo and Kelly (my daughter) were also very close. He was her baby. The brother and sister team filled our lives with joy and laughter for 10 years. When we would go outside the bunnies would come with us and they never attempted to run away, yet when they heard a bird fly overhead or a rustling in the bushes they would flatten down to the ground, ears pinned against their back.



Boo Boo weighed all of 3 pounds so I assumed he might be naturally frightened feeling defenseless. However, Jo Jo being a “substantial bunny,”--an agreed upon term by her veterinarian and I between her being fat (his term) or simply fluffy (my term) we compromised on, “substantial”--would most likely be able to hold her own especially against a bird not much larger than a robin. This behavior sent me on an investigation about our furry companions. What I learned was that bunnies are prey to almost all creatures. In fact, according to Quora.com, rabbits form the basis of the food chain for larger predators in most ecosystems. How could this be?

As we spent more and more time with our furry family, we became very aware of not



only how sweet and docile bunnies are but also how smart, compassionate, and loving they are to one another. These siblings of ours were very attached to one another. Jo Jo took care of Boo Boo, and Boo Boo appeared depressed when Jo Jo was separated from him. Sadly, their time on this earth, although long by bunny life expectancy standards, was too short by human heart standards. I knew that these two amazing creatures who touched our lives so deeply would live on forever in us and in my future business, Peace2AllBeings (from here on referred to as P2AB).

I have always felt like a defender of those with no voice--much like the famed Lorax in the book by Dr Seuss, who spoke for the trees, the Brown Barba Lott's and the other creatures that lived where the Grickle grass grew. For me, the P2AB bunny logo is a picture representing Jo Jo and Boo Boo; innocent creatures being able to embrace the world fearlessly and consequently, peacefully. For all who follow us at Peace2Allbeings you can rest assured there will be laughter, fun challenges, community, and above all a focus on the peaceful side of life.

The Vision

The Vision is quite simple--

Peace 2 All Beings is dedicated to assisting you on a journey toward a transformation of your unique mind, body, and spirit.

