

NOBEL LAUREATE AUNG SAN SUU KYI: A PERSONAL SENSE OF PEACE

Spirituality & Health

The Soul/Body Connection

**HEALTHY
BONES**
without **DAIRY**

**Grieving
My Mother**
Mexico's Day
of the Dead

There's
Something
about **Eckhart**

Eckhart Tolle
on the Future,
the Feminine, and
Awakened Doing

Eve Ensler
Confessions of a Zen Monk
Reb Zalman on Aging
Laughter Yoga



MAY / JUNE 2013

\$5.99



deeply grounded in faith needed little support from her. Normally, Vincent says, she played an active role during births—rubbing the women’s backs, looking into their eyes during contractions, reassuring them they were doing a good job. But women of spiritual faith turned inward for strength.

“They were really independent,” Vincent says. “They didn’t need me to be with them eyeball to eyeball. I pretty much sat and watched them do their thing, which was not my usual style.”

She remembers one devout Catholic who birthed holding rosary beads. Propped up on the bed, this mom-to-be rocked and hummed softly during contractions. During her home birth—which lasted only a few hours—she gazed at the three-foot-tall statue of the Virgin Mary in her room. “I felt I was in the palm of the Virgin Mary,” the mother explained to Vincent afterward. “She was protecting me.”

It is not a particular religious denomination that helps women have enjoyable, vaginal, and medication-free childbirths. Rather it is the belief that their bodies are doing what they’ve been made to do and that they are connected to something higher—be that God, the spirit, the universe, or even an awareness of women in the past who have given birth before them.

“Spiritual practice gives you a sense of curiosity,” Fromberg explains, “and the sense that there are options to explore when you encounter pain, as opposed to clenching up against it or running away from it. We can soften in the light of pain, open, breathe into it. We have a relationship to the pain and see how the pain helps us have our baby.”

—JENNIFER MARGULIS

Two Minutes with **Eve Ensler**

BEST KNOWN FOR her groundbreaking play *The Vagina Monologues*, and as a founder of V-Day, a movement to call attention to violence against women, Eve Ensler reveals her harrowing struggle with uterine cancer and explores how the ordeal allowed her to reclaim her own body in her intensely personal new memoir, *In the Body of the World*. We reached her in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she has been working to raise awareness about the use of sexual violence as an act of terrorism and war.

You write about being forced into stillness by your illness. Has any of that stillness stayed with you?

Yes, there has been a shift in the energy that dominates my life. It has been a wildly active year, but I find there is this calm, still energy in the center of me. The old desperation of a do-or-die mentality seems to have lifted, and although I work nonstop it does not feel compulsive or manic. It feels organic and easy, still.

What do you think it is in you that calls forth your highest self when facing adversity?

Desperation, necessity, caring about something bigger than yourself, really smart friends who love you but don’t indulge your self-pity.

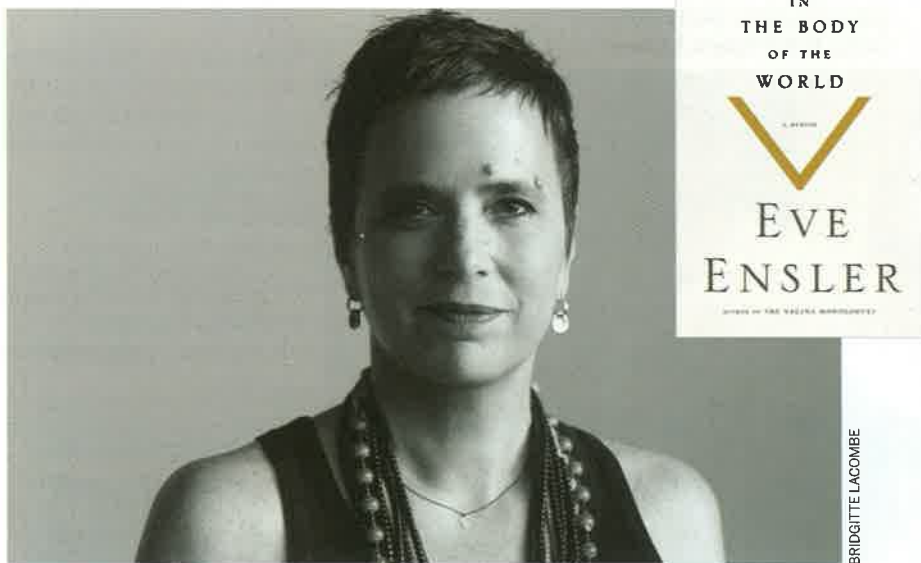
Do you have a practice that keeps you connected to your center?

Yes, I do yoga and chant regularly.

What has been the most satisfying moment for you as an advocate for women globally?

One Billion Rising [a worldwide protest of violence against women and girls held Feb. 14] was beyond anything we could have dreamed. It was global and local, fierce and joyous, holy and political. Women and men, one billion rising and dancing in 205 countries on the same day in solidarity, our feet on the earth, dancing up the will of the world to end violence against women. I am still flying.

—KALIA KELMENSEN



BRIGITTE LACOMBE