



THE
Awakening
CENTER

Since 1994

Discover the person you were meant to be.

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'Deflating' Your Inner Demons
Amy Grabowski, MA, LCPC

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from Amy's book about recovering from eating disorders, which she expects to be published soon. You can read previous excerpts on our website :

www.awakeningcenter.net/newletter

...In addition to taking on the characteristics of an abuser, the Bully has other tricks to keep herself in control of the other Parts in the system. To get our attention, the Bully may "puff up" to appear larger, scarier, and more powerful than she actually is. A large and scary facade gives the Bully power.

Joni's story illustrates the power of the Bully in its 'puffed up' state. Joni originally came to me to resolve her issues with binge eating, negative body image and low self-esteem. She

and I had been working together for a while when she described a Bully that she called 'The Disgusting Uncle.' She saw him as a huge man with rolls of flesh. He smelled bad, had greasy hair and rotting teeth. His nose ran; he drooled as he chewed on a cigar stub. His clothes were covered in food stains and crumbs. His gravelly voice continually put Joni down for anything and everything she did from the way she tied her shoes to how much jam she put on her toast. Nothing she did pleased him and he let her know it constantly! When he spoke to her, or rather when he shouted at her, Joni felt dirty, smelly, ugly, stupid, and no good down to her core. Joni feared him and wanted to just get rid of him.

Even though I kept reassuring her that he did have a positive

intention and was just a Mentor forced into an extreme role, Joni could not go inside and talk with him without being overcome by anxiety. For a long time she needed to imagine me going into a room to talk to him, while she stood outside the door listening.

After working with this Part for months, she reluctantly agreed to go inside and talk with him. The Disgusting Uncle was particularly stubborn in not budging from his stance that he needed to harangue Joni. He *had* to point out all the *bad* things Joni did wrong or she'd continue to do them and never be any good. There was the beginning of the positive intention! He wanted Joni to be a good person, even though in his black-or-white thinking every little mistake was seen as a major character flaw!

(Continued on page 5)

Save The Date! February 27, 2009
Synergistic Approaches For the Treatment of Eating Disorders

The Awakening Center, the Eating Disorders Program at Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital and Timberline Knolls are collaborating with ANAD for the 2009 Eating Disorders Awareness Week Symposium: ***Synergistic Approaches for the Treatment of Eating Disorders***, to be held at Sto-

negate Conference Centre in Hoffman Estates, IL on February 27, 2009.

This conference will provide professionals with the opportunity to learn about unique and innovative treatments for providing quality care for those suffering from an eating disorder, as

well as other co-morbid illnesses.

More information will be mailed out in January 2009. If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

I hope to see you there!

Namaste,
Amy

PTSD & Yoga Therapy ***Meghann Richko, BA, CYT, IAYT***

We would like to introduce the newest Member of The Awakening Center team, Meghann Richko. Meghann will be leading the Yoga Therapy Group on Wednesday evenings.

Individuals suffering from PTSD can find real relief through yoga therapy. The experience of 'being grounded' is incredibly important for a person with PTSD, and can be obtained through a solid yoga practice. Also, yoga practitioners are well aware that yoga provides the chance to feel present, gain body awareness, and a sense of control. A person with PTSD should experience all of these feelings in order to truly cope with their trauma and gain stability. When stability is achieved on the yoga mat, it can be translated into real life. If a person who is in fear can gain serenity by feeling their feet on the ground, and have the ability to live in the present moment instead of the painful past, then benefits can begin to arise. Through a yoga practice, one can relieve painful episodes, tune into their body, let the negative feelings go, and feel a sense of safety through the entire experience.

In a study published last year in the Annals of the New York Acad-

emy of Sciences, a PTSD expert discovered that "a group of female patients who completed eight hatha yoga classes displayed significantly more improvement in symptoms – including the frequency of intrusive thoughts and the severity of jangled nerves – than a similar group who had eight sessions of traditional group therapy. Yoga also improved heart rate variability, a key indicator of a person's ability to calm themselves." Why is yoga proving to be such a success? The memory of trauma is imprinted on the human organism, so when therapists treat psychological issues, they need to work with the body as well. Through a yoga practice, one can learn how to develop friendly relationships with their body. Yoga helps people deal with their internal sensations. It creates a safe atmosphere for a person to get in touch with their body. The relaxation and breathing helps people calm themselves when they experience a flashback or panic attack. To be able to relax and surrender to the poses dissipates the anger.

Anxiety worsens with lack of movement, which causes muscles tensions to build. Even a short asana practice daily helps regulate breath-

ing and relaxes the body, releasing tensions and bringing the mind from restlessness to stillness. Yoga encourages the development of sensations in the body, awareness of tension, relaxation, location, and breath. Exploration is done from moment to moment. Transformation occurs. Confidence and capability are restored, and control and awareness of choice come back. Experiencing the body in measured steps provides the person with the ability to recognize the way this trauma has impacted life.

A yoga therapy approach aids the person in understanding the stress response, movement with awareness, empowerment, breath, establishing connection, and how to develop their own practice off of their mat. Pranayama is always very important for accessing the emotional body. Asanas are key because the body holds on to the emotions and trauma, and through physical work that can be dealt with. Relaxation teaches the person to evoke the parasympathetic response. Sympathetic nervous system is overstimulated during the initial trauma and becomes quickly conditioned to respond in the same manner to stimuli associated with original trauma.

In conclusion, Yoga assists in restoring balance to all the energetic systems through the various approaches discussed above. These approaches stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and help to decrease input from the sympathetic nervous system. Specific asana and pranayama can increase flow of energy, remove blockages, and imbalances in the pranic system. The person can then build self esteem and focus on the present.

The primary use of yoga for mental health issues is to supplement whatever course of treatment the person and/or their doctor has chosen.

Meghann Richko BA, CYT, IAYT



is a certified yoga therapist and yoga teacher in the Chicago area. She brings her talents from Boulder, Colorado where she studied with Richard Free-

man, and Sarasvati Buhman of The Rocky Mountain Institute of Yoga and Aryurveda. She also has a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Meghann will be leading a Yoga Therapy Group on Wednesday evenings. For more information please call Meghann at (773) 929-6262 x 17.

In Memory

Jerry Lind, PhD
September 28, 1943 -
July 12, 2008

Our dear friend and colleague Dr Jerry Lind lost his courageous battle against cancer on July 12, 2008. At The Awakening Center he contributed his deep wisdom, gentle spirit, generous nature and capricious humor. All of us at The Awakening Center will greatly miss him. He will continue to be with us in spirit.



**All Services are offered at 3523 N Lincoln, Chicago
Some Services also in Evanston & DesPlaines**

CURRENT GROUPS:

•ANAD DROP-IN EATING DISORDERS SUPPORT GROUPS

Tuesdays—7:00-8:30pm
Jenn Schurman (ext 20)
Saturdays—9:30-11:00AM
Erin Diedling (ext 19)

Open to women, men and teens with Anorexia, Bulimia, Compulsive Overeating, who want a safe place to discuss struggles and successes with others in recovery. No pre-registration, join any week by just “showing up”. Free/Suggested Donation \$4

•FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesdays—7:00-8:30PM
Jenn Schurman (ext 20)

Open to family and friends who want to learn about eating disorders and how to support the person in their recovery while also helping themselves cope with their own personal reaction to the person’s illness. No pre-registration, join any week by just “showing up”. Suggested Donation \$4/Meeting.

•EATING DISORDERS THERAPY GROUP

Thursdays 7:15—9pm
Amy Grabowski (ext 11)

Led by a therapist with personal recovery experience. Explore feelings, thoughts and behaviors which contribute to binge eating and/or purging and learn key ways to recover your Self and change your Core Beliefs. Intake interview/commitment to group required.

•“RECOVERY JOURNALS”

Thursdays 6:00-7:30pm
Renee Melton (ext 13)

Keep your recovery on track daily using visual ways to express and explore issues around self-esteem, anxiety, depression, relationships, eating disorders/disordered eating or body image issues. Low fee/sliding fee available. Intake interview /commitment to group required.

•SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

Call Erin Diedling (ext 19) for more info

•DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT) GROUP

Monday 6:30-8:00pm
Gulin Guneri (ext 18)

Practical strategies to manage emotions. Members may join at the start of a new unit Intake interview and commitment to group required.

Mindfulness: (the “core” DBT skill) cultivates awareness of thoughts, emotions, and present-moment experiences.

Distress Tolerance: learn to tolerate distressing emotions when you can’t eliminate or change them.

Emotion Regulation: understand emotions and ways to eliminate, de-escalate or change them.

Interpersonal Effectiveness: how to get your needs met without damaging relationships or feeling overwhelmed.

•DBT GROUP FOR TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

Tuesdays 6:00-7:30pm (In DesPlaines)
Fridays 5:00-6:30pm (In Chicago)
Linda Winter (ext 22)
Mari Richko (ext 15)

DBT group for teens & young adults. Help for teens to take charge of their emotions, their choices, and their lives. Give them the tools to be in charge.

Three Units: Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Effectiveness. The core skill “Mindfulness” is incorporated into each Unit. Intake interview/commitment to group required.

• PEER SUPERVISION GROUP FOR THERAPISTS

Every Other Monday: 11am—12
Erin Diedling (x 19)

For professionals who are looking for more support with their client caseload, to create community and break isolation.

•YOGA THERAPY GROUP

Wednesdays: 6:30—7:30pm
Meghann Richko, (ext 17)

(See Article Page 2) Yoga has been shown to help people connect to their bodies, decrease anxiety, increase body satisfaction, and lessen disordered eating. Small size group allows for individual attention. Intake interview/commitment to group required. Call ext 17 for more information.

INDIVIDUAL SERVICES:

• INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

We use a uniquely effective combination of Psychodynamic and Internal Family Systems Therapies, cognitive/behavioral interventions, wholistic and body-centered techniques for eating disorders, panic and anxiety disorders, depression and self-esteem issues, couple’s communication, parenting, women’s issues. Call ext 14 for info

• .LOW FEE THERAPY

Low Fee psychotherapy, with therapists-in-training, for those who do not have insurance coverage for mental health services. There may be a waiting list for these services. (We are unable to accept Medicare / Medicaid). Call ext 14 for info.

• BODY-CENTERED PSYCHOTHERAPY

Drawing from a wide range of psychotherapeutic techniques including Hakomi, Body-Centered psychotherapy explores issues from a place of mindfulness. Explores how the body and mind compliment and impact upon each other. Call ext15 for info.

• ZEN SHIATSU

Pressure and contact applied while recipient is seated or lying, fully clothed to improve energy flow. Call ext 15 for info.

• BODY/MIND ACUPRESSURE

Acupressure helps to release physical and emotional tension. Clients may talk with practitioner and share memories, images and feelings that surface during the treatment or may fall into a deep relaxing sleep. Call ext 15 for info.

• FAMILY & COUPLE’S THERAPY

Psychotherapy for families and couples with psychotherapist specially trained in Marriage and Family Therapy. Call ext 20 for info.

• NUTRITION COUNSELING

Using a gentle, wholistic approach, licensed dietitians can help bring into harmony the natural processes of eating, tuning into your body and learning to eat naturally, for eating disorders and disordered eating, diabetes, cholesterol, allergies, vegetarianism, pregnancy. Call ext 16 for info.

• DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT)

Learn to identify, experience and regulate emotions, to interact more effectively with yourself and others. Stay motivated, understand how and why problem behaviors occur and identify alternative, more skillful ways of coping. Call ext 18.

• ART THERAPY

For those who want alternate ways to express themselves and their emotions visually. Call ext 21

• YOGA / MEDITATION

For those who want personal attention and instruction in Yoga and Meditation. Call ext 17

• PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION/ INTERNSHIPS

For Professionals working towards licensure or Masters & Doctoral Level Students who want experience working in an intensive Eating Disorder Treatment Program. Supervision with licensed therapists, with years of supervision experience, prior teaching experience, and trained in supervision. Call x 11

• PROFESSIONAL TRAINING / CASE CONSULTATION

For professionals who would like to learn about treatment of Eating Disorders, Trauma, Sexual Abuse Survivors, OCD, Anxiety/Panic Disorders. Call x 11

• LECTURES/SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Licensed professionals with specialized training can speak about the treatment of Eating Disorders, Body Image, Trauma, Sexual Abuse Survivors, OCD, Anxiety/Panic Disorders, Relationships, Parenting, Women’s Issues. Call x 11.

Why Did I Get an Eating Disorder?

Erin Diedling, MEd, LPC

In my work I've found that often the individual with an eating disorder is the family member born with two innate gifts: brightness, an ability to shine in the way that little girls shine, combined with a fine-tuned interpersonal awareness. The brightness and ability to tune into others (their emotions, their moods, etc.) gets her noticed by her family. In some families, the child's brightness and knowledge allows her to soothe, to attend to family members, to heal. If there has been pain, trauma or suffering in the family, the child may sense it and naturally begin to take it on and carry it for her various family members.

For example, she may become a surrogate spouse to a spurned parent, a high-achieving, able-bodied sibling in a needs-challenged family or a rescuer to an alcoholic parent.

A particularly attuned child may do so at such an unconscious level that it will not be acknowledged to her. She may begin this role as a baby or as a toddler. But there is a cost to the child in the form of her safety and her identity. If the child is tending to the family's safety, who tends to hers?

Over time, the learned flow of the family dynamic may be to funnel their pain, difficulty and suffering to the child. She becomes a lifeline, a lightning rod or a safe-keeper for the family. Family difficulties become processed through the child at varying levels of consciousness. The child becomes this soothing force specifically because she has such a gift to tend to others' pain. Her mere presence can be healing and calming. Parents, grandparents, siblings, etc, may tap into the child's ability to heal the family's pain - whether they do so openly or latently.

In turn, a child who can take on such hardship and repair it for the family will be reinforced. She is rewarded for carrying family pain. The role becomes more and more cemented. She takes on the role of safe-keeper that has been requested of her. Soon, she doesn't know another way of being and subsequently her core identity goes into

hiding. Other people's needs and suffering must take precedence over hers. She begins to see her identity as being the one who carries the pain, unmet expectations, joys, sentiments, stories, patterns, and legacies. And she does this with ease - at least for a time.

A child who can keep the family safe is certainly strong enough to keep herself safe yet she no longer knows how to keep herself safe. She may not know how to use her high level of awareness for herself. She is so busy carrying the pain of others that her own safety and needs must hop into the back seat. There is more reinforcement for the child being such a good safe-keeper that soon there is no room left for her. Her core identity must step out of the way in order to receive the next wave of family needs.

Even her body begins to function without her self-awareness because her interpersonal awareness is like a baseball catcher, always on the ready for other people's baseballs. And this, too, can work for a time. Without her awareness in her physical self, she becomes overwhelmed yet has no language to describe her sense of overwhelm. The body begins to protest because it needs her awareness in order to function as a whole. Soon, the body begins to protest when other's needs come before her own - protest against the pain that is not her own. The body protests in the form of restriction, bingeing, purging, over-exercising, etc. The body attempts to numb out, push out or push down the pain that has taken over. Other people's pain has taken over the places where her identity and self-care should reside. It is the body's self-protective alarm demanding that she bring her identity and awareness home.

It is amazing to see the hundreds of intelligent, creative, savvy, beautiful and kind women who come through the doors of the Awakening Center. They have so much ability and yet are not allowed to use their talents for themselves. The talents and awareness have been so tied into carrying the needs and suffering of others that little permission is avail-

able to the individual. By the time a client shows up in my office at the Awakening Center, she is often out of touch with the identity she owned before she was the family's safe-keeper. And that is where the therapeutic work begins. We begin to call back her self-awareness in order that she may use it on her own behalf. This may sound redundant, but to the safe-keeper client, this is often awkward and foreign at first.

At the Awakening Center we are not looking to put down the beauty of her ability to heal others. Nor are we looking to invalidate the family that recognized her capability to soothe its pain. We are looking to delicately bring her awareness back so that she may use her healing resources AND her bright identity on her own behalf. An introduction to this sometimes awkward process is to ask her what fascinated her. What brought her joy? What was your favorite place to play? The client will often light up when you ask her what kind of a child she was. Simple enough sounding questions, but there is a wealth of information in those simple questions. Tapping into this sense of beauty is a great way to summon her sense of identity.

Once she learns and possesses her own identity and knows her own needs she can respond to herself. She can respond from her own sense of self-knowledge and centeredness, learn how to keep her own needs for safety, peace, boundaries in sight. From there, she may continue to heal the family, but she'll do so from a sense of choice rather than a sense of requirement. She has permission to return to her bright self, to the awareness that makes her such an amazing safe-keeper. Now, she is her own safe-keeper.

Erin Diedling, MEd, LPC sees



clients for individual therapy at The Awakening Center and co-leads the Saturday morning ANAD support group and the Peer Supervision Group for Therapists. You can contact

her at (773) 929-6262 ext 19 for more info.

'Deflating' Your Inner Demons

(Continued from page 1)

With my encouragement, Joni found the courage to tell The Disgusting Uncle that his haranguing made her feel worthless, unlovable and unable to do anything about it. Eventually, with patience he started softening his voice, saying he wanted Joni to be happy and feel good about herself. He was the one who pushed her to grow and move forward in life, to be the best person she could be.

With this, Joni got a look of astonishment on her face. "He's deflating!" she exclaimed.

"What do you mean?" I asked, puzzled – this was a new one on me!

"He's shrinking!"

Joni described how The Disgusting Uncle was slowly deflating like a blow-up costume! She looked and deep inside the folds of the costume was a zipper. Opening the zipper, she was faced with a skinny, frail, old man, with kind eyes, and a sheepish look on his face. She asked him "What happened? What's going on?"

He explained, "You wouldn't listen to me when I looked like this. I had to get big, loud and mean for you to listen to me. Now that you're listening, I don't need it anymore."

We renamed this Part 'Uncle Waldo'. With my guidance, Joni and Uncle Waldo had a long discussion about how their relationship had accomplished exactly the opposite of what each one wanted. Uncle Waldo wanted Joni to listen to him, but because he had been big, loud and mean Joni tuned him out. Because Joni ignored him he screamed even louder. Uncle Waldo ultimately wanted Joni to feel better, but his tirades made her feel worse.

Since they both wanted the same thing for her, Joni and Uncle Waldo decided to work cooperatively together as a team. Joni's half of the bargain was to listen to what Uncle Waldo told her and to take into consideration everything he told her. Because Uncle Waldo felt listened to, he agreed that he would talk softly and gently to Joni. Joni would then heed what Uncle Waldo told her and make changes accordingly in her life. For example, if Joni made a mistake at work, Uncle Waldo would tell Joni in a kind and nurturing way how to learn from the mistake so as to not

repeat it. Joni would listen to Uncle Waldo's advice and make changes in her behavior. Joni then felt she had power to make positive changes that made her feel more in control of her own life.

Another part of the bargain was to remind each other if they should forget and slip into their old roles. If Joni forgot to listen, Uncle Waldo reminded her. Joni told Uncle Waldo he could raise his voice slightly as long as he didn't use demeaning language. If Uncle Waldo slipped and became mean or nasty again, Joni reminded him, "I will listen to you if you talk softly. But if you shout at me, or insult me I won't listen."

The following weeks Joni was very enthusiastic and worked hard to make this relationship a productive one permanently. When something happened at work, sometimes as a knee-jerk reaction, Uncle Waldo would start to berate her. Joni imagined holding up a stop sign to remind him to talk softly and to describe the situation in more objective terms. They could analyze the situation together, sometimes calling in another Part Joni called The Problem Solver.

In our therapy sessions Joni realized The Disgusting Uncle had evolved when she was very young, probably in preschool. Her mother, an obsessive housecleaner, was exceedingly anxious and rule-bound. The children were not allowed to sit on their beds or the entire bed would have to be stripped and all the sheets re-washed. Clean dishes had to be re-washed *before* being used. Young Joni often woke in the middle of the night to the sound of her mother vacuuming the same room over and over. Nothing Young Joni did seemed to make her mother happy or less anxious. Young Joni internalized the problem saying, "If only I was cleaner, neater, good, I would make mommy happy." Young Joni was unable to see the problem was not hers to solve, but rather her mother's.

Whenever Young Joni made a mistake and broke one of the many rules in the house, her mother

would become anxious and start to clean. This sent Young Joni the message that she was unclean, dirty and smelly. This young Part of Joni took on the burden of being unclean, which Joni incorporated into her Core Belief system, "I am dirty." Young Joni began to reprimand herself at this time, thus beginning the polarized relationship between The Disgusting Uncle and The Dirty Kid.

By helping her to change her relationship with The Disgusting Uncle, to see him as not horrible, Joni was then able to see that she, as a child, was also not dirty. She started viewing herself as a child as "normal"! It's normal for children to sit on their own beds! It's normal to use a clean dish without washing it first! What a relief when she was able to lovingly unburden this child, "You're not dirty. You're fine just as you are."

No longer afraid of Uncle Waldo, Joni's self esteem and confidence grew. It was soon afterwards that she came to session and said, "I had 'an epiphany'." She said she "felt" a voice within that told her she didn't have to hate herself any more. She knew deep inside "I am good enough, it wasn't my fault".

As we changed Joni's relationship with Uncle Waldo, she was able to see how overeating served as a way to keep her body unattractive to avoid intimacy and rejection. As she let go of the burden of uncleanliness, she felt better about her body. Joni began to view her body as something normal and natural – not dirty and disgusting.



She started eating intuitively and her body responded by losing weight, not a lot of weight, but a little. When she stopped therapy,

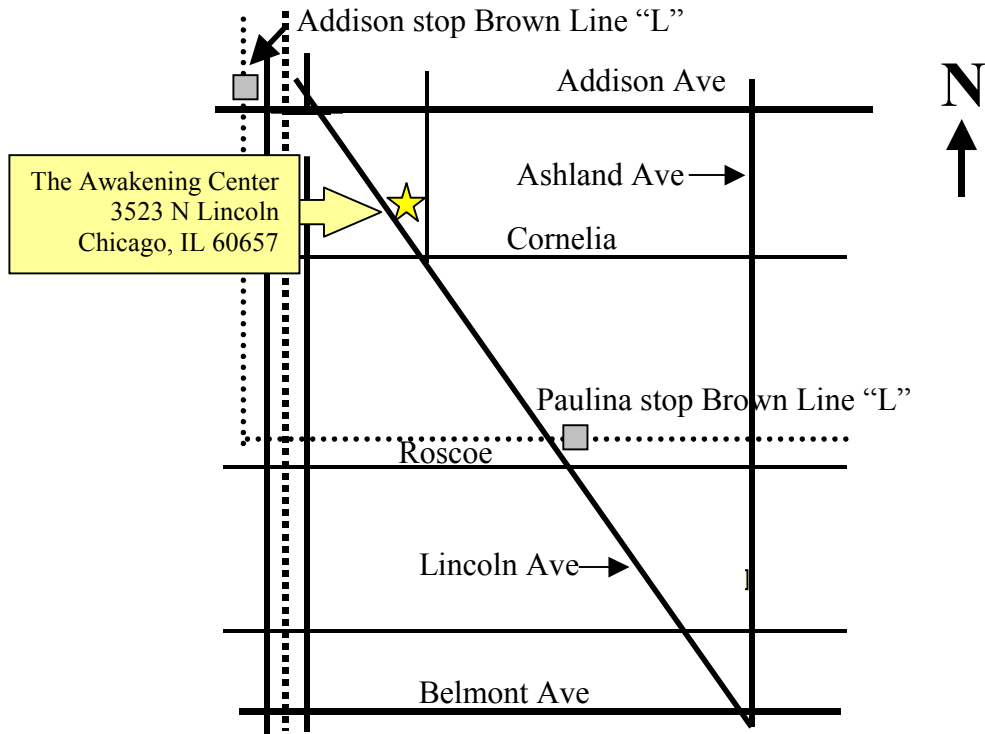
she was in a close and loving relationship with a man who found her beautiful inside and out.

Amy Grabowski, MA, LCPC is the Founder & Director of The Awakening Center. She can be reached at (773) 929-6262 x 11

Testimonials from readers can be helpful to convince publishers to consider a book. Please send any comments to awakeningcenter@aol.com.

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How to Find The Awakening Center



The Awakening Center

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