

# **WHO WAS/IS DAN KAPICA?**

*Philosopher, Artist, Writer*



## **LIVING IN A BUBBLE**

I was born(1942) and raised in New Britain, Connecticut, a Northeastern factory town with an ethnic understanding of the World. After my father departed to engage the Japanese in World War II, I began a lonely childhood. I have few memories of my childhood; but, two eye operations(when I was nine and eleven) stand out as frightening. My stoic grandmother, who only spoke Polish, cared for me while my mother worked in a factory.

As a second generation, Polish Roman Catholic youth . . . Altar Boy, Eagle Scout, National Honor Society, and overachiever in a public high school . . . I was admitted as a “minority” student to Yale University(1960). I struggled academically, financially, and socially in college. I was like a fish gasping for air during my four years of study.

Upon graduation(1964), and with the idealism of youth, I went off to fight a mythical “war” in Vietnam. This was my first major taste of cognitive dissonance. It was a time of military conscription, but I realized that I did not truly “defend” my country as my father had done. Now, years later, I see that I was a cog in a very grandiose profit machine! After one year of active combat as an airborne infantry platoon leader(wounded and recovering from malaria), I returned home without ceremony, fanfare, or adequate psychological decompression.

Life in this country, as we knew it then(1965), was changing rapidly. But, what was “normal life” in the 1960’s? I struggled with how to re-enter when I had

changed so much inside myself.

## **THE BUBBLE BURSTS**

I tried to move forward into adulthood and marked the years with events . . . marriage(1966), children(1970,1974,1975), advanced business degree(1969), and a job. After a tumultuous twenty year “career” on Wall Street, punctuated with bouts of unemployment and depression, I could no longer cope with my hollow victories.

The myopic focus of my youth, culturally conditioned, constrained my latent ability to express my true identity. After Vietnam, I put my head, ostrich-like, into the sand and plodded on with what I thought was “doing life.” I had always tried to please others, but “something” was missing . . . *my authentic Self*.

By 1987 my ideals were tarnished and my emotions were spent. After failing to adjust to a “normal life,” there was only one choice . . . start Life’s journey anew! A divorce, major job losses, recurring PTSD from combat, and alcohol abuse launched me into a full “recovery” mode. Perhaps, we all must pass this way to find an inner peace and the contentment that we crave.

## **RISING FROM THE ASHES**

Frugally supporting myself with a wide array of part-time jobs, I earnestly began to study and experience new ways of Self expression. My new “identity quest” involved many “roads less traveled,” with each path leading me to greater intellectual understanding and emotional healing.

In time, I moved from the Northeast to Florida to begin a decade of continued search for my authentic Self. This healing journey was especially beneficial because I continued to “make peace” with my father as he moved into a succession of nursing homes.

## **SPROUTING A NEW SEED**

To transition from a place of “doing” to a space of “being” has not been easy during the past twenty-plus years. However, I continue to learn how to accept my authentic Self, without guilt and shame. This new way of living has sprouted a new meaning for my life’s existence. My *outer* war and resistance is morphing into an *inner* peaceful flow of Self acceptance and genuine caring.

I founded(2004) the Mangrove Seed, Inc., a non-profit educational center, as a supportive bridge for others to use on their paths to living a life of fulfillment, contentment, and joy. The Mangrove Seed is a guide and outline for Self development and authentic expression. After my personal twenty-two year “identity quest,” I developed the educational program of the Mangrove Seed([www.mangroveseed.org](http://www.mangroveseed.org)) to reflect my conclusions about how to live authentically as an individual, and harmoniously as a member of society.

I have also discovered one theme that has threaded through my life . . . the Expressive Arts. Starting with a school wall mural drawn in fourth grade, to studying graphic design at Parsons School of Design as an adult(with subsequent courses in drawing, watercolor, oil, acrylic, collage, and videography), I have experienced a new way to authentically express and heal my Self. Now in my “Golden Years,” I have chosen to help others to also heal their hearts and souls through the use of Expressive Arts.

I have created an artistic process, *Identity Quest*, that is offered by the Mangrove Seed, Inc., to help people create a holistic, balanced, and authentic interpretation of both their inner Self and outer world. I firmly believe that the Arts can help us to heal; Arts can help to discover who we “really” are; Arts can help us reconnect to our lost Selves.