

The Maine Trust Project

“We need people in our lives with whom we can be as open as possible. To have real conversations with people may seem like such a simple, obvious suggestion, but it involves courage and risk,” wrote 18th-century Irish poet, singer and songwriter Thomas Moore.

In this mistrust-filled world full of political contention and both fake and devastating news, mustering such courage is challenging. Finding common ground and engaging in civil conversations about important issues facing our communities, our state, our country and our world can seem elusive, if not sadly impossible.

This concerning state of affairs prompted Pine Tree Watch to examine the concept of trust. And thus, we’re launching a new series called “The Maine Trust Project.” Each month, we’ll sit down with a Maine resident to discuss this precious commodity. We’ll see which people and institutions Mainers trust and how the concept of trust drives their thought processes and actions.

<https://pinetreewatch.org/the-maine-trust-project-kathleen-swinbourne/>

Trusting yourself isn’t simple – even when you’re a psychic

By Stephanie Bouchard | June 20, 2019

Get to know Kathleen Swinbourne

Age: 44

Hometown: Topsham

Religious affiliation: Raised Catholic and believes in God, but isn’t affiliated with any religious institution now.

Political affiliation: I am a Democrat, but I learned this from (former Sen.) Bill Cohen when I was a Senate page: He told us you vote for what you believe in.

How she describes herself: I am a passionate person full of spirit. I am curious, loyal and loving. I am becoming enthusiastic about how to share spirit with the world.

How she defines trust: The confidence to believe in and rely upon the character and strength of an individual or situation.

Kathleen Swinbourne, 44, has been practicing yoga for decades. She started her formal practice in 1997, after graduating from Bates College, and began teaching a year later.

Yoga is so much more than just poses – it’s a practice of trust, a lifelong process of learning to meet yourself where you are without judgment. But for the last two years, since she moved back to her childhood home of Topsham from Denver, Kathleen has been struggling with trusting herself. “I keep trying to force myself out of what’s naturally happening for me,” she says.

When she lived out west, she continued teaching and practicing yoga and trained as a massage therapist. She also began unveiling a part of herself that she'd been denying all her life: her psychic abilities of clairvoyance and mediumship.

Throughout her life, Kathleen had known things about people that she had no way of knowing. She didn't know how or why she knew these things, but she didn't like that she did.

In her 20s, a friend convinced her to see a psychic in Gray, who told her that her abilities would help people. Kathleen adamantly told the psychic she didn't want whatever it was she had: "I was like, 'This lady is crazy.'"

Instead, she worked as a physical therapy aide at a Portland rehabilitation hospital and taught yoga. Eventually, she put PT work aside and opened her own yoga studio in Portland, which she operated for nearly a decade before closing it and moving to Denver in 2010.

It wasn't until she was in her mid-30s and living in Denver that she finally confronted herself about her psychic abilities and began working and training with psychic teachers. But Kathleen resisted their urgings, and those of her parents, to use her abilities professionally. "I (didn't) want to predict the future for people," she says.

But then she got a sign – a huge one.

She was teaching yoga at a health club. At a store in the building where she worked, she kept passing by a book on display written by a well-known medium. She'd resisted buying it, but then her mother urged her to buy it after revealing that Kathleen's grandmother also had psychic abilities.

Kathleen bought the book and could barely put it down, crying as she saw her own experiences described by someone else. Before going to bed, she prayed to her "spirit team" – a group of people she seeks guidance and support from – adding the book's author to the team: "If I'm crazy, that's fine," she told them, "but if I'm not – if I'm supposed to be doing this ... please show me a sign."

The next day, she went to the club to teach a yoga class. A woman who Kathleen hadn't seen before walked in and spent the entire session smiling at her. After the class, the woman thanked Kathleen, said the class was just what she'd needed, and left. But as Kathleen made her way out of the building, she encountered the woman again.

The woman marched over to her, grabbed her arms and said, "I don't mean to freak you out, but I'm a local psychic, and you're the reason I'm here."

The woman explained that she'd been cooking dinner when she got psychic messages that she needed to go to yoga. She initially thought the demands were simply to force her to slow down and recharge herself, but as she was leaving the health club, she got further instruction to seek Kathleen out and tell her that she was on the right path.

Kathleen was stunned, but nearly hit the floor when she then learned that this psychic was the author of the book she'd been reading the night before.

With that affirmation, Kathleen started giving readings in addition to still teaching yoga and doing massage therapy. In that time and place, she felt at ease with her path.

When she returned home to Maine, the doubts returned. She recently resolved to give it up, and told the owner of the metaphysical store where she has been giving readings that she's going to step away.

“It scares me. How do I trust it?” she says.

Except that she keeps being directed toward the psychic path. So, she continues to pray and seek guidance, reminding herself what yoga continually teaches its students: meet yourself where you are and trust will come.

Q&A:

Pine Tree Watch: Who meets your definition of trust?

Kathleen: God and my siblings and some close friends, but especially my parents. My parents taught me what belief is and they demonstrate how to believe. They believe in our family. They believe in me, support me and encourage me. They don't ask me to be anyone else but me.

PTW: Who doesn't meet your definition of trust?

Kathleen: I'm leary and distrustful of people who talk negatively of others. By doing so, they're dissolving any form of confidence and reliability and truth because they're not holding the essence of someone with strength and confidence and love. My parents taught us not to talk negatively of others. You have to accept people without judgment.

PTW: What breaks trust for you?

Kathleen: When someone is harming my or another person's spirit. Like, they're talking negatively or they're being mean or they're bullying.

PTW: Can broken trust be healed? And if so, what has to happen for healing to take place?

Kathleen: Yes. It takes intentional consciousness and showing how that consciousness has been realized, and then – I sound like I'm righteous – rectifying.

PTW: Do you think the cultural definition of trust has changed, and if so, how?

Kathleen: Yes. I think we've lost what trust really is. I feel like our culture has a split personality. I think we're overconsumed with this twin self – this façade – that people create for themselves on social media. There's a lack of authenticity and that creates distrust.

PTW: What worries you?

Kathleen: Social media and the lack of authenticity and President Donald Trump. I feel like social media is a vehicle for a sort of destruction. I feel like Donald Trump is an icon for being inauthentic and dishonest and distrusting, but I feel like it's not a mistake that he's in office

because I feel like it's making us have the choice of reestablishing what trust means to us and collectively shifting the consciousness.

PTW: What inspires you?

Kathleen: People of service. Those who unselfishly give to a mission and a purpose that helps other people.

PTW: What issues do you think are important today?

Kathleen: Racial integration, inequality and inclusivity. I was driving on this street in Portland and I noticed a lot of African people. I couldn't stop smiling. I felt like right in front of my eyes, here's an opportunity for us to grow together.