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Peggy Huddleston graduated from Harvard Divinity School in 1980 with a Master's in Theological Studies.

Peggy Huddleston has felt a connection to God from childhood. "I always felt the presence of God as a gentle shower of grace or love. I thought everyone felt that," she says.

A direct descendent of Thomas Dudley, a governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and one of the founders of Harvard University, and raised Episcopalian in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Huddleston graduated from Connecticut College in 1965 with a major in Asian studies. During the ensuing years she worked as a psychotherapist and quickly discovered that when her clients connected with that feeling of presence—whether they called it the divine or their higher power—positive outcomes resulted.

"We have a stream of presence flowing to us from our eternal self. I found early in my work that I could show a person how to feel its love, ask it questions and hear its answers. I use this with my clients to guide what will help their emotional and spiritual healing," she explains. "Everyone feels better when they are connected to love."

To gain academic grounding in this work, Huddleston came to Harvard Divinity School in 1978. She designed her own course of study in what a person can do emotionally and spiritually to speed physical healing. It combined traditional Divinity School topics such as study of the mystic Teresa of Avila with courses in chemistry at Harvard College and psychoneuroimmunology at Harvard Medical School and an independent study using mind-body techniques to aid in the remission of multiple sclerosis with people who had recently been diagnosed.

In *Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster* (Angel River Press, 1996; 4th ed. 2010), Huddleston writes about the method she developed to prepare for surgery using mind-body techniques. "I wrote my book so that anyone who has a spiritual life could use it. But atheists also are comfortable reading it, as they can relate to the medical research showing that relaxation and guided imagery reduce stress, lessen use of pain medication and speed healing. The book is used with her relaxation CD.

Huddleston, who estimates that half a million people have followed her five steps to prepare for surgery, has received extensive press coverage including interviews on public television and Fox News. Luminaries in integrative medicine—including Andrew Weil, MD; Joan Borysenko, PhD; and Mehmet Oz, MD—have endorsed the book, while Christiane Northrup, MD, past president of the American Holistic Medical Association, wrote the foreword. Many U.S. hospitals recommend it, including Brigham and Women's Hospital, a Harvard teaching hospital, and NYU Medical Center.

Huddleston's diverse work can be distilled into helping others find the presence she knew as a child. She still practices psychotherapy, leads workshops on healing, and is in the midst of a clinical study using her pre-surgical program at Children's Hospital in Boston.

"My greatest joy in people using my program for surgery is that many say 'I've connected with an inner peace I've never felt before, and this has changed my life.'"

Seeking a similar peace as a Puritan in England in 1630, Thomas Dudley, Huddleston's 10th great-grandfather, sailed with his family on John Winthrop's ship, the *Arbella*, to the shores of New England.