

Subject: Inspirational Stories – The Hundredth Monkey

July 1, 2002

Monkeys With Potatoes, Afoot In The Land...

by Gloria R. Lalumia

A thread on the Democratic Underground site brought me back to it again. It's a little paperback book with yellowing pages that has been traveling with me for about 20 years. I have no idea where I got this book, but I've clung to it. It was being sold back then for \$2.00 ("Priced to give copies to your friends"), but I got mine for free and I kept it. And I'm glad I did, because its title has stared steadily at me from the shelf and kept me hopeful over the years.

The author is Ken Keyes, Jr., author of the *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*. I have that one, too, and it's well underlined. I don't really remember much from that book, but I do remember the little, yellowing paperback's message.

The book is called "The Hundredth Monkey" and I now want to pass its message along to my Internet friends.

A hunt around the web brought me to many sites about this little book, including this one from which one may download the full text:

<http://www.nonviolence.org/amhviqil/100Monks.html>.

From the above site, here's a brief summary of this little book: "Ken Keyes, Jr. first published this book about the dangers of nuclear power and weapons in 1981; this internet-friendly copy is based on the 10th printing (Vision Books, 1985). The "Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon" refers to a possibly mythical study conducted in 1952 in Koshima, Japan: One monkey learned to wash its food, and then taught other monkeys in its troop this new skill. Still more monkeys in the troop learned to wash their food until one day one last monkey, arbitrarily labeled the "hundredth" monkey, learned the skill... at which time, the entire troop suddenly learned how to wash their food, and monkeys from across the sea learned as well. The point of this story is to illustrate that when enough members of a group are aware, their society can be changed. This book is still valid today. Even though the Cold War is over, nuclear war and nuclear power plant failure are still very real and frightening possibilities." [Author's Note: the food was potatoes.]