

Diane English

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Diane English, a.k.a. “The Great Cosmic Happy-Ass,” was born into a very conservative Irish family in 1942. She began expressing her passion for artistic pursuits when she was a child, winning local drawing contests as a youngster and taking honors in a competition sponsored by regional cookie company.

Fearing she lacked the talent and discipline to become a “real” artist, Diane abandoned her bliss when she graduated from high school and entered a technical college instead of an art institute. After enduring a brief, life-force sucking stint as a medical technician, then selling shoes and ads, she shifted philosophies and gears to become an advertising layout person at a newspaper in West-by-God Virginia.

She dipped a toe back into the pool of creative self-expression when she designed inspirational posters she was able to sell to Unity churches. Then, during a 1986 vacation to St. Augustine, FL, Diane fell in love with the charming, eclectic city and relocated there to open a metaphysical bookstore called, appropriately enough, “Dream Street.”

During her 14 years running the store she devoured a smorgasbord of metaphysical books, and delighted in meeting a wide array of fascinating people on a spiritual path. While she was living large, laughing and loving life, she found it odd that so many fellow seekers took themselves way too seriously. Taking her cue from Buddha, who said enlightenment cannot be achieved without a sense of humor, Diane started roasting a few sacred cows and designed several clever greetings cards “for the spiritually challenged.”

The daring, delightfully astute creations were inspirational, ironic and irreverent, and were immediately snapped up by customers who demanded more. Diane’s spiritual transformation into the self-realized “Great Cosmic Happy-Ass” occurred after she read “The Artist’s Way” by Julia Cameron, and then attended a “Life, Paint and Passion” workshop in San Francisco.

A serendipitous conversation with a bookstore customer clued Diane in to Asheville’s growing reputation as a haven for the spiritually, creatively and artistically inclined. Two weeks later Diane visited the quaint town, and fell in love with its earthy, earnest vibe. Even though Dream Street’s revenues had quadrupled, Diane took a leap of faith and left the bookstore to concentrate on creating more “happy-ass” nuggets of spiritual wit and wisdom in an exciting new environment. Three months after first visiting Asheville, Diane packed up her life and relocated to the mountains of western North Carolina.

Her eclectic “clubhouse” studio is an incubator for brilliance, irony and some really silly ideas which are gaining a global audience. A national distributor places her original designs in bookstores, galleries and shops across the country.

She's also receiving orders from around the world as internet customers discover her website at www.greatcosmichappyass.com. Products are printed on recycled paper right here in the Good Old U.S. of A. The new line of Great Cosmic Happy-Ass e-cards captures free-range pixels to beam her most popular designs everywhere there's a computer monitor.

Diane lives in a delightful sprawling cottage nestled in the woods outside of Asheville, NC with her significant other and two spoiled rotten kitties, "Dances with Litter" and "Peez-a-lot." She is right on the verge of reaching Total Cosmic Enlightenment. But first, perhaps a dark chocolate truffle or two...