

**Newsletter from Dr. Iyer
June, 2014**

Fear of Change

My recent squaring off with the possibility of pending death brought the topic front and center. Many people assert that the fear of death is the greatest fear there is. I discovered that just isn't true for me. The fears that really crimp me up are of a deeper sort. It may seem that it doesn't get any deeper than death – but that isn't my experience.



I notice in my own life, it is not physical death I'm most afraid of – but the possibility of some sort of torture just ahead. Something that is completely not of my choosing.

What's up there – around that bend I'm careening toward just might include some sort of pain I really, really don't want. I glitch up the most when I feel completely out of control of where the boat is headed.

The greatest fear for many seems to be of change. Not just any old change, but specifically any change that really shakes things up in a way of major unknown consequences. Death figures right up there in this context as a major change-agent, of course. In a way, change does imply a death of sorts – to all things as we know them. And for many, the death of the body tops the list for the biggest change possible.

But, for some of us, death implies simply a change in form. And some of us don't buy into the myth that the body is forever, so that particular facet of change doesn't bother us so much. In fact, if we've hung out with really sick and ailing elders for a while, we may come to realize that death of the body is a deep blessing when it finally comes. There are other "deaths" – not necessarily of the body or physical form that are far more scary. There are forms of annihilation of the self that run deeper than dropping the physical form. For instance, if we feel of absolutely no value anymore, that is deeply painful. We – as living entities – may consider ourselves as surpassing and continuing on beyond the death of the body. But if we no longer find value in our very existence – in any shape – it is a terribly lonely proposition.

When we frame the conversation that way we open it up to realize the source of many sorts of suffering among us. We can understand the misery of those whose voices hold no weight – either because of gender, economics or age. Those who have "proven" themselves to have no worth by somebody's strict dogmatic standards. Those of any minority in any place when the majority somehow consider themselves superior.

There is also, in today's culture, some validity to the fear of getting old and dying – in the way it happens here. To enter the medical community as an old, sick person is often to lose any sense of dignity or self-proprietty whatsoever. The worst part about my recent colon cancer mirage was the way the gastroenterologist who did the colonoscopy treated me. Like a brainless child who was meant to follow his orders. Not in the least interested in my experience or brainpower.

And that's in spite of my being a trained physician. Who scored in the top 99.8 percentile in verbal reasoning in the MCATs!

There is a debilitation of self that occurs under these conditions that far surpasses the sloughing off of the

carbon-based skin form we're lugging around. To be treated, and start to think of ourselves as a sort of nonexistent ghost still stuck on the planet – with no worth or substance of worth – is misery.

Death, as I said, becomes a blessing. Get us out of here already.

There is a recent article in the *Time* magazine which describes the remarkable turnaround in returning soldiers with PTSD when they are placed in community service opportunities. One of the subtitles of the article is "We still need you".

That says it all. My prayer for us each: As long as we are on the planet, may we know ourselves to be worthy of the space we occupy. We do – need you.

Snippets of Information:

Upcoming workshops:

- **An Integrative Approach to Pain Management: CME Grand Rounds.** Date: June 20th. Time: 7 am. Where: St. Charles Hospital, Bend, OR, 97701.
 - The many faces of pain include societal, physical and psychological components. By giving attention to the surrounding issue that exacerbate or ameliorate pain, the clinician will expedite the desired end result of relief and increased function for the patient. ***This activity is CME approved for physicians.*** Please contact St. Charles hospital directly for more information: Tracy Parmele, Manager, Continuing Medical Education (541) 706-2605.
- **Meditative Journaling Workshop.** Date: June 21st. Time: 2 pm to 4 pm. Where: Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library, 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis, OR 97330.
 - This popular workshop is back by public demand. We share our two hours together by deeply immersing into meditation with seed-questions that help open up an inner marvelous depth of wisdom. Answers emerge during this time -- to those questions that float around in our minds. Anchoring the experience through journaling is an extraordinarily powerful tool. These workshops tend to fill up early, so please, please do call the library to sign up if you are interested. Phone: 541-766-6965 (no cost to participants)
- **Opening to Your Joyful Self.** Date: June 22nd. Time: 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Where: Encore Physical Therapy, 2609 NW 9th St., Corvallis, OR.
 - I'm teaming up with friend and teacher Beeara Edmonds, LMT in this co-created day of delightful self-exploration. You are invited to deepen in your awareness of yourself through the dynamic combination of Meditative Journaling and Authentic Movement. Join us – to foster and anchor your ability to open into your Joy -- and then maintain your wisdom in your daily life by the powerful anchoring techniques of embodiment and journaling. Please let me know if you'd like a flier with more information on this workshop, and Contact: Beeara Edmonds directly at beeara@beeara.com or 541-752-1997 to register. (Space is limited; so registration is required.)
- **Vision Quest** – Date: July 19th (Sat). Time: 2 pm to 5 pm. Where OM Sanctuary, 87 Richmond Hill

Drive, Asheville, NC 28806.

- Distilled from the five day Vision Quests I led in the '80's, I've pulled some of the most pivotal exercises for a three hour powerful focus! My initial training in this venue combined traditional Native American practices with best practices in psychology to create a powerful blend for going deeper into the subconscious – that part that can be pesky in its insistence on directing our lives. I hope you can join me – at the beautiful and tranquil OM Sanctuary. Contact OM Sanctuary to register: 828.252.7313.

- Ongoing monthly healing group: Every first Tuesday from 7 to 8 pm. Please contact me at DrMA@maryanniyer.com if you are interested; and I'll share more details. This group is designed for inner reflection, using Meditative Journaling as a "backbone", but also incorporating other techniques as the need arises.
- To schedule an individual session with me: contact me directly. My focus is mindbodyspirit; in addition, with my background in Internal Medicine, I do tests to rule out things I might be concerned about if someone does not have a primary care doc who has already done all that. I do not do primary care – but will work with primary care docs if either: 1) I find something that needs ongoing primary care attention; or 2) a primary care doc referred to me in the first place.
- Find *The Heart of Healing* or *Mindful Eating: Mindful Life* [author name: Mary Ann Wallace, MD] in book or eKindle format at www.amazon.com/author/mawallace, www.maryanniyer.com, or any bookstore on request. *Mindful Eating: Mindful Life* can also be found in German from Herold Verlagsauslieferung at: p.zerzawetzky@herold-va.de.
- Numerous meditation CDs are available at <http://www.maryanniyer.com/books-cds-2.html>. Please consider these for a friend whom you'd like to introduce to meditation, or for yourself if you'd like the extra support. Any bookstore can order these CDs from New Leaf Distributors. I also make available, at no charge, meditations on my web page at: <http://www.maryanniyer.com/meditations.html>.

Joy to you! ~ Mary Ann Iyer, MD

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