

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

Changing Events

I've had lots of opportunity in the past year to reflect on my relationship with instability. Our move across the country was punctuated by a robbery in Selma, CA, a car accident in Santa Rosa, NM and a severe migraine that left me five pounds lighter by the time we arrived on the East Coast. It was a transformative trip. Since then, the challenges of finding a house and the summer scare of colon cancer (that turned out to be an adenoma, not cancer) have driven home the awareness of our fragility and the temporary nature of all things.



In all of this, the background cadence of “this, too, will pass” has been a soothing drum-beat. At no time has it felt like there was a “mistake”, or an omen of a wrong turn or punishment for some things not done “right”. And, through each event, a goodness ensued. Beyond the obvious relief I felt from the pathology report being noncancerous is the joy I feel in knowing without a doubt that I am so unafraid of death. Only by staring it in the face for a few days as a real near-term possibility could I have arrived at the solidity of this knowing.

The loss of the many things on our trip across country left us even more aware of what matters to us – and grateful for what we do have. The difficulty finding a home served to both strengthen my resolve to not sell myself short under the pressure of compromise, and introduced us to a fantastic builder with whom we have created what we actually want.

And, most of all, I notice that any given circumstance can open to greater awareness, rather than feel like oppression that just won't stop. I have met individuals (and at times I have been one of them) who seem to prefer maintaining their status quo, miserable though it is, over making the changes necessary to create true and lasting peace for themselves. On some level, our gut knows full well when the habits, relationships or situations we are in are hurtful. We know when we hurt. In an odd, paradoxical way, this is sometimes part of the attraction. Why is that?

There is no simple answer to this. But it may be helpful to consider a few thoughts. If we look closely, we see that sometimes we have hidden, presumed benefits from our pain and struggle. Being seen as a victim may be the only way we've learned to get attention. For some this may be a way to establish their worth, because people show they care. Overcoming the victim stance requires great strength and courage because, to some extent, it has been an ennobled position in the world. Victimhood is sinuously close to martyrdom, a revered state in many cultures. The trouble is, to keep getting the benefits associated with being a victim, we have to keep reinventing the drama of it – and experiencing the dastardly consequences.

There are indeed sometimes difficult circumstances in the world we must face. It is the way of this planet for all events and situations to come and go. Some are painful in their occurrence; some in their passing. How we frame these events in the matrix of our own psyche depends in large part on our acceptance of our experience as we have it. So long as we explain the passing events of our time as “our fault” or “punishment” or some other judgment-based picture, we will suffer an added blow to the original experience. Again and again, until we see it differently.

When we realize deeply that the ways of this world are in constant flux and that our experiences are potential openings to greater self-awareness, understanding, depth and acceptance, all these plays of our lives take on a different meaning. We learn to be curious about the event, and open to our experience. We learn to love ourselves in it all, and embrace ever again the possibility of deepening contact with that most precious ongoingness of life, Itself. Underneath all this is the fluid self-acceptance we can find by knowing that we, too, are temporary on this earth. We matter as we are – right now.

Noticing that all things – for better or for worse – are temporary phenomena is powerful medicine for overcoming fear or resentment. Living in gratitude for the moments we do have – as we have them – is a payoff that beats victimhood hands down.

Snippets of Information:

Upcoming workshops:

- **Reflective Journaling for Wellness.** Date: April 10, 2014. Time: 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Where: Swannanoa Library, 101 W Charleston Ave, Swannanoa, NC.
 - Introducing useful questions within the context of a meditative stillness invites individuals to delve into rich inner resources. Most of us already know the answers to the questions, tensions and pains that pester us. One of the bigger challenges in our time is to find or create oases of time and intention to go to that place where we already ‘know’. In this special hour, after we enter a quiet introspective place of self-awareness, I will pose relevant questions that invite helpful insights to arise. We will then do Journal work with this material.
 - Bring Journals and pens. Please contact the library directly at (828) 250-6486 for registration, and Dr. Iyer for more information about the talk, DrMA@maryanniyer.com.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Retreat: Mindful Eating.** Date: May 16th through May 18th. * Time: registration: 4 pm (Fri). Where: OM Sanctuary, 87 Richmond Hill Drive, Asheville, NC 28806.
 - These lovely retreats at OM Sanctuary in Asheville, NC are designed as a deep immersion into relaxation and self-reflection. There is a wonderful balance of movement, meditation, and class-time – all in the setting of one of the most beautiful, serene places you will find. It is well worth the trip to get here. You have the option to sign up for the full retreat (4 pm Friday to 3 pm Sunday); or *just take the featured topic classes (7:30 pm to 9:30 pm Friday; 2 pm to 5 pm Saturday). I’ll be leading this topic class in Mindful Eating the weekend of May 16th/17th. Contact OM Sanctuary directly at: 828-252-7313 for more information or to register. <http://www.omsanctuary.org/plan-a-stay/healthy-lifestyle-retreats/>
- **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.)
- 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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