

Mickelson Muse

From our state of deep thought or dreamy abstraction.

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Here is a wish for a very happy, fun filled summer!!!!

Well, here is it is... May already. Does it seem to any of you that time is flying by at a speed faster than light? Man, we don't even remember winter. This newsletter will seem a bit unfocused, even for us, but all in all, we had a lot to say. So, here goes:

Changes in Health

There have been a number of people that have written us about changes that have been going on with their health. These changes go from one extreme to the next. It could be high energy, emotional exuberance, constructive personality changes, and needed weight loss – to the other: chronic tiredness, hot “flashing” with severe sweating affecting both men and women, sleep loss, unneeded weight gain, depression, and difficulty holding the light. This is just to name a few things.

We do not have any hard and fast answers to what is going on or the types of energies that are coming in at this time. The energy from the above list is definitely affecting our bodies and emotions differently. Some individuals are taking longer than others to adjust to the change in frequency. We think that may be a result of individual differences like body chemistry, diet water consumption, age, exercise, effects of prior physical afflictions, presence of parasites, your individual bodies' particular weaknesses, working environment and attitudes of co-workers, exposure to chemicals, financial or relationship stress—and the list could go on and on, and of course it includes the influence of each person's beliefs.

For those of you that have been experiencing the downside of the conditions in question, look at your lifestyle and change the aspects that common sense dictates and resources can accommodate. You may want to consult with practitioners in both mainstream medicine and

alternative therapies, and have tests for blood chemistry, parasites, low level infections and any other condition you suspect so it can be properly treated or ruled out. One thing you may be doing is just establishing a base line for how you are at this given moment for future reference. A simple measure that can be very helpful to everyone is rhythmic deep breathing. It is possible that our soul contract calls for this kind of experiencing, but it may be presented as a condition to either master or endure, so please consider both of these possibilities. Ask your soul for illumination and guidance; the answer will come as intuition – heed it...

Some of the symptoms that we are talking about are: Spaciness, Weakness, Sleepiness, Free-Floating Anxiety... except, when the smoke clears, we'll still be here.

What feels like a weakness is really a new kind of softness... the exact energy needed to deal tenderly with a newborn world. A world of gentleness, respect, nuance and grace.

The feelings we are having will be the new normal, except they will seem familiar, rather than strange and fearsome.

Our physical body spasms and aches because it is deathly afraid that, without those facades and ego defenses, it will cease to exist.

Something else to consider, for those of you going through our various levels of clearing, is doing another level of clearing that is calling out to you.

How to find peace amid the pressure?

1. Seek out quiet
 - a. Get away.
 - b. Create a calming ambience.
 - c. Look for privacy wherever you can.
 - d. Catch your zzz's.
 - e. Simplify.

2. Play as much as possible.
 - a. Smack something.
 - b. Break out the board games.
 - c. Have a few friends over.
 - d. Find fun in odd places.

3. Take care of yourself.
 - a. Make exercise a habit.
 - b. Eat better.
 - c. Quit smoking.
 - d. Seek balance

Have a heart: The Empathy Workout

The following information is from an article written by Martha Beck who is the author of Leaving the Saints and The Joy Diet.

I can't say I always enjoy cardio-vascular exercise. I don't think anyone does. Being an Earth-human myself, I strongly resist abandoning my customary torpor (hibernation) to participate in perky physical activity of any kind. Nevertheless, I do cardio pretty regularly. I do it because I know my heart was designed to handle such challenges, because once I get started, I feel that it's doing me good, and because if I stop for very long my health begins to atrophy.

There's another form of cardio that works much the same way, though it affects the emotional heart rather than the one made of auricles and ventricles. This workout consists of deliberately cultivating empathy. To empathize literally means "to suffer with," to share the pain of other beings so entirely that their agony becomes our own. I know this sounds like a terrific hobby for a masochistic moron, but hear me out. The reason to develop a capacity for empathy, and then exercise it regularly, is that only a heart strengthened by this kind of understanding can effectively deliver the oxygen of the spirit: love.

Emotional Cardio

Love requires connection between lover and beloved, and empathy is the quiet miracle by which this connection is forged. When you share others' suffering, you also share their experience of receiving your gift- the gift of being accompanied into grief or anguish rather than bearing it alone. Naturally, almost involuntarily, people will love you for this. If you're in a state of empathy, you'll feel their love for you as your own emotion, thus coming into understand what it means to love yourself. This will make you love the other person even more, and of course you'll receive that love even as you give it, which makes it even deeper, and... well, you can see where this is going. Become an expert at it, and soon your life will be absolutely lousy with love.

I know one wise old man who has been working at empathy every day since becoming a meditation master early in his life. He matter-of-factly describes a state of complete empathic fitness as a "continuous emotional orgasm." Who's with me now?

Caveat Empathor

Many people, especially those of us who've had a little bit of therapy, fall into an emotional trap Buddhists call "idiot compassion." At first glance, this looks like empathy, but it's actually protection. It encourages us to condone harmful behavior by assuming that the perpetrator is acting out of pain and helplessness.

"I know he's just a hurting little boy inside," says Jeanie, whose boyfriend, Hank, has just beaten the living tar out of her for the umpteenth time. He's so sensitive. His mama abandoned him. He even cries when he talks about it." Because Jeanie herself would become violent only in the grip of intolerable torment, she thinks she understands Hank's motivations-and so she excuses his behavior. Real empathy is not based on this kind of projection but on close observation. If she were a true empathy, Jeanie would notice that hand, while "so sensitive" to his own misery, never notices others' distress.

When Jeanie understands that no one who cares for her could act as he acts, she'll drop the idiot compassion and get the hell out of Dodge. At that point, she'll realize that real empathy doesn't put us in harm's way. It protects us. That's just another reason to implement one of the following exercises:

Exercise 1: Learn to Listen

If you want to feel that you belong in the world, a family, or any relationship, you must tell your story. But if you want to see into the hearts of other beings, your first task is to hear their stories. Many people are gifted storytellers. Only the empathic are true storyhearers.

To become one of these people, start with conversation. Once a day, ask a friend, "How are you?" in a way that says you mean it. If they give you a stock answer ("Fine"), repeat the question: "No, really. How are you?"

You'll soon realize that if your purpose is solely to understand, rather than to advise or protect, you can work a kind of magic: In the warmth of genuine caring, people open up like flowers. You'll be amazed by the stories you'll hear when you use this simple strategy with your children, your next-door neighbor, your Aunt Flossie. You'll learn things you never knew you never knew.

Even if you're not in the company of people, you can work to increase your storyhearing techniques. Here's a snippet from English teacher Jane Juska's wonderful memoir, *A Round-Heeled Woman*, in which she describes teaching creative writing to prisoners in San Quentin: Suddenly Steve, silent until now, speaks: "...when we used to have a really fine librarian here, he gave me this book. It was *Les Miserables*... That book changed my life. It gave me feelings, gave me empathy... *Les Miserables*, by Victor Hugo." He is wrapping up this gift and holding it close. It is his forever.

Books, movies, songs-stories told in any artistic medium can give you an empathy workout. To grow stronger, find stories that are unfamiliar. If you read, watch or hear only things you know well, you're looking for validation, not an expansion of empathy. There's nothing wrong with that, but to achieve high levels of fitness, focus once a week on the story of someone who seems utterly different from you.

Exercise 2: Reverse Engineering

Some mechanical engineers spend their time disassembling machines to see how they were originally put together. You can use a similar technique to develop empathy, by working backward from the observable effects of emotion to the emotion itself.

Think of someone you'd like to understand- your enigmatic boss, your distant mother, and the romantic interest that may or may not return your affections. Remember a recent interaction you had with this person-especially one that left you baffled as to how they were really feeling. Now imitate, as closely as you can, the physical posture, facial expression, exact words, and vocal inflection they used during that encounter. Notice what emotions arise within you.

What you feel will probably be very close to whatever the other was going through. For example, when I "reverse engineer" the behavior of people I experience as critical or aloof, I

usually find myself flooded with feelings of shyness, shame, or fear. It's a lesson that has saved me no end of worry and defensiveness.

I train life coaches to use reverse engineering in real time, by subtly matching clients' body language, vocal tone, even breathing rate. It's so effective that clients often think the coach must be psychic-how else could anyone "get them" so quickly and completely? Elementary, my dear Watson. The body shapes itself in response to emotion, and shaping one's own body to match someone else's is a quick ticket to empathy.

Exercise 3: Shape-Shifting

In folklore, shape-shifters are beings with the ability to become anyone or anything. As a child, I was fascinated by this concept, and used to pretend that I could instantaneously switch places with other people, animals, and even inanimate objects. What if I woke up one morning in the body-and the life-of my best friend, or a bank robber, or the president? What if, like Kafka's fictional Gregor, I suddenly became a cockroach? (You could find people who think I've actually done this.) My point is, what would it feel like to be them? How would I cope? What would I do next?

I can feel this shape-shifting developing my empathy. It gives my heart a stretch, makes me entertain unfamiliar thoughts and feelings, and leaves me with the sensation that I've completed a stomp session on an emotional StairMaster. And if I want to ramp up my workout, it's just a short hop to some practices that work even better, and have been tested for centuries.

Exercise 4: Metta-tation

World-class empathizers like my friend the meditation master (he of the continuous emotional orgasm) conduct a daily regimen of metta, or loving-kindness, meditation. This involves focusing all of one's attention on a certain individual and offering loving wishes to that person with each breath you take, for several minutes at a time.

Classic metta practice starts with your own sweet self. For five minutes, with each breath, offer yourself kind thoughts (May I be happy, may I feel joy, etc.). Taking these few minutes every day can put you on the road to complete, uncritical acceptance-the foundation on which all empathy is based. (Reaching that point, admittedly, takes years for most of us incomplete and self-critical people.)

Then switch the focus of your kind thoughts onto a friend or family member. When you feel a sense of emotional union with that person, target someone you barely know. As a final, black-belt exercise, project metta thoughts onto one of your worst enemies until you can begin to feel for them. Don't rush this process, or (God forbid) fake it. You'll only become a saccharine pseudo-empathizer, wearing the plastic smile of a fitness model from Neptune.

The Payoff

The thing about cardio is that once you get used to it, you can feel it making you stronger, calming you down, and improving your quality of life. Regular empathy practice keeps you on the edge of your emotional fitness, but the benefits are enormous: an awareness of union that banishes loneliness, a natural ability to connect and relate to others, protection from idiot compassion, a wider, deeper life. As your empathy grows, you'll find that it's infinite and that

through it, you transcend your isolation and find yourself at home in the universe. I promise, it'll do your heart good.

*****A special note to those of you that are over-empathic and can't tell what belongs to you or you actually "take on" the other person's issues. These exercises are not intended to integrate someone else's emotions, feelings, etc., but to understand where the person(s) are coming from.**

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Things I've Learned Since My Knee Surgery

So, I am going to let you know what I have learned about myself this winter. The first thing I have learned is that I have absolutely no patience. This may not come as a surprise to those of you that know me, but the *absolutely* part did come as a surprise to me. This healing process after the total knee replacement has been horridly slow, a snail moves faster. Secondly, I realized that although we are going through vibrational changes, there may be parts of our body that won't. In this instance, it is my knee. The posterior ligament was torn off.. there was no way to sew it back on so, voila, new fake knee. I had to go the allopathic (MD) route, which was very hard for me. So what I learned was: sometimes we have to have things removed, replaced or fixed. It won't hinder the total vibrational rate increases, in fact, will bring that part of the body up to the rest. So, if you have ailments, maladies, etc. that all the hand's on healings, Reiki healings, positive thinking, etc. haven't worked, then it may be time to seek out allopathic medicine.

Just because I seeked out the allopathic way for the replacement didn't mean I did the "drugs" well. (well, the pain pills certainly helped ease the pain, I didn't like ME when I took them, or I really didn't care at times if I were ME). I had to be on Coumadin (a blood thinner) for 6 months because of the pulmonary embolism. I really hated the way it made me feel, plus I am sort of a klutz, so the probability of bleeding to death because of one of my mishaps was quite possible. I found a good alternative for me.. Natto. It is fermented Soy Beans. It turns out that Natto is good for many other things as well as a natural blood thinner. Natto is actually Nattokinase, a fibrinolytic enzyme. The Japanese look at it to be a "perfect food" producing 18 valuable amino acids, an enzyme natokinase, protein, fiber, calcium, potassium and vitamin B2. Natto may prove to be a defibrinogenating enzyme that drastically decrease blood viscosity. Decreasing blood viscosity strikes at the root of arteriosclerosis and atherosclerosis as well as hypertension, peripheral vascular disease and congestive heart failure. It has also been used by the Japanese market to improve the immune system. The most distinctive features of Natto are the adhesive surrounding the soybeans and the strong flavor. These features sometimes make it hard for some people to eat. Loren takes it in its natural state, camouflaged with yogurt, but I have such a bad gag reflex that I take it in pill form. You can find out more about this by doing a search online for Natto or by going to an oriental market and asking about it.

Now for the pain issue: I learned a good way to make my own ice packs (which actually stay colder longer). Since ice packs are a part of my life right now, I will share the recipe with you: 1 cup rubbing alcohol to 3 cups of water. Put in a gallon zip lock bag. Zip up and put this into the second gallon zip lock bag. Freeze and use. Also, I use several drops of Eucalyptus Oil in my bath water to ease stiffness, sore muscles and pain. Another thing I learned was to take some

fresh shredded ginger and boil for 5 minutes. Strain the ginger and put it in a dishtowel-like cloth. Put this compress on a sore muscle for about 10 minutes. It will also ease muscle pain. Now for headaches... I put a couple of drops of peppermint oil into a small amount of olive oil. I put a bit on my pointer fingers and rub it on my temples or the base of my neck. If nothing else, it seems good.

In trying out my new knee, plain old walking has proven to be difficult. In doing research on this, Loren and I have taken up Nordic Walking. That is walking with Nordic Poles. You get a good workout and also get to be outside. It isn't nearly as hard on your knees. Here is some information on Nordic Walking: (Yeah, I'm done whinning).

The Benefits of Nordic Walking.

Many doctors agree that Nordic walking is one of the most effective cardiovascular workouts because it works all major muscle groups in the body.

Recent studies by the Cooper Institute, Dallas, showed that Nordic walking burned more calories, increased oxygen consumption, and can be up to 46% more efficient than normal walking.

Nordic walking is also great for weight loss. By using the Nordic walking poles, you increase your heart rate on average 10-15% more than normal walking. This means you can burn up to 450 calories per hour, much more than normal walking, which only burns approximately 280. An additional energy consumption of 1500-2000 calories a week while doing physical activities reduces your risk of getting sick. You can achieve this by walking with your poles approximately 3 hours every week.

Nordic walking offers more health benefits than regular walking, jogging, biking or running.

Normal walking, even with a fast pace and good stride, only uses approximately 70% of the muscle mass in the body at any given time. Put some Nordic Walking poles in your hands, and with the proper technique, you will now be utilizing up to 90% of your body's muscle while increasing your heart rate significantly.



Thoughts

ONE. Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.

TWO. Marry a man/woman you love to talk to. As you get older, their conversational skills will be as important as any other.

THREE. Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or sleep all you want.

FOUR. When you say, "I love you," mean it.

FIVE. When you say, "I'm sorry," look the person in the eye.

SIX. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.

SEVEN. Believe in love at first sight.

EIGHT. Never laugh at anyone's dream. People who don't have dreams don't have much.

NINE. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it's the only way to live life completely.

TEN. In disagreements, fight fairly. No name-calling.

ELEVEN. Don't judge people by their relatives.

TWELVE. Talk slowly but think quickly.

THIRTEEN. When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, "Why do you want to know?"

FOURTEEN. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk

FIFTEEN. Say, "Bless you" when you hear someone sneeze.

SIXTEEN. When you lose, don't lose the lesson

SEVENTEEN. Remember the three R's: Respect for self; Respect for others; and responsibility for all your actions.

EIGHTEEN. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.

NINETEEN. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

TWENTY. Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.

TWENTY-ONE. Spend some time alone

True power is knowing that you can, but you don't. Juliet Jarvis

That is all for now...

Loren and Diane

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