

Mickelson Muse

From our state of deep thought or dreamy abstraction.

No. 41, November 2008

We read this quote the other day... author was not given, but we thought it was a good way to start the day... “You look at all the things you have done in your life, and every now and then go back and count your successes. And I’ve had quite a few successes since I was born. Waking up this morning was one of those, and it’s not bad.”

Although, in an article we read by Mark Morford (a columnist for the Seattle Times) in which he was speaking about the upcoming election, it said a lot in reference to the “times” we are in now. So we will use his concept and some of his words as a springboard to what is going on now in our world. Morford starts out by telling us that we really only get a handful, a smattering, maybe three or four per lifetime (if we are lucky and are paying attention) of historic events, major shifts, upheavals, great leaps forward, or “The Thing That Changed Everything”. We have actually been waiting lifetimes for this change. We don’t mean this election (although with both parties talking about change, something is bound to happen here, also)... we are talking about what is happening energetically, vibrationally, perceptively, universally, cosmically, etc. Will we even notice? Will we care? When history walks up and slaps us upside the head with a megadose of human drama wrapped in shiny evolutionary paper, will we do anything about it? Will we offer thanks? Will we hold a ceremony? Will we join in? Will we at the very least, pause in our day and take a deep breath and say, “oh my god, would you look at that, the world is shifting right this very moment – something like I’ve never experienced before, and I can feel it rumbling beneath my feet – so hang on, hang on, oh just hang on?”

Right now is a prime time to pause and step back for a moment, blink a few times as you note how things are changing... this election happens to be part of the kind of things that can change the timber and tone of everything. Again, are you ready for change? We’ve been waiting for lifetimes for this.....

You can’t pick up a newspaper or magazine or turn on the TV or radio without getting a constant onslaught of bad news – about the economy, about the war, about, well most everything. Face it: it’s getting pretty tough out there. Some people will choose to do nothing in the face of this adversity; they keep doing and acting as if nothing is wrong. Others will do the wrong thing; they will go into panic mode and do everything opposite of what they should do. Others will be paralyzed by fear and go deeper and deeper into lack and negativity. Matthew (Matthew Books) says that the universal law of attraction, or “like attracts like,” (which, by the way is totally neutral and constantly in operation) will serve each person in accordance with their perception of and reaction to their personal situations. The energy sent by those who see themselves as tragic victims will zoom out and draw to itself the energy of thought forms in the ‘universal soup’ that match the individual’s thoughts and feeling, and the energy combination will manifest “tragic victim” circumstances for the person to deal with. Those who feel genuine gratitude for what they have will be provided with more to be grateful for, and the energy of sharing with an open heart has the same positive result.

The foundation of ‘weathering any distressing situation’ is staying out of fear about it. The magnified energy of fear assures that the laws of attraction will bring fear filled circumstances to the fearful person. Knowing that out of the current turmoil will come exactly what each person manifests. Keep your spirits high and your resolve strong; keep your outlook positive and don’t allow the negativity of fear to intrude.

With the recent economic turndown, fear is back – real fear – survival fear. For a long time, we have been worried (fearful) about war in other places, starvation in other places, disease, famine, etc. These fears were mainly **outside** of us... mostly things that never really ‘touched’ us. But this (new) fear is back – it had been delayed, denied, denounced and it is as mad as hell. This ‘new’ fear is **personal**, it is **within us**. Is this economic turndown real? Was the prosperity of the past decade real or was it phony? In all probably, it never really was real, the middle class has been on a downward slide for quite awhile – the rich got richer and the rest of us – well didn’t. We’ve had to work harder for less money and sometimes have lived beyond our means, desperately hoping for “better days.” No, we haven’t been prosperous for a long while. **The old fear was ‘outside’ of us, the new fear comes from within. How do we deal with this new fear?**

One way is to take up a practice called, “mindfulness.” In a recent article in the Seattle times, Richard Seven talks about, “Mindfulness: taking charge of your mind and body.” It is a meditative approach that focuses attention on the present, not on what might happen or what you should have done. To be in the hear-and-now has never been harder. Is your job safe? How low can the retirement nest-egg shrink? Will this political sniping ever end? Will the sun ever again shine? Will our teams ever win? The world gets more complex. Layoffs, the constant drip of bad news, 24 hour doomsday hype, and the diving stock that hammers it all home.

There can be a fine line between dealing with what is happening and dwelling on it. That is where practices like mindfulness might help. You don’t need to have gone to a retreat to gain a little perspective. But face it; stilling our minds can be hard. When is the last time you even took a deep deep breath? **Let’s get real; do you even know when you are centered? Grounded? In your body? Before we go any further – Always, always, always remember to do the Gold Light Exercise (if you do not remember how do this, go on our website, www.drsmick.com, and look under Other Information, and it will tell you how do to the exercise). Also, check your posture; are all your plumb lines straight? (We have a good illustration on the website for this). Go hug a tree, grab a rock – do anything to get you in your body and get you balanced.**

A good quote we ran across by Carolyn McManus, “Imagine a wheel with pleasant life circumstances on the top, unpleasant ones on the bottom and neutral ones on the side. If you only focus your attention on the circumference of the wheel, you experience life as a continual roller coaster of ups and downs. If your attention rests in the **center** of the wheel, your experience would be different. You would still have the ups and downs of life, but your relationship to them would change. You would experience being **centered** while in the midst of constant change.”

There are ways, other than a full-blown meditation practice to find peace: (For us this is good that there are other ways, because we don’t do very well with full-blown meditation.)

Techniques:

Breathe: When stressed, we revert to cave-dweller days and go into fight or flight mode. Our breathing gets shallow. Slow, deep breathing reverses that. Settle down and take focused breaths. Make sure your breath is deep and deliberate and fills the lower lungs so it feels as if it is reaching your waist. McManus says, “You might know the feeling of having a very long day and you finally make it home and open the door, step into your home and a feeling of ease and relaxation washes over you. You can recreate a little of that feeling with each breath by repeating to yourself ‘arriving’ on the in-breath, ‘home’ on the out-breath. You can choose any word or phrase that works for you.”

Focus on today: Anxiety and worry are future concepts. We don’t know what the future holds but the mind is adept at conjuring up the worst possible outcome(s). When you focus on your breath, you bring your mind back

to the present moment. That is where your personal power resides. Plan for the future, but don't spend your life there because it may change tomorrow.

Be on your side, not on your case: Mindfulness teaches how to observe your thoughts in a detached way. Imagine your mind is like the sky and thoughts are clouds. That helps you observe your thoughts without getting completely absorbed and invested in them. If you can do that, you can make clearer, more conscious choices. How would you comfort and advise your best friend if he or she were in your shoes? Now talk to yourself with those same words. People have the wisdom within themselves, but often save it for others and don't apply it to themselves.

Remember the good: Sorrows and joys coexist. Think of your life like a big garden with some plants that are healthy and other plants that are sickly. If you spent all your time focused on the sickly plants, you would miss out on the whole garden. By paying some attention to the other plants you gain a more realistic perspective on the garden. Instead of fixating on the plummeting stock market, or the war or bills to be paid – go on a walk or a hike or pursue some other activity that adds to your perspective and lends stability that helps you deal with the difficult. (Loren and I take a walk near water to help us.) And each day, review the things in your life for which you are grateful.

Help someone else: It might be as simple as a kind word to a co-worker having a difficult day or checking in on a neighbor, or really listening to a family member or friend. People often underestimate the value of their presence in someone's life. Just knowing we are not alone can reduce stress. We are all in this together and being here for one another will help us all through these difficult times.

Change happens: The practice of mindfulness embraces the idea that change is constant and can feel painful in the short-term. There was a story about a lady (now in her 90s) who was living a successful and financially affluent life in Germany when WWII changed everything. Her family lost their livelihood. She, her husband and young children immigrated to the US and started over. Her motto was, "Do not place your security on things outside of yourself. Everything outside of yourself can change. Your security is within you. Security comes from the self-confidence that you can respond to life circumstances, whatever they might be." Good words to live by, don't you think?

Dealing with it:

Take a bath in the dark. Hot water plus silence and no visual stimulation equals relaxation. Breathe in the steam ... breathe deeply, let your mind wander.

Use the remote: Avoid maddening or violent TV programs at night. Mute the commercials if they annoy you.

Revise your standards. You don't have to be a perfectionist about everything. Take pressure off yourself when you can.

Huff and puff. Any activity that makes you temporarily short of breath eases stress. If you don't have any time for an aerobic activity, simply sit and do deep, fast breathing. It oxygenates your brain and blood, and takes away the strain.

Program your MP3 player. Find songs that make you feel happy and calm. Listen to them whenever you feel most uptight (at the end of your workday, for example.)

Break it down. Many of us stress because we're overwhelmed by work, too many options, and by too much information. Break tasks or problems down into small parts that you can tackle easily.

Managing Stress

Look around. See if there really is something you can change or control in the situation.

Set realistic goals for yourself. Reduce the number of events going on in your life and you may reduce the circuit overload.

Remove yourself from the stressful situation. Give yourself a break if only for a few moments daily.

Don't overwhelm yourself. Don't fret about your entire workload. Handle each task as it comes, or selectively deal with matters in some priority.

Don't sweat the small stuff. Try to prioritize a few truly important things and let the rest slide.

Selectively change the way you react. Don't try to do it all at once. Focus on one troublesome thing and manage your reaction to that one thing.... Then do another.

Change the way you see your situation; seek alternative viewpoints. Stress is a reaction to events and problems, and you can lock yourself into one way of viewing your situation. Seek an outside perspective of the situation, compare it with yours, and perhaps lessen your reaction to these conditions.

Avoid extreme reactions. Why hate when a little dislike will do? Why generate anxiety when you can just be sort of nervous? Why rage when you can just be angry for a bit? Why be depressed when you can just be sad?

Get enough sleep. Lack of rest just aggravates stress.

Work off stress. Get physical. Do some physical activity.

Avoid self-medication. Alcohol and drugs can mask stress. They don't help you deal with the problems.

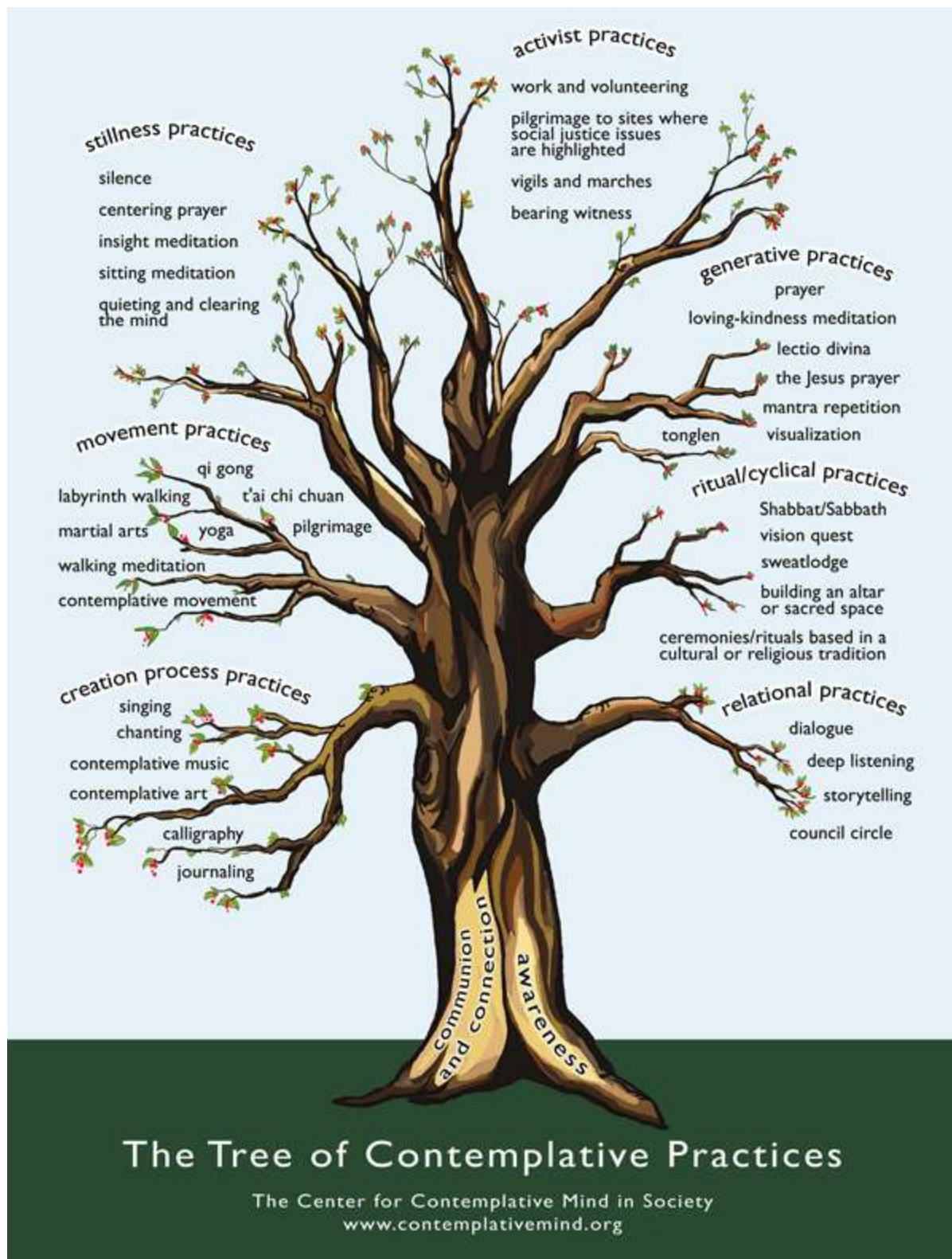
Additional thoughts on centering and balancing:

When our children were going through high school, we made sure that they were not only strong academically, participated in the arts, were active in sports and volunteered for something humanitarian. We thought that this formula would help make a more rounded student when trying to earn their way into the college or university that they wanted to get in to as well as qualify for a few scholarships that may be available and in general prepare them for life. Our children were in high school in the 1980's and early 90's. This was before we knew anything about being balanced, centered and grounded.

We have been working so hard on balancing the many aspects of our body, mind and spirit that it was difficult to know if you were leaving anything out or over-doing any particular aspect.

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has broken everything down into a number of different practices which can quickly help you in analyzing areas that you are successful in and areas that you can improve on. The illustration that follows can help you fine-tune additional ways to become more in balance. Look at the

main categories and the examples of activities. We thought this illustration could help you think of activities that would fit with your belief system and help you create a spark for future actions that will help you remain in a more centered and balanced place. We know this illustration has helped us think of a few things that we could be doing.



Another hint to help: Spices for health



Spices are high in antioxidants..... The word “antioxidant” typically congers up thoughts of fruits, vegetables, tea, and even chocolate. But did you know that spices and herbs are also ripe with antioxidant power? Pictured above are what is being referred to as “seven super spices” that are comparable in antioxidant levels as many fruits and vegetables. Adding more spices and herbs is a way for you to improve the over all quality of your diet.

Spices and herbs are botanically classified as fruits and vegetables. Since they no longer contain the water that makes up a significant part of the fresh produce, spices and herbs offer an even higher level of antioxidants. In addition, they are also rich in phytonutrients, such as carotenoid, flavonoids and other phenolics, all of which possess health-promoting properties.

The healthy benefits of spices are herbs are:

Antioxidant power: Research has shown that antioxidants are substances found in foods like fruits and vegetables that may protect cells against the effects of free radicals. Free radicals are molecules produced when your body breaks down food or by environmental exposures like tobacco smoke and radiation. Antioxidants can protect you against heart disease, cancer and other diseases. Antioxidants include beta-carotene, lutein, lycopen, selenium and vitamins A, C, and E.

Anti-inflammatory properties: Researchers are investigating the unique protective properties of spices and herbs, and their role in possibly reducing inflammation. Inflammation has been identified as a precursor to many chronic disease such as heart disease, allergies and Alzheimer’s to name a few. Spices and herbs can be included in an anti-inflammatory diet to not only add flavor but to also assist in healing the body.

Weight loss: Researchers are exploring the potential of spices to boost metabolism, promote satiety, aid weight management and enhance the overall quality of a diet. The capsaicin in peppers is believed to have metabolic boosting properties.

Ok what are these spices?

1. Cinnamon
2. Oregano
3. Ginger
4. Dried Red Peppers
5. Rosemary
6. Thyme
7. Tumeric

Now that I know that spices are good for me, (something other than salt and pepper – who would have ever thought spices could help?), what do I do now? Experiment, play around with spices, and be creative. You don't need to limit yourself to the seven listed above – just go crazy. Have fun! This time the “fun time” will actually really benefit your health!!!!

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...and more

The last level of work, we have discovered, has been more physical than we could have ever imagined. To help us with this level, we are testing products that we think can assist us in clearing, protecting, nourishing, nurturing, restoring, and energizing the cells of our body and can assist us in staying in balance. We are extremely sensitive to things (creams, lotions, etc.) that can be applied to our physical bodies, so if we find the products to pass our test, it may be a product that you can use also. We are drawn to this product because it contains malachite, gold, hematite, smithsonite, rhodocrosite and mica. When you consider the metaphysical properties of these stones you can see why we are drawn to this product. We will let you know if the product works for us.

Something else that has helped us quite a bit is adding **Ribose** to our morning routine. This natural supplement was recommended by a good friend who is a walking encyclopedia in the nutrition department. Ribose is a natural sugar found in all living cells, which begins the process by which cellular energy or adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is produced. Ribose and its related compound, deoxyribose, are the carbohydrates used to form DNA and RNA (ribose is used in RNA and deoxyribose is used in DNA). **Ribose provides every cell in the body with energy.** You can purchase this at a healthfood store or order it online. We use it in powdered form... adding it to water and drinking it.

Also, check your body to see if you need extra Vitamin D..... With the winter season fast approaching, our bodies may be needing it. Vitamin D is called the sunlight vitamin because the body produces it when the sun's ultraviolet B (UVB) rays strike the skin. It is the only vitamin the body manufactures naturally and is technically considered a hormone. Vitamin D is important for the proper absorption of calcium from food. It is vital for the control of the levels of calcium in the blood and also controls the rate at which the body excretes calcium in the urine. The active form of the vitamin is calcitriol which is synthesized from either D2 or D3 in the kidneys. Calcitriol binds to a protein transcription factor which then regulates gene expression. Essential for building strong bones and teeth, vitamin D also helps to **strengthen the immune system** and may prevent some types of cancer.

Do some research on all of this information presented in this newsletter, see what resonates with you. Ask your acupuncturist, your massage therapist, your chiropractor, your naturopath, your MD, your friends, your family, etc. for suggestions. Gather information and YOU decide for YOU what is best. Do not let someone else decide for you. You need to be in charge of YOU.

Until next time,

Loren and Diane

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