

HEALING CYCLES

By Frank Gemmato, L.Ac.

Nature goes through its endless cycle of renewal and rebirth in a myriad of ways and a multitude of species. The warm sunlight and island rains nourish and nurture everything in sight.

THERE comes a time in the life of every person when illness presents an opportunity to reintegrate in a way that leads to profound healing. Whether from injury, emotional imbalance, or spiritual crisis, illness presents the sufferer with the possibility of elevation to a higher plane of wholeness and insight. In this sense, illness can be a blessing. In the course of my work, I have been privileged to witness this process called healing, and welcome you to share in an experiential journey toward wellness.

The healing experience

The air in the room is fresh and invigorating, the temperature perfect. There is soft music playing in the background. The patient comes into the room and expresses his needs and concerns, his symptoms, worries, anxieties, and fears. An atmosphere of complete safety and trust is established within the sacred healing relationship. Once inserted, the acupuncture needles tingle slightly as the client contacts the rivers and streams of his own energy flow. He may experience a coming home to himself, peaceful and serene; for some, bordering on euphoria. Moments of timeless integration follow where the client may enter deep relaxation or even fall asleep.

Through the vehicle of acupuncture, the client becomes one with the Energy of the universe and is therefore able to release the blocks previously held as disease. As these blockages are released, cognitive connections are made, and with this gift of awareness comes the opportunity to heal. This may be experienced simply as the relief of pain. In some cases, a profound healing of emotional trauma or spiritual crisis may come about. Responsibility, self-empowerment, and renewed optimism are the results.

Freedom from shame and guilt

Gusts of wind rustle the coconut frond, the jungle scent is sweetly perfumed, the bougainvillea hang in heavy, multicolored bouquets of purple and red.

To step off the plane of shame and guilt onto an island of worthiness is a key step in the process of healing. To know and to realize that changes can be made, that life is good, that love and hurt are two different things. It is essential to take time out in order to sustain health. Burnout is a state of flat, uni-dimensionality, a precursor to disease. Care of the self is the best healing, because it is preventative.

In his book, *Radical Honesty*, Brad Blanton says that “what must be unlearned is the habit of being lost in value judgments that override experience.” He says that the minimum requirement for happiness is “the willingness to take care of oneself.” On this island of retreat, I enter into myself, question my beliefs, values, I reintegrate. I move into a place of unknowing, where all preconceived notions and concepts dissolve.

Healing as a process

The night sky pulsates with planets and stars millions of light years away. It is truly awesome. I take my rightful place in this heaving, breathing, vibrant universe.

It seems to me that the healing process is essentially creative. And I have discovered the importance of developing creativity from the point of view of **process** rather than **product**. Julia Cameron, author of the best-seller *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, suggests writing three pages in a stream of consciousness each morning. “If you think of them as being an active form of meditation for westerners, you are basically writing down your ‘cloud thoughts’”. This frees the individual from the blocks that have limited creativity and the even flow of energy. Healing is a process in which the sufferer reclaims her essential destiny as a creative being.

Acceptance and Love

Tall sugar cane stalks hiss in the wind, the afternoon light shines honey colored. Birds sing their evening song, and the red clay soil smells damp and raw.

There is no healing without acceptance and love. This work begins with the self. Fostering a disposition of unconditional love of self, and overcoming the obstacles to receiving that love, are crucial to the process of healing. This means dying to ourselves: to preconceptions, judgments, and all that would take us out of the present moment. For many it takes a lifetime, but I believe this is every person's destiny. As the individual opens to unconditional love of self, the same reality manifests with others, and the deepest healing happens.

The cycle of death and rebirth continues as day is enveloped by night. •

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