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as well as Yoga Instructors deal with - back pain. Our example client is Joe, a 45-year old married business professional with 2 children. Joe has been suffering from back pain on and off since his mid-thirties, but the pain has escalated in the last six months and has caused him to seek out a Yoga Therapist.

If we apply a strictly physical diagnosis to Joe, we would concentrate our energies on releasing the lower back muscles throughout a combination of yoga poses and breathing exercises intended to relieve tension in that area. While both of these things will help Joe, the relief that they bring will be temporary. If he is disciplined enough to practice these things at home, he may get more moments of short-term relief, but in the long run, Joe will never learn how to face the underlying issues of his stress. The inherent fault in the physical-only diagnosis is that the therapist never learns anything about Joe's life that could empower him to understand and eventually transform the deeper issues that are causing his back pain.

If we use the Koshas as a diagnostic model for Joe, we discover that on a physical level, Joe has tight muscles exasperating the low back resulting in nerve pain. We also discover that on an energetic level, Joe changed jobs almost six months ago, and has gained 15 pounds due to the fact that he has been eating more take-out food and has not been able to keep up with his normal exercise routine. On an emotional level he is in a state of fear being that he feels the need to prove himself in order to keep his new position. This has manifested in a heightened state of alertness as his new blackberry device has him feeling like he is "on call" all day long. The emotional strain has created tension at home as his wife and kids are feeling neglected. In addition, his social life is practically non-existent outside of work. Intellectually, Joe is thriving and growing with the new job experience, but spiritually, Joe has had less time to do his nightly inspirational reading and has been skipping church on Sundays to get some extra sleep.

Armed with all of this knowledge, we are now prepared to make a holistic interpretation of Joe's condition. We see that Joe's back pain is the result of three major contributing factors, lack of exercise, poor nutrition and the work/home stress created by being in a new job and working longer hours. We also see that Joe might be feeling isolated from his family and friends, and is feeling slightly depressed by his lack of connection to his spiritual practice. We understand

that Joe's back would be most improved by creating balance between his work life, home life and spiritual practice. We empower Joe with this knowledge and he begins to work out how he is going to create some clear boundaries. He starts to leave work on time and put his blackberry aside in the evenings. When this happens, he finds more time to eat healthier meals, exercise, and spend time with his friends and family. As a side effect, his clarity of mind increases his efficiency at work and he gains the recognition of his co-workers for his productivity and pleasant demeanor.

By addressing the area of his life that is most out of balance and finding lifestyle practices that support the necessary changes to bring balance back, Joe feels a release of tension in the muscles supporting the low back. He still needs to practice his yoga poses, deep breathing, relaxation and meditation, but understands that they only help him if he continues to work on the lifestyle factors that contribute to his back pain. As Joe progresses with his Yoga Therapy he learns and applies the basic tenets of the Yamas (Restraint of Negative Behaviors) and Niyamas (Positive Observances) to his daily activities and becomes better at managing his stress. Further study of the Chakras continues to deepen his level of self-awareness and understanding. Joe's Yoga Therapy program contributes to his overall physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. He continues his practice on his own, comes to a yoga class twice a week and no longer needs to see his therapist on a regular basis.

Conclusion

While this example is somewhat over-simplified for the purposes of this article, I have used this process with thousands of yoga students over the last 20 years and have witnessed tremendous healing occur. If we trust the clear path that the ancients have laid out for us and help our students to connect the dots in the mind/body/spirit, the Yoga tradition does the work for us. However, if we limit ourselves to the Western diagnostic process, the application of Yoga becomes limited and the chances for individual transformation decrease. Yoga's entire culture of consciousness offers a path of complete self-realization that is as broad as human life itself and a holistic diagnostic model that includes physical, life force, mind, intellect and spirit offers Yoga Therapists and students an approach that can transform pain and disease into a path of enlightenment. ▲



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Integrating Change: A Guide for Modern Spiritual Warriors

TRANSFORMATION IS A WELL-DEFINED PROGRESSION IN MANY TRADITIONS, OFTEN FOLLOWING A THREE-PHASED APPROACH OF EXILE, JOURNEY AND THE RETURN HOME.

The would-be Hero answers a call that throws him into an adventure that tests his character. After descent into the wilderness, battles are fought in which the warrior confronts his demons. Having conquered his fears, the hero proceeds to a welcoming reunion at their place of origin, which is also freed from tyranny through their efforts.

A significant difference between the classical and present day Exile/Journey/Return Home is that for some, the 'Return' may be fraught with more upheaval than the journey itself! Today's spiritual warrior must quickly integrate hard won perceptions into their daily lives with little or no fanfare or support. Cultivating awareness and respect for this stage of transformation can mean the difference between still feeling in the wilderness of exile or the heroic warrior-*bodhisattva** returning home to benefit all.

Contemporary Buddhist thinkers seem very effective at bringing the wisdom of ancient truths into modern day practicality as they take refuge in the Buddha (the example of the Enlightened one), the *Dharma* (the teachings of the Buddha), and the *Sangha* (spiritual community) to assist in the re-entry process.

A common outcome of the transformative experience is that we may not have completely integrated aspects of the change in into our personalities. Who are we now? How do we respond to personal, social and work situations? There is a rawness here; a sense of being very aware that we are not going to proceed with our usual programmed responses, but unsure as to what to say or how to act, especially when others are still relating to the 'old you.'

Gradually, we come to be aware that a feeling of groundlessness is an opportunity to remain fully present to this state rather than returning to our old patterns. Taking refuge in the Buddha, who shed all aspects of personality, we reach a point where something in the nebulousness of 'nothing solid' begins to feel like freedom. The writing of Pema Chodron delves deeply into these states of 'not knowing' that ultimately bring us closer to reality than the walls we used to build to feel safe and in control.

Another reaction might be feeling as if our experiences in daily life will never be as satisfying as a peak experience during our transformation. A related mind-set is that our insight makes us aware of how far we still have to go to



attain enlightenment. We might, for example, observe ourselves preaching 'love' and still being grumpy when there isn't a second helping of rice at dinner. If we are not careful, both attitudes can lead to a depressive state.

As we take refuge in the *Dharma*, we remember that the condition of the human being is attraction to things that please us, and an aversion to that which causes pain even after what we think of as enlightenment. Jack Kornfield's compendium of writings from contemporary Buddhist masters gives us a sense that we are not alone in the struggle for balance and integration.

Many of us have had a peak experience that gives us renewed sense of purpose and vision, only to find that when shared, those around us do not understand that we are operating from a new reality. If on our return from the metaphoric forest we try to convert our loved ones to a way of thinking for which they are unprepared, or to heal relationships which they don't think need healing, we can encounter a backlash that is the very antithesis of the reaction we desire.

As the returning 'hero,' the onus is on us to find a way to relate this shift to others. Remember that the classical hero would have defeated an external evil that everyone is aware of while we may find ourselves justifying why we had to go on our journey at all!

Taking refuge in the *Sangha*, as so beautifully advocated in the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh, we cultivate supportive spiritual friendships with others that have been through similar experiences and who are devoted to the practice of mindfulness. The *Sangha* can provide understanding hearts while we explore the best ways to integrate new insights in our relationships with important others.

As aspiring warrior-*bodhisattvas*, taking refuge in the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha*, the true heroism is having the courage to continually return to the reality of what is now, even if it is painful, so that others will not have to suffer for us.

Notes: *Bodhisattva: one who out of compassion forgoes nirvana in order to save others.

Recommended Reading:

- Chodron, Pema, *The Places That Scare You*, Shambala, Boston and London: 2001.
- Chodron, Pema, *Comfortable With Uncertainty*, Shambala, Boston and London: 2003.
- Chodron, Pema, *When Things Fall Apart*, Shambala, Boston and London: 2000.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat, *Being Peace*, Parallax Press, Berkeley: 1987.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat, *The Art of Power*, HarperCollins, New York: 2007.
- Kornfield, Jack, *After Ecstasy, The Laundry*, Bantam Books, New York: 2003



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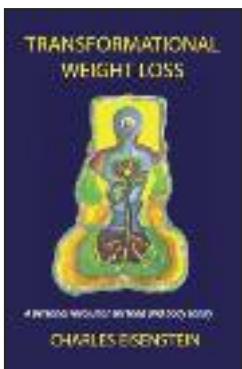
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**TRANSFORMATIONAL WEIGHT LOSS: A PERSONAL REVOLUTION FOR FOOD AND BODY SANITY**
by Charles Eisenstein

People look at the overweight and often assume that they are lazy, greedy, ignorant, or just not trying very hard. "I would never let MY self get like that," they think with disgust. What they do not understand is that most overweight people *have* tried hard -- harder than you can imagine. And it didn't work. To try even harder, then, is to do even more of what doesn't work. This book presents another way.

Transformational Weight Loss offers a transition away from life-long habits of control, self-denial, limiting intake and burning calories. It is inspired by the deep yogic principles of self-acceptance, non-judgment, and self-trust. Discipline is reduced to its proper place -- the will to align with a state of being that is the true Self. The book offers concepts, practices, and a new lens for self-understanding that can catalyze real and lasting change. It will help people "let go of weight," on both the emotional level and physical level.

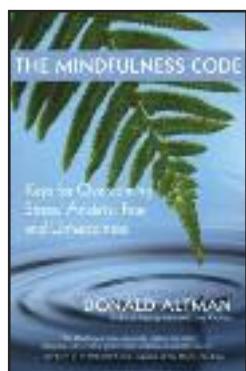
Editors Note: This is the weight loss book that I have been waiting for! It has an insightful and unique perspective that will help anyone with weight/food issues explore a whole new paradigm for maintaining a healthy weight and loving themselves.

PLUS-SIZED YOGA: BEGINNERS YOGA FOR PEOPLE OF ALL SIZES by Donald Keith Stanley

Generally a person starts a yoga practice by attending yoga classes. In a class setting, one can learn the techniques and postures before continuing on at home. Unfortunately, there are very few yoga classes available to those who are plus-sized. In *Plus-Sized Yoga*, Stanley shows how it is possible for those who are, or feel they are, not "height/weight proportionate" to enjoy the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of yoga.

The book is divided into three sections: *In a Class by Yourself* explains the components of Kundalini Yoga, how to practice yoga and meditation at home, relaxing during your practice and tuning into your inner teacher; *Yoga and Meditations* explains where to start and details nine postures, seven yoga sets and eight meditations; and *Be Happier Now* offers a new approach to dealing with personal issues of the plus-sized including dealing with self-judgment, the judgment of others and living a life in balance.

Editors Note: In a world laden with images of skinny people practicing yoga, it's really refreshing to read this authors caring approach and see the world of yoga further open its doors to people of all shapes and sizes.

**THE MINDFULNESS CODE: KEYS FOR OVERCOMING STRESS, ANXIETY, FEAR AND UNHAPPINESS**
by Donald Altman

There has never been another period in the history of humankind that is more frenetic, hectic, fast and chaotic as our own. As much as we collectively embrace and marvel at the speed, connections and benefits of technology, we also need to acknowledge the effects of its complexity and costs – most significantly, a perpetually high level of stress. In *The Mindfulness Code*, psychotherapist and author Donald Altman combines brain science and mindfulness practices to offer an antidote for all those who, despite the productivity, convenience, and sophisticated tools they possess, sense that their lives are either empty or out of balance.

Drawing on ancient wisdom yet embracing 21st century science, Altman presents practical strategies for turning four keys toward contentment, confidence and joy, unlocking mindfulness in the body, mind, spirit and relationships. The powerful tools presented can help anyone who is ready to transform their life from the inside out.

Editors Note: I am always interested in making the connections between Eastern wisdom and modern science, and this book does an excellent job in doing just that. A great read for the faithful or skeptical seeker looking to understand how bridge the gap.

FULL BODY PRESENCE: LEARNING TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY'S WISDOM
by Suzanne Scurlock-Durana

In today's fast paced world, most people live in their heads and think a lot about changing their lives. They might also want to change with all their hearts. However, says author Suzanne Scurlock-Durana, until we get out of our heads and into our bodies, our attempts toward creating lasting, positive change will be stymied time and time again.

Full Body Presence offers concrete, life-specific instructions for accessing the connection with our bodies and life energy so we are able to enjoy life more fully. The book offers practices to show individuals how to discover a deeper awareness of the present moment and discover a sense of trust and confidence in themselves and the world. The easily implemented skills returns readers to the reliable navigational system of the body, so that they can hear the voices within, become fully grounded and present in the moment, and connect deeply with others.

Editors Note: This book offers an interesting perspective and is a well thought out contribution to the personal growth genre of books. Good for anyone looking to better understand the connection between the mind and body in order to make lasting changes.





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MIDLIFE: Saying "Yes" to a New You

T HE CHALLENGES YOU FACE TODAY MAY BE LARGE. They may be small compared to what others are facing. They may be financial or career related. They may be about health or relationships. No matter what category they may fall under, you quite simply are in a chaotic, uneasy state of mind. You are 30, 40 or 50-something and you're in the midst of a malaise, sense of general discontent or what some might call a crisis. The moments of your life may seem like a time of despair and hopelessness - emotionally painful with no solution in sight. Or it may feel like a depression, a deep psychological rut with no rope to pull your self up to the light of day.

If you are feeling this way, you are not alone. I may have identified your personal crisis, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to be able to accomplish such a feat. Here's where it takes more than being any kind of a scientist. What I am going to suggest to you requires more than knowledge or anything beyond traditional education can offer you. For your consideration, I am going to propose to you that your current crisis may very well be a blessing.

I believe that much, if not all of our own personal discord, is a prompting, a nudge so to speak from our unconditioned, all-loving Self saying to us: "Hey, this is not who you intended yourself to be in this lifetime. I'm giving you a kick where it may seem to hurt a bit or a great deal. Oh, and by the way, I will continue to put you into situations and relationships you label "*bad*" until you awaken to the magnificence you intended to be and express in this lifetime."

In this way, a midlife crisis is an opportunity. It is a spiritual text message to you that changes are required in your life. The result, by creating these changes,

will be both beneficial and positive; not only for you, but for all people who you personally and professionally interact with. To begin the process of change, you must first become aware that change is real and possible, and inevitable, like death and taxes.

I ask you this "*Why do you do what you do?*" Mull it over



for a while, and when you discover an answer, think about how you would apply it to any or all aspects of your life. In doing so, you can reveal your intention in any given moment. Responding to this question gives you valuable information as to whether or not you are living your life fully and authentically. You are also revealing the payoff of your actions, behaviors and the situations that you willingly participate in. If the payoff is a sense of emptiness or icy hopelessness, it is a signal for change. If the payoff is loneliness, depression, anger, resentment, rage or any other negative emotion, consider yourself aware and blessed that there is a part of you that loves you so much that it is making an effort to show you that your so-called crisis is quite simply an awakening. At this point, all that is required of you is to declare your power, standup and say, *"I am ready to take full responsibility for my life! I don't know how I am going to do it; however, I'm willing to allow it to happen."*

This is how growth and transformation begins - one step at a time, one day at a time.

Midlife can be a glorious time. It is a time to admit that we really haven't grownup and aren't as mature as we thought. It is a time for incredible positive change for ourselves as well as the people around us. By our 30s and 40s we've all "been around the block" several times. The problem is that so many of us refuse to consider taking an alternate route.

As you consider an alternate path, try to remember that in the end, you will not be remembered for the size of your bank accounts, the car you drove or how many degrees you received from an accredited university. What will be remembered is the love you offered others, the kindness you spread and the smile that you shared. Your loved ones and friends will essentially recall why you came here in the first place: to be the powerful source that you inherently are. The source of this power is love and the way it is made manifest is by each of us being a conduit of service to our fellow man.

So if your current circumstances have got you down and out, ask yourself this question, *"Am I willing to pick myself up, dust myself off and consider the possibility that Life is calling me?"* Congratulations if the answer is *"Yes!"* You're considering the possibilities - welcome to midlife! ▲



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Penny Kulp grew up in Chester Springs, PA, in a caring family environment. After a short time in business, her concern for others led her into a career as a Massage Therapist.

A graduate of Episcopal Academy and Gettysburg College, Penny completed her professional training at the Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy in 1998. She started practicing at her current location in June of 1999, and has since gained the respect of many clients.

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What Transforms The Person, or the Family?

At the age of 20, I read **Siddhartha**... more than once. Herman Hesse's short novel retold the story of the Buddha so eloquently I thought. Sitting in the back of buses, lonely and estranged from both family and my religious upbringing, criss-crossing Europe on art history tours during a junior year abroad—I dreamed of walking the path outlined so beautifully in the book. Somehow, like the Buddha, I would leave the family for asceticism and training. Maybe I already had. But then would come immersion in business, passion, and wealth, followed finally by that enlightened epiphany in which I saw it all as “illusion”—and realized my essential oneness with everything. It was the classic, heroic, individual quest for unity with a transcendent Divine. I drank it in like a starving child.

Roughly four decades later, that quest remains. But progress has not come in the ways I thought it would. The grand vision absorbed in my youth had some things totally backwards. In some respects, it started me (and many others) walking more or less in the wrong direction. Take the idea, still prominent in Yogananda's **Autobiography of a Yogi**, for instance — that Mother Earth and this life on her are really just a platform for **private** spiritual evolution. She's all maya—illusion—anyway. Get on to nirvana, or heaven, as fast as you can. That's all that matters. While there's some truth to this, still, by itself, it can be irresponsible, escapist, and downright dangerous. It fosters the attitude that we can plunder and destroy the great, nurturing ecosystem that gives us all this chance to incarnate

and evolve. How can that not matter? The traditional message —“live for the afterlife, this one's a mess”—has turned out to be a deadly half truth. In our world, it's that message that has created the worst of the mess.

But more recently, into my awareness at least, has come a reversal even more radical. Not only must the transformational pilgrim be ultimately responsible to the planet and the rest of humanity, but even the “I”—the distinct, individual seeker—is a kind of reductionist fantasy. That lone “I” is far more bound up with collective families than we in the West have tended to think. From the perspective of Bert Hellinger's Systemic Constellation Work, we remain part of an ever-present, ancestral family system (or “soul”) that deeply influences our adult lives.

So to think, as I did, that I could just turn completely away from my family and achieve fulfillment and enlightenment as an isolated being—well, in an awful lot of instances, that may simply not be possible. So many cases now show that the life and love of the divine Mother flow to us through the root systems of our ancestral families. If these channels are damaged or clogged, the branches and leaves of our lives spread into the light of Father Sun sickly and undernourished.

In other words, what if the transformation the “I” seeks alone involves also a transformation of its ancestral family?

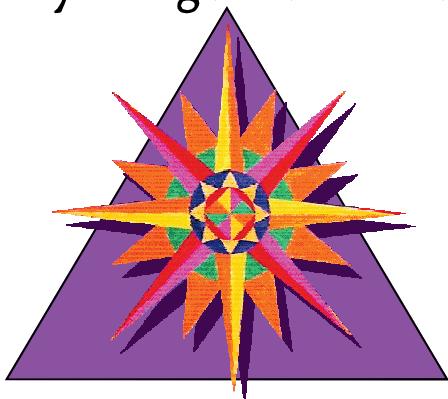
Of course, the first argument that arises against this is—well, you can't change the past, so your parents and grandparents are what they were. And the answer to that is: precisely, but what if they never accepted it? What seems to clog the familial root systems, and cause serious trouble for later descendants, is exactly denial of what they were. Serious aspects of our recent ancestors' fates, which they

were unable or unwilling to accept, tend to resurface as problems in the lives of their descendants. Out of “systemic” loyalty, the war, the lost baby, the bad marriage never accepted will emerge somehow once again in a grandchild's life. Constellation Work shows us, in vivid and fascinating ways, that we do have ways to help ancestors accept their fates—even after death.

How does this work? How can such a thing be? Intuitively chosen representatives “constellated” in workshops resonate somehow with the souls of non-living relatives in such a way as to help them come to terms with excluded aspects of their lives. For many, this has to be seen to be believed. But what it means is this. There is a bi-directional healing that takes place here. The client, whose issues and family soul are in focus, by doing this work helps recent ancestors achieve clarity and peace. As this happens, the ancestors “untangle” and pass life and love undamaged through to the client. With the “roots” clear, so the client experiences increased strength and freedom in life. Chronic issues of health, relationships, and business, no longer anchored “systemically,” begin to resolve.

So then, in this notion of transformation, there are the two great reversals. As individual seekers we are still responsible to the planet. And beyond that, we are forever part of a family collective that may need to transform along with us. Looking back, despite the surprises I felt over the decades in making these shifts, I see now what profound sense they make. For enlightenment has always been described as “unity with everything.” However did we get the idea that we could achieve this unity while turning our backs on not merely the planet, but the very families that birthed us? ▲

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SLOW FASTS & DETOX RETOX

A GROWING INTEREST IN DOING "FASTS", "DETOXES" AND "CLEANSES" IS A RESPONSE TO OUR EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROLE OF TOXINS IN OUR HEALTH. Yoga is a way of doing a spiritual-psycho-neuro-physiological-mechanical detox; other detoxes are more chemical in nature. However, if done incorrectly, like yoga, these processes can make us sicker rather than better. This article will discuss these topics in general; future articles will discuss specific fasting and detox strategies and the role of the liver - important information for anyone considering these processes.

A "fast" is defined as the removal of certain nutrients and other "inputs", such as TV, for a period of time. Three things therefore define a fast: what is eliminated, what is allowed, and the duration of time. Fasts can be both restorative and challenging to our physiology.

A "detox", (short for detoxification) in conventional medicine refers to a process where a specific substance, to which one is usually addicted, is removed from the body. These include alcohol, narcotics, nicotine, Valium-like drugs and sleep medications, and others.

In alternative medicine, we also talk about other types of detoxes. The first is certain foods with addictive features, such as caffeine, sugar, other sweeteners, bread and glutens, dairy, and others. The second is organ-specific detoxes, sometimes called "flushes", where we do specific processes that "clean out" the organs. Most common are colonics, liver-gallbladder flushes, and kidney flushes.

The line between fasts, detoxes, flushes and cleanses is somewhat arbitrary; in all cases certain things are removed (such as solid foods), certain things are emphasized (such as water or fruit juice), and certain things are added (such as chelating agents, herbals and magnesium). They all have time parameters, and often have phases or stages, including a preparatory period and an after-process period where things are re-introduced.

Toxins

While there is controversy about the impact of toxicity, there is no literature, conventional or alternative, that disputes the increasing toxic nature of our modern life. Conventional toxins include heavy metals, carbon dioxide and methane (global warming is a toxicity of the planet), PCB's, pesticides, other petroleum-based compounds, food additives such as trans fats, MSG and preservatives, and others. Rocket fuel is now found in breast milk; pharmaceuticals in our drinking water.

Controversial toxins include electromagnetic radiation and electronic media, genetically modified foods and organisms, vaccines, and other chemicals deemed "safe" by the regulatory agencies but distrusted by a growing portion of our population.



Light and noise are two interesting pollutants that are of concern to certain groups.

It is helpful to think of toxins in several categories. An important concept is endo- vs. exo-toxins, referring to toxins that come from the inside vs. those that come from outside. In order for the liver to remove the thousands of bio-chemicals that it processes each day, it must modify these compounds so they can water or fat-soluble, to be carried out by the kidneys or bile/colon. If there are

too many compounds, or there are nutritional deficiencies that slow down the liver's processes, then these compounds can accumulate in our tissues. Fat-soluble compounds can accumulate in our fat cells, our brain (which is 80% fat), and our organs. Water-soluble compounds can also accumulate in most tissues of the body. In some ways, disease and aging can be thought of as a process of accumulating toxins, like a filter that progressively gets clogged. Sometimes the filter can be cleaned (but eventually needs replacement!).

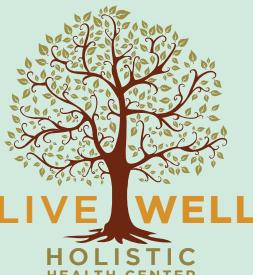
Endo-toxins also are generated by the trillions of bacteria, yeast and other organisms that naturally live within us, in large part within the digestive system. The blood from the digestive system goes to the liver and spleen for filtering and processing. Again if there is an overload of toxins due to bacterial/yeast imbalance, junk food, allergenic foods (which cause inflammation and weakness of the gut lining), and "leaky gut syndrome" these toxins will limit the liver's ability to eliminate others, and cause accumulation. Another important endo-toxin is thought, but this topic is beyond the scope of this article.

Exo-toxins are those that come from the outside of the body, and include food additives, pesticides, industrial toxins such as heavy metals, medications, etc. These again must be transformed in order to be excreted.

While certain toxins, including mercury, are "natural" in that they have been in the environment before man, and have caused our bodies to develop detox mechanisms for their removal, the quantity and scope of toxicity can still impair their removal and cause startling accumulation and illness in certain individuals.

During a fast, we are resting the digestive system to a smaller or larger extent. Since digestion consumes 25% of our energy, and generates toxins, resting the digestive system allows for resources to be applied to other processes. However, since most fasts also provide less calories and nutrients than needed for the day, the body must rely on internal stores of energy and materials - mostly fat and muscle. Since fat accumulates fat-soluble toxins, the burning of fat causes a release of toxins. Therefore, a fast done too fast, or too long, or without proper preparation or support, can mobilize toxins, allow them to re-deposit and affect other systems of the body, and interact with other toxins.

continued on page 30



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Compartments

It is important to understand the compartments in which these toxins accumulate. For example, while the body is made of 50-75% water (decreasing with aging and obesity), only approximately 10% of this water is in the blood system. The majority of the water is in the cells and the "extra-cellular" space, sometimes called the "extra cellular matrix". Toxins slowly diffuse and collect in these compartments; clearing them is a slow process. If the arteries and veins can deliver and remove toxins like email, then these other spaces must use snail mail. Methods like yoga, sauna and lymphatic massage can facilitate the mobilization of the toxins in these compartments.

Certain compartments have very specific gates. For example the "blood-brain-barrier" ("BBB") only allows certain compounds, such as mercury, to enter and leave using very specific compounds and under very specific conditions. Other compartments include specific proteins, or bone, that bind to toxins and make them especially difficult and slow to release.

Cocktail Effect

Most toxins that have been tested are tested one at a time, and often not in humans. However, in real life, we accumulate hundreds if not thousands of toxins. We have no idea about these accumulated effects, called the "cocktail effect". Fortunately there is also a positive cocktail effect - if we combine multiple healthy lifestyle measures, they often will synergize and allow for healing.

Individuality of Detoxification

The tendency to accumulate toxins and the ability to eliminate them is highly individual. Factors include: age, sex, genetics, current and past use of pharmaceuticals and street drugs, alcohol, caffeine, sleep, current and past stress levels, current and past illnesses, current and past exposure to toxins, nutritional deficiency, exercise and movement, and state of hydration, (just to name a few!). Therefore, strategizing a detox program for an individual requires proper consideration.

Methods of Elimination

We have essentially five main methods or organs of elimination. These are the kidney (urine), intestines (stool), liver-gallbladder (bile -> stool), skin (sweat) and lungs (breath). We have other minor excretions such as hair, mucus, sexual fluids, saliva, tears, milk, and processes such as sleeping, shivering, yawning, blinking, and even burping and flatulence that have some unique features and may have detoxification roles that are not yet understood.

If a preferred method of excretion for a particular toxin is blocked or overloaded, then other methods are utilized. Increased sweating, diarrhea, bad breath and psoriasis are examples of such alternative excretions.

Adrenal Stimulation, Fatigue and Morphins

Toxicity causes physiological stress. The major stress-managing system of the body is the adrenal gland (see prior articles on Cortisol and Adrenal Fatigue). Long periods of toxicity, causing

long periods of stress accelerate aging and are a major contributor to chronic illnesses such as fatigue, arthritis, diabetes, depression, dementia, etc.

An important but counter-intuitive observation is that we often crave and even binge on toxins and allergens. One explanation is that the response to toxins and stress is the production of endo-morphins, which are internal opioid-like (happy-making) molecules. It is as if the body is protecting us from the negative effects of the toxin or stressor. Certain food toxins such as casein from dairy or gliadin from gluten grains lead to the production of these morphins. Because of this, these toxins can become addictive, and removal of them can cause a withdrawal reaction, with irritability, problems sleeping, depression and anxiety, gastro-intestinal disturbance, and other symptoms, causing a detox to be not fun. Proper preparation and self-care, with decreased stress and lots of rest is optimal during a fast/detox.

Testing

Testing for the multitude of toxins, and the liver's capacity to detoxify, is not (yet) within the scope of conventional medicine. There are some specialty tests that can detect these toxins, even when hidden in poorly accessed compartments.

Re-Toxification

For most of us, a single detox will not be sufficient. In addition, due to environmental toxicities, we are constantly exposed to toxins through the air, water, and food. Periodic detoxes, even weekly, may be optimal. In some ways, a Sabbath is a detox, in that activities and foods are altered, and there is a concurrent spiritual cleansing. Most cultures have an annual detox, such as Lent, Yom Kippur and Ramadan.

Constructing a sustainable lifestyle that limits toxicity and includes regular detox is a leading-edge challenge for which we are getting better information and methods, and will continue to improve over time.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This educational material may not be used to make decisions about medical care without the help of an experienced practitioner.

FOR MORE INFORMATION (Books followed by ISBN number)

- Ballentine, Rudolph: *Radical Healing: Integrating the World's Greatest Therapeutic Traditions...* Three Rivers, 2000. 0609-804-847
- Sivananda Center: *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. ISBN: 0684-87000-2.
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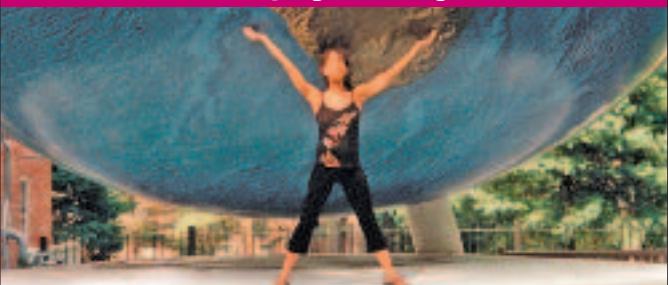
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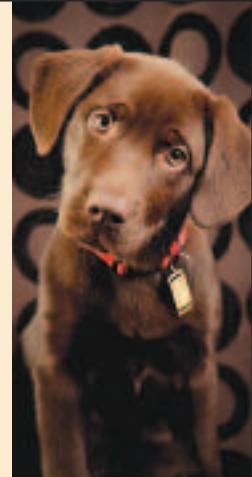
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Stop Going to “Work”

A Short Story

SHE HAD HEARD HE COULD SOLVE ANY PROBLEM. Naturally, she was skeptical, but that didn't stop her from meeting him. They planned to meet for lunch at a popular seafood restaurant that overlooked the Cooper River. When they met, they made their introductions, and he got right to the point.

"So what is making you unhappy?", he asked.
"It's my work."
"Why is your work making you unhappy?"
"I don't feel motivated. I mean I'm only really motivated by the paycheck and the value that the money has in my life."
"And exactly how does this affect you?"
"Well I often feel like I am being pushed or pulled through my workday, with the feeling that it's something I have to do, not something I want to do."
"You know you're not alone in your feeling about work."
"What do you mean?"
"I've seen a statistic of seven out of ten being unhappy with their work."
"Well I'm definitely one of the seven."

They stopped to order their meals. And then he suggested that they just look at the river and enjoy the scenery for a few moments, which they did.

"So you have the solution for this thing that is making me unhappy?"
"Yes, I do."
She raised her eyebrows as if to say, 'Well?'

With a brief hint of a smile, he raised his glass of water and took a sip. "I think you should stop going to work."

She laughed, mainly at herself for pursuing yet another blind alley in her pursuit of a personally satisfying and meaningful life. Humoring him at this point, she continued, "So how do I survive?"

"I'm not saying to stop earning money, I'm just saying to stop working."

"And how do I do that?"

"First change the place you're going to work to the place where you earn your income"

Without waiting for her reply, he continued,

"Tell me, what do you do when you go to this place?"

She explained her activities, and the service that they provided.

"Do you like the feeling of helping people?"

"Yes I do."

"Good, stop working and just feel like you are helping people. First tell me who you are helping in each of your activities. And then how are you helping them."

She thought about it and gave comprehensive answers.

"It's a good feeling, helping others. It's an easy feeling. In fact you can simply coast through your day on the feeling of helping people."

She agreed, but then thought about it. "What do I do when that feeling of 'work' reenters my mind?"

"You just think of who you are helping with the function you are performing, and go back into that feeling."

"What if someone is doing better than I am in my work?"

"Look up to them as a role model in how they are helping more people or helping people more efficiently. Admire them. Learn from them."

"And what if people are stuck in the work mode and try to pull me into it?"

"Just have the same conversation with them that we're having. Tell them to stop working."

"Sounds too simple." she mused.

"It's actually pretty deep. When you do this, you change the form of the activity. In other words, you transform it from the self-weakening, self-defeating negative connotation of having to work, to the positive, self-empowering sense of purpose and mission. This can end much of the stress in your life."

"That's a pretty big statement. How will it do that?"

"It will do that because you will always be coming from a higher motivation, always doing the right thing for the right reason. And since stress is usually the result of some kind of defensive or offensive situation, you will have eliminated both of them through the pure motivation of helping."

"Hmm. Sounds a little too idealistic or unrealistic, like I'll get too much resistance to it."

"The resistance is actually in your own mind. Once you transform your own thinking, your entire world will change and your entire life will become easy. And once you transform your work life in this way, you'll find that feeling of ease overlapping into all areas of your life".

At that point she knew that with these simple words, she had been given the true answer to her problem. She smiled, and he nodded. They talked about their lives as they finished their meals. ▲

