

7.13.015: Four leaf clovers everywhere!!!

As some may know, Jim ain't the most confident when it comes to potlucks. It is such a tough order for me to make and offer food to others that I often just bring olives because, well, people like olives. But even then, I secretly glance at who is eating olives and how many are getting grubbed and foolishly take it personally. I know the root cause of this insecurity and in spite of this direct awareness, I have been unwilling to let it go. However, even prior to landing at Mahadevi Ashram for my teacher training, I sensed the foundation of this stoopid childhood myth was about to crumble.

In many ways I panicked (and rightfully so) because I knew the selective group of uber-intentioned western yoga folks taking the course with me would know all the right tidbits of this food and that nutra-trend, demanding clean food, all the while peering over everyone's shoulders for who is making what and how. And more, I worried that people would want communal cooking! No way would I participate in that scene!

Luckily, communal cooking did not transpire but I grabbed a buddy, Claire from Australia, and she and I joined forces, mixing our veggies and ideas every so often. I shared my insecurity of cooking with her the first night and it began to lessen (as it does when you share), and of course, with the various experiences of the last three weeks, little crags of myself have been melting away, losing their value and allowing for a larger liberation and exploration of myself as a person.

This "melting" proved exceptionally true this last week during the four day silent hridaya meditation retreat. No words. No eye contact. Not even showing off your knees was allowed. We sat for several hours, morning and afternoon, receiving significant lectures about surrender and various strategies to support the potential journey towards falling from the personal self into a larger universal awareness through meditation.

Knowing full well that spiritual transformation sits at the core of a deeper yoga practice, not fitness, I was curious where my experience here in Guatemala may take me. Of

course, having had a key spiritual breakthrough 8 years ago upon finding sobriety through the 12 steps (oh, never did I email y'all... My eight years of sobriety, July 1, was spent at a full moon ecstatic dance and cacao ritual in San Marcos, supported by about 14 of my fellow teachers-in-training! Such blessings...), I wondered what more, if anything, I might be graced with concerning spiritual evolution... Well, blessedly, I received some very subtle and powerful points of expansion in four days on silence, a very powerful rewriting and dismantling of old myths within my mind: my thought patterns and it's wild, feral dynamic in relationship to listening and controlling my heart.

And the myths fall elsewhere, too! Last week I got the compelling idea to boil down some strawberries, add a bit of panela (sugar in purest form), lime and chia and make preserves. Seemed to be of huge interest to all my mates, as everyone asked for a dip of the jam the next day. And the day after? They were all making jam!

And further fall my mythic insecurities today, given the chance to make the ceremonial cacao drink for the weekly Kirtan. Having been much intrigued to the cultural history of cacao with the Mayans from my time at Princeton, learning how to crumble the cacao from raw block form, through mixing in the various spices was a gift... And now, I take a break from the chanting, drumming and dancing at the Kirtan, where 40 participants sipped the brew made by my hands...

Old myths are powerful. They form us and make us who we are. But we are more.

Be more.