

## Balance with Grace

A monthly newsletter by Grace Durfee, personal coach

Volume 12, Issue #9, Holiday Newsletter: Exquisite Self Care

How have you been fairing over the holidays or high-low-days as I feel they are more accurately described? I've certainly experienced the full spectrum this season with extremes at both ends. The highs were visits with extended family. We knew my mom wasn't doing well, so we took our sons out of school and made the trek to Virginia to see her and to bring my dad, who's in a nursing home, to see her. In spite of her nausea, her spirits and energy were good, and we had a wonderful visit. Shortly before Christmas we had a lovely gathering with most of my husband's family, including nieces and nephews from far-flung locations. The lows have come from my mother's passing from ovarian cancer. We lost her the day after Christmas—only two day after she gave up the fight and decided to stop further chemo and IV feedings. Although I wasn't with her when she died (my flight was the next day) I feel blessed that I happened to call right as she was beginning her transition, so I could tell her one more time how much I loved her. I stayed on the line while sending distance Reiki to her. A few moments later my sister said she was gone. When the sun set a few hours later, people in Williamsburg saw a rainbow. The day before yesterday I clipped a color photo of the rainbow from the front page of their paper. It's headline was "Calm After the Storm."

They say you teach what you most need to learn, so even though there are a million details to attend to, I wanted to get this newsletter out. The topic—Exquisite Self Care--that I've had in mind for this holiday issue now seems especially fitting, because it's certainly what I'm needing and is helping me in these difficult days. I offer the following practices to consider as you begin and make your way through the days.

- \*Linger longer in bed for a self-Reiki treatment, meditation, or to focus on gratitude or your intentions
- \*Drink hot water with lemon upon arising
- \*Read something that's inspirational or that develops you
- \*Watch the sun rise (it was just coming over the trees as I drafted this)
- \*Eat healthy foods and lots of vegetables (To sneak some into your breakfast, add some organic baby spinach or kale to your morning eggs or smoothie. Or juice a combination of fruits and veggies. Another of my "highs" was buying a juicer for \$3 at our church's holiday fair.)
- \*Scrape your tongue before brushing your teeth-this is an Ayurvedic practice that helps to freshen your breath
- \*Use a neti-pot to clear nasal congestion-this is another daily recommended Ayurvedic practice, but I tend to only do this to clear congestion or to flush out any germs I might have been exposed to
- \*Do Donna Eden's 5-Minute Energy Routine (Youtube has some instructional videos)
- \*Enjoy nature
- \*Laugh
- \*Exercise-if pressed for time, jumping rope or rebounding are effective and efficient
- \*Sweat-a weekly sauna or steam bath can be very detoxifying
- \*Stretch-especially if your job is sedentary, take frequent stretch breaks

- \*Strengthen and tone-if you aren't one for the gym, push-ups and planks require no equipment
- \*Love the skin you are in-dry brush to stimulate circulation before bathing, exfoliate regularly, and use skin and body care products that cleanse and nourish without harmful ingredients
- \*Make a difference to others-create opportunities to uplift others, even if it's just with the warmth of your smile
- \*Meditate
- \*Reflect
- \*Connect-be in touch, both figuratively and literally, with those you love
- \*Relax
- \*Floss before brushing your teeth and use a rubber pick afterwards to massage your gums and remove any further plaque
- \*Sleep well-hold sleep time as sacred as this is when the body, mind, and spirit replenish

This may seem like a daunting list, so please don't feel as if you “should” aim to do all of these things. I do know that my best days are the ones where I engage in more of these practices than not, but I can also still hear my mom's voice ringing in my ears, “You can't do everything!” I'm encouraging “exquisite” self care, so that means finding that balance of what feels wonderful and right for you. If you have other favorite self care practices (or juice recipes) please send them along and I'll share them in the next issue.

Wishing you all the best in 2013!

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