



"Under Her wings we find shelter.  
Where will Her wings take us now?"  
(Trisha Watts)

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## SUMMER NEWSLETTER December 2009

### The practitioners at Ma'at Holistic Health extend festive greetings to all our clients.

*"May your walls know joy;  
May every room hold laughter  
and every window open to great possibility."*  
Maryanne Radmacher

At this time of year when we are rushing around finishing off work and home related tasks before the Christmas break, we can be forgiven for not having time to stop and reflect on the essence of this season. Many believers in a Greater Being or Spirit, whatever their religious or spiritual calling, celebrate a festival of light at this time of year - the light of life, of hope, of celebration of what is and has been, of new birth with their attendant emotions of reverence, hope and joy.

However, as we well know, this time of year is often a time of sadness, family tensions, grief for lost loved ones, isolation, and loss of hope and joy in life. It can be a really difficult time which one gets through with gritted teeth!

Recently, two articles appeared in the popular press suggesting strategies which might be useful for when we find the festive season hard to bear. The first article is by Sarah Wilson, a columnist in the *Age*, *Sunday Life* magazine. She recently wrote about "cheerfully lowering the tone of Christmas" (*Sunday Life*, November 29, p.13). Her answer is to look to the Buddhist teachings on the cultivation of cheerfulness as opposed to happiness. She states: "I shall arrive at the family home, deeply breathing with the mantra: ***'I'll aim only for cheer'***". Whilst happiness is often an unattainable ideal, cheerfulness can be drawn on from within, and can be built up in layers – in small steps. The Buddhists teach that it is inherent in all of us, and we can choose to use it when faced with unpleasant situations or tasks that need to be dealt with.

The second article focused on the value of tuning into the small things in life. Using a technique called 'mindful savouring' one can focus on joyful things, however small, training the mind to focus on positive thoughts and feelings. (*Prevention*, November 2009). This ***'mindful savouring'*** is espoused by Dr Fred B Bryant of the Loyola University, Chicago. He has come up with 9 strategies to encourage the development of joy and satisfaction in everyday things. They are:

- ***Share positive feelings***, however small, this includes

sharing happy memories with family or friends through photos, emails, letters, phone calls. This affirms connection with others.

- ***Build memories***. Take note of memorable moments or vivid events so you can recall them later and pinpoint what made them stand out and gave you joy or pleasure. You can then recall these when feeling down.
- ***Congratulate yourself***. If you have studied all year, or worked hard at something, take time out to congratulate yourself. Write it down somewhere you can see it.
- ***Become absorbed***. At least once a week engage in an activity that absorbs your concentration. This will vary but can be reading, gardening, listening to music, playing a sport, singing or your favourite hobby. This achieves what is called 'flow', a level of consciousness achieved through absorption in a situation or task which achieves an almost euphoric satisfaction.
- ***Compare with darker times***. It is easy to 'compare up' and thus compare negatively. The trick is to 'compare down' or positively. Examples are: "Is today cooler than predicted?" It's about looking at how things are better than expected - and keep it light!
- ***Seize the moment***. Moments and events are transitory. Reminding ourselves of this, helps to savour them when they occur.
- ***Avoid killjoy thinking***. Be aware of when negative thoughts creep in and banish them to an imaginary trash bin and focus on a happy memory or task. Don't allow yourself to ruminate. Consciously embrace joy or pleasure when it occurs and allow it to fill up your tanks to draw on in the dry times.
- ***Fine tune your senses***. Close your eyes and savour a perfume, or taste. It can be the next piece of chocolate you have, or the smell of the sea or the perfume of a rose. Allow it to expand into all your senses.
- ***Say Thank You***. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude towards yourself, others, the universe. Say thank you for a cool breeze on a hot day, thank a stranger for letting you go first in the supermarket queue, say thank you to your child for listening. Bryant says that this deepens our happiness by making us more aware of it.

These are some thoughts for this festive season and possible ponderings for the New Year ahead.

#### References:

- Wilson, S. (2009). A better lie. *The Age*, *Sunday Life* Magazine November 29. p.11.  
Carpenter, S. & J. Pinkerton. (2009). Joy: How to make it last. in *Prevention*, (2009) November edition.108-111.

## QUOTES FOR QUIET REFLECTION

Here are some quotes on joy which you might want to use as a mantra in quiet moments of reflection.

*"Joy is not in things;  
It is in us."* **Richard Wagner**

*"One joy scatters a hundred griefs."*  
**Chinese Proverb**

*"Sometimes your joy is the source of a smile;  
but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."*  
**Thich Nhat Hanh**

## JANUARY SUMMER INTENSIVE

**"Yesterday, tomorrow and today" - prepare for the year ahead through reflection of the year past and taking a seat in the present.**

Using guided visualisation, music and creative expression, we will explore the year past, our hopes for the year ahead, and how these impact on the present so that our choices and actions in 2010 come from a place of mindful awareness and inner wisdom.

Sessions will take place over 3 consecutive evenings in January.

**Venue:** Ma'at Holistic Health 721B Riversdale Rd

**When:** 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> January

**Time:** 7.30 – 9.30pm

**Cost:** \$120

For further details and bookings:

**Kay:** 0412 785 031

### MA'AT PRACTITIONERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATIONS OVER THE XMAS/ NEW YEAR.

**Jane Jeffers:** 0401 857 886

**Kay Kilham:** 0412 785 031

**Jeff Pemberton:** 0422 375 899

**Peggy Page:** 0412 590 624

## MEDITATION TERM 1 2010

*"Learning to live in the present moment is part of the path of joy."*

(Sarah Ban Breathnach)

Mindfulness meditation is about paying attention, purposely in the present moment. It involves a significant commitment to oneself. Many who practice mindfulness meditation find that it deeply enhances their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

**Jane Jeffers** facilitates group meditation sessions, with a focus on mindfulness, at Ma'at Holistic Health:

**Tuesday, 8.00pm – 9.00pm and**

**Wednesday, 11.30am – 12.30pm;**

and in Canterbury:

**Thursday, 7.00am – 7.45am and**

**Friday, 9.15am – 10.15am.**

Individual sessions are also available by appointment. The next series commences in late January – early February.

**Enquiries:** 0401 857 886

## SUMMER READING!

"RADICAL GRATITUDE and other life lessons learned in Siberia"

**Andrew Bienkowski & Mary Akers  
Allen & Unwin, 2008**

This inspiring book draws on the life experience of Andrew Bienkowski, who, as a five year old Polish boy, was exiled with his immediate family in Siberia.

Bienkowski, now a clinical therapist, together with co-author Mary Akers, presents his story through a series of 'life lessons'. Each chapter relates details of the family's journey of survival, together with powerful examples of ways to achieve fulfilment through helping others.

Lesson One is "Radical Gratitude" and tells how Bienkowski's grandfather chose to starve to death to give his family a chance of survival. *"Thankfully, most of us will never be called on to make as great a sacrifice as my grandfather made, but we can make smaller daily sacrifices. We can learn to put others first in ways that create joy and enhance our lives."*

'Radical Gratitude' is the notion that we can learn to be grateful even for the difficult experiences in our lives. Ultimately we can be grateful because they make us stronger, wiser and more empathetic to the suffering of others.

Other chapters in this poignant book include "We Are All Connected", "Nurture Hope – Wherever You Find It", "A Sense of Humour Can Save Your Life", "The Miracle of Motivation", and "To Find Peace, Let Go".

Andrew Bienkowski and Mary Akers have gifted us with a book that is deeply spiritual, yet at the same time genuinely helpful, in that it provides life lessons that are practical and applicable to daily life.

## We welcome Peter Kahane to Ma'at Holistic Health in February 2010.

Peter's core orientation and training falls within the framework of Existential/Phenomenological Psychotherapy which has a focus upon lived experience and the experience of living. Clients are encouraged to explore (and where necessary alter) their beliefs about themselves and the world in order to improve the quality of their lives. Within this framework Peter can offer clients assistance in the following areas; anxiety, depression, loss and grief, relationship issues, stress, self-esteem, direction in life concerns and performance psychology issues. Peter has a keen interest in the area of creative arts-therapy and will be undertaking studies in this area in 2010.

Peter Kahane,  
*B.A. Grad. Dip. Education  
Grad. Dip. Counselling  
Grad. Dip. Psychotherapy*

## And finally a New Year suggestion.....

- Get Up
- Dress Up
- *Show Up..... and Enjoy!*

**Best wishes for the Festive Season from us all at Ma'at Holistic Health.**