



GRATITUDE



DEEP NATURE CONNECTION:
SESSION 1









© René Dumoulin



"THE WORK OF THE EYES IS DONE, NOW
GO AND DO THE HEARTWORK"

RAINER MARIA RILKE

A SPIRITUAL MODEL OF SELF-CARE

- SELF-AWARENESS
- DEEP NATURE CONNECTION
- OPENNESS, RECEPTIVITY, AND DEEP SURRENDER

A SPIRITUAL MODEL OF SELF-CARE

- SELF-AWARENESS

- DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

- OPENNESS, RECEPTIVITY, AND DEEP SURRENDER

Original Article

Healing Connections: On Moving from Suffering to a Sense of Well-Being

Balfour M. Mount, MD, Patricia H. Boston, PhD, and S. Robin Cohen, PhD
McGill Programs in Whole Person Care (B.M.M.), Department of Oncology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec; Division of Palliative Care (P.H.B.), Department of Family Practice, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia; and Departments of Oncology and Medicine (S.R.C.), McGill University, and SMBD Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Abstract

Life-threatening illness is an assault on the whole person—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. It frequently presents caregiver and sufferer with a paradox—suffering does not correlate with physical well-being alone. Drawing on a purposive sample of 21 participants, a phenomenological study was carried out to explore the relevance of the existential and spiritual domains to suffering, healing, and quality of life (QOL). The phenomenological method was used to achieve an in-depth description of both existential suffering, and conversely, the experience of integrity and wholeness, in persons with life-threatening illness; identify “inner life” and existential contributors to suffering and subjective well-being in advanced illness; and develop a narrative account of these QOL extremes. The importance of meaning-based adaptation to advanced illness was supported, as were Frankl’s sources of meaning and Yalom’s sources of existential anguish. Divergent themes characteristic of the two QOL extremes were identified. Four types of “healing connections” involving a sense of bonding to Self, others, the phenomenal world, and ultimate meaning, respectively, were identified. They situated the participant in a context that was greater and more enduring than the self, thus leading to enhanced meaning and QOL. The assumptions underlying the construct “health-related QOL” are questioned. J Pain Symptom Manage 2007;33:372–388. © 2007 U.S. Cancer Pain Relief Committee. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Key Words

Suffering, healing, quality of life, response shift, meaning, qualitative research

This study was funded in part by the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Project on Death in America.

Address reprint requests to: Balfour M. Mount, MD, Department of Oncology, McGill University, 546 Pine Avenue West, Montreal, Quebec H2W 1S6, Canada. E-mail: balfour.mount@mcgill.ca

Accepted for publication: September 4, 2006.

© 2007 U.S. Cancer Pain Relief Committee
Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Life-threatening illness is an assault on the whole person—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. It frequently presents caregiver and sufferer with a paradox—suffering does not correlate with physical well-being. The patient may have significant pain or other symptoms but no anguish, no suffering. Conversely, the patient may be free of physical symptoms, yet suffer terribly. Suffering is experienced by whole persons, not bodies. It is subjective

0885-3924/07/\$—see front matter
doi:10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2006.09.014

HEALING CONNECTIONS

1. SELF: MEDITATION, JOURNALING
2. OTHERS: MEANINGFUL TIMES WITH LOVED ONES
3. THE PHENOMENAL WORLD: OTHER-THAN-HUMAN NATURE, MUSIC, THE BODY
4. ULTIMATE MEANING: RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

HOW CAN WE COME INTO AN EMBODIED EXPERIENCE
OF DEEP NATURE CONNECTION?



COMING INTO DEEP NATURE CONNECTION
IS ABOUT FINDING...

*"OUR PLACE IN THE
FAMILY OF THINGS."*

"WILD GEESE"



MARY OLIVER

PERCY

WAYS INTO THE FLOW OF DEEP NATURE CONNECTION



THE KEY IN EITHER CASE IS "SENSORY AWARENESS"



SENSORY AWARENESS

- OUR SENSES ARE ORGANS OF CONNECTION
- SENSE ORGAN + SENSORY STIMULUS > SENSATION
- SENSES WORK THROUGH RECEPTIVITY
- SENSATION OCCURS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT
- SO, IN BEING WITH THE "FELT-SENSE" (THE MERGING OF AWARENESS IN/WITH SENSATION) WE COME INTO THE NOW

INNER DEEP NATURE CONNECTION



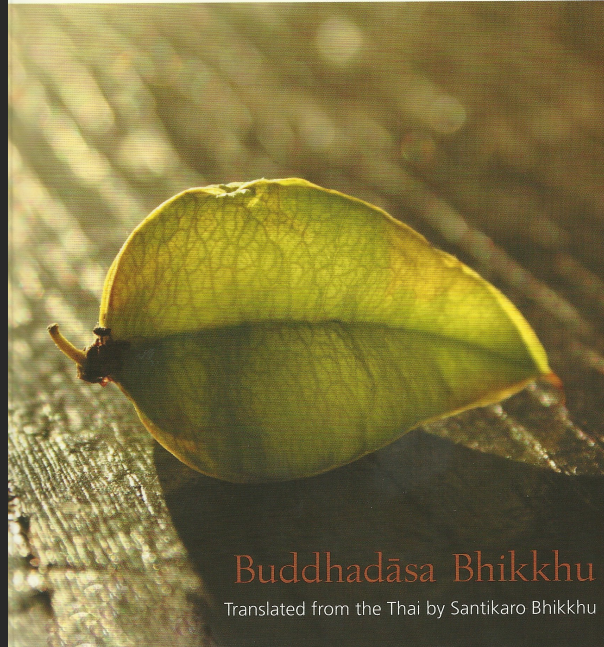
MINDFULNESS OF & WITH BREATHING

Handwritten signature

ĀNĀPĀNASATI

Mindfulness
WITH BREATHING

A Manual for Serious Beginners



Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Translated from the Thai by Santikaro Bhikkhu

ĀNĀPĀNASATI

“ĀNĀPĀNASATI, WHICH MEANS “MINDFULNESS WITH IN-BREATHS AND OUT-BREATHS”, IS THE SYSTEM OF MEDITATION OFTEN PRACTICED AND MOST TAUGHT BY BUDDHA GOTAMA. (INDEED, HE IS) SAID TO HAVE ATTAINED ENLIGHTENMENT USING THIS VERY METHOD. IN PRACTICING MINDFULNESS UPON AND THROUGH BREATHING WE LEARN TO RELAX THE BODY AND CALM THE MIND. WE DISCOVER THE FUNDAMENTAL REALITY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE AND LEARN TO LIVE OUR LIVES IN HARMONY WITH THAT REALITY.”

SANTIKARO BHIKKHU

FROM, “MINDFULNESS WITH BREATHING”, BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU

ĀNĀPĀNASATI IS A PRACTICE OF LETTING GO

"WE BEGIN BY LETTING GO OF OUR *COARSE ATTACHMENTS*: ATTACHMENTS TO THE BODY, TO ACHES AND PAINS; ATTACHMENTS TO AGITATION AND IMPATIENCE, TO BOREDOM AND LAZINESS; ATTACHMENTS TO EXTERNAL DISTURBANCES AND PETTY ANNOYANCES. THEN, WE FIND OURSELVES BECOMING *ATTACHED TO MORE SUBTLE THINGS*, SUCH AS HAPPY FEELINGS. ONCE WE LET GO OF THESE, WE DISCOVER *ATTACHMENTS TO TO HIGHER, BRIGHTER, CLEARER, MORE REFINED STATES OF AWARENESS*. LETTING GO OF THESE, WE BEGIN TO HAVE SOME INSIGHT INTO REALITY AND SO WE *BECOME ATTACHED TO THE INSIGHTS*. FINALLY, WE LEARN TO LET GO OF EVERYTHING. IN THIS WAY, ĀNĀPĀNASATI IS A SYSTEMATIC METHOD OF SUCCESSIVELY LETTING GO OF MORE AND MORE SUBTLE ATTACHMENTS UNTIL THERE IS NO ATTACHMENT LEFT AT ALL."

SANTIKARO BHIKKHU

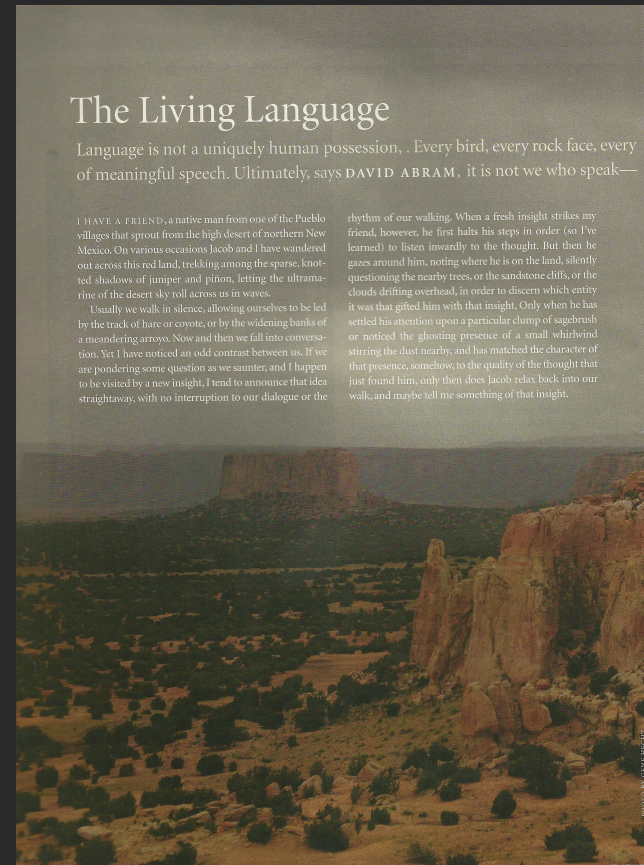
FROM, "MINDFULNESS WITH BREATHING", BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU

SO,
ĀNĀPĀNASATI
OR
MINDFULNESS WITH BREATHING
AS
A WAY OF COMING INTO THE FLOW OF
DEEP NATURE CONNECTION
THROUGH SENSORY AWARENESS AND LETTING GO

BREATH IS INTERCONNECTION



DAVID ABRAM



The Living Language

Language is not a uniquely human possession. . . Every bird, every rock face, every of meaningful speech. Ultimately, says DAVID ABRAM, it is not we who speak—

I HAVE A FRIEND, a native man from one of the Pueblo villages that sprout from the high desert of northern New Mexico. On various occasions Jacob and I have wandered out across this red land, trekking among the sparse, knotted shadows of juniper and piñon, letting the ultramarine of the desert sky roll across us in waves. Usually we walk in silence, allowing ourselves to be led by the track of hare or coyote, or by the widening banks of a meandering arroyo. Now and then we fall into conversation. Yet I have noticed an odd contrast between us. If we are pondering some question as we saunter, and I happen to be visited by a new insight, I tend to announce that idea straightaway, with no interruption to our dialogue or the

rhythm of our walking. When a fresh insight strikes my friend, however, he first halts his steps in order (so I've learned) to listen inwardly to the thought. But then he gazes around him, noting where he is on the land, silently questioning the nearby trees, or the sandstone cliffs, or the clouds drifting overhead, in order to discern which entity it was that gifted him with that insight. Only when he has settled his attention upon a particular clump of sagebrush or noticed the ghosting presence of a small whirlwind stirring the dust nearby, and has matched the character of that presence, somehow, to the quality of the thought that just found him, only then does Jacob relax back into our walk, and maybe tell me something of that insight.

SHAMBALA SUN, NOV 2011

"THE AIR RUSHING IN AND
OUT OF OUR LUNGS IS
CONTINUOUS WITH THE
BREATH NOURISHING THE
FROGS CHANTING ACROSS THE
CREEK ... THE AIR WE
BREATH IS CONTINUOUS WITH
THE WIND RIPPLING THE FUR
OF AN ENDANGERED LYNX
STALKING ITS PREY, WITH THE
DWINDLING RESPIRATION OF
DROUGHT-STRICKEN PINE
FORESTS ..."

DAVID ABRAM

"THE AIR RUSHING IN AND OUT OF OUR LUNGS IS CONTINUOUS WITH THE BREATH NOURISHING THE FROGS CHANTING ACROSS THE CREEK ... THE AIR WE BREATH IS CONTINUOUS WITH THE WIND RIPPLING THE FUR OF AN ENDANGERED LYNX STALKING ITS PREY, WITH THE DWINDLING RESPIRATION OF DROUGHT-STRICKEN PINE FORESTS ..."

"TO BRING AWARENESS TO THE AIR AS IT RIDES IN AND OUT OF OUR NOSTRILS IS TO DISSOLVE OUR DETACHED THOUGHTS IN THE ONGOING EXCHANGE, THE MEETING, THE RECIPROCITY BETWEEN OUR BODY AND THE BIOSPHERE. WE RENEW THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN OUR ANIMAL PRESENCE AND THE ANIMATE EARTH. MEANING LIVES IN THIS MEETING."

DAVID ABRAM

ATTEND TO THE SENSATION OF BREATH



PEMA CHODRON

"THIS IS NOT WATCHING THE BREATH LIKE A HAWK; THIS IS NOT CONCENTRATING ON THE BREATH. THIS IS *FEELING* THE BREATH, OR ANY WORD THAT YOU CAN USE TO DESCRIBE BEING ONE WITH THE BREATH."

*FROM, HOW TO MEDITATE: A GUIDE TO
MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR MIND*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXHALE



“LET GO ALL THE WAY THE EXHALE AND CONTINUE TO LET GO, EVEN BEYOND THE END OF THE EXHALE, CONTINUING TO LET GO UNTIL THE NEXT BREATH FLOWS IN EFFORTLESSLY, LIKE A WAVE WASHING UP ON SHORE...

AND LET THE BODY BREATHE...”

EXCERPT FROM “SETTLING THE BODY IN ITS NATURAL STATE”

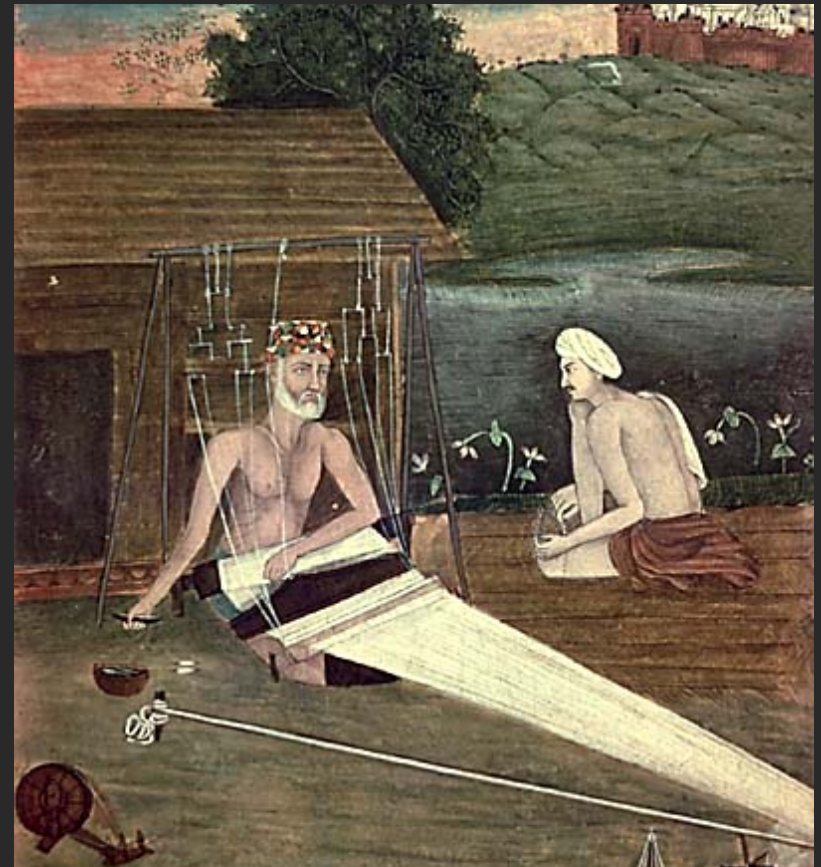
ALAN WALLACE

GUIDED MEDITATION



KABIR

*"SOMETHING INSIDE ME
HAS REACHED THE PLACE
WHERE THE WORLD IS
BREATHING."*



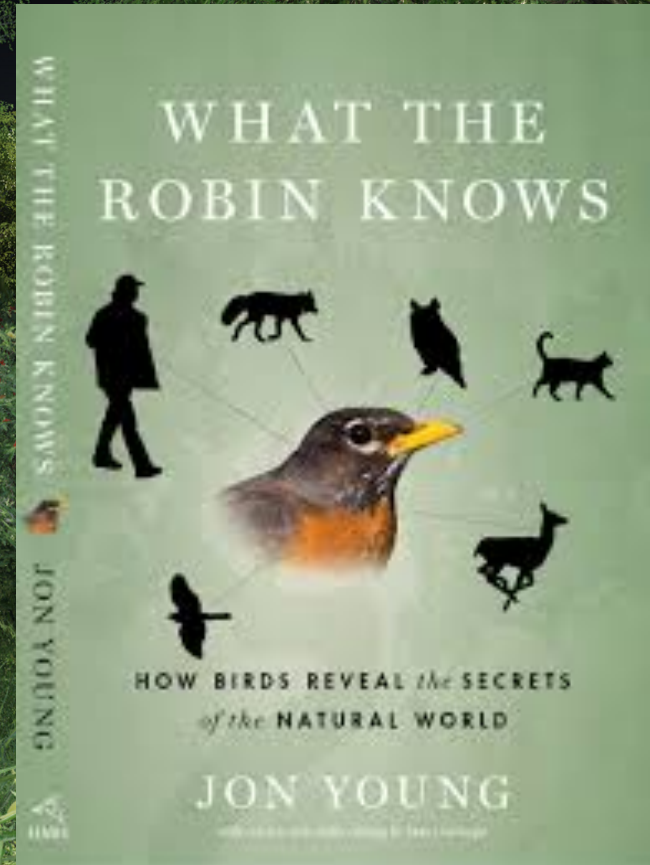
KABIR 1398-1518



OUTER DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH PLACE AND
"OTHER-THAN-HUMAN NATURE"

"DEEP NATURE CONNECTION"



"IF ONE DAY I SEE A SMALL BIRD AND RECOGNIZE IT, A THIN THREAD WILL FORM BETWEEN ME AND THAT BIRD. IF I JUST SEE IT BUT DON'T RECOGNIZE IT, THERE IS NO THIN THREAD. IF I GO OUT TOMORROW AND SEE AND REALLY RECOGNIZE THAT SAME INDIVIDUAL SMALL BIRD AGAIN, THE THREAD WILL THICKEN AND STRENGTHEN JUST A LITTLE. EVERY TIME I SEE AND RECOGNIZE THAT BIRD, THE THREAD STRENGTHENS. EVENTUALLY IT WILL GROW INTO A STRING, THEN A CHORD, AND FINALLY A ROPE. WE MAKE ROPES WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE CREATION IN THIS WAY."

SAN BUSHMAN



THE SEVEN ATTRIBUTES OF DNC

1. QUIET MIND
2. COMMON SENSE
3. ALIVENESS AND AGILITY
4. INQUISITIVE FOCUS
5. CARING AND TENDING
6. SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY
7. AWE AND REVERENCE

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

2 SIDES OF A COIN:

1. CORE ROUTINES OF CONNECTION

2. CULTURE OF SUPPORT

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

EXAMPLES OF CORE ROUTINES:

1. SIT SPOT

- LISTENING FOR THE FURTHEST, QUIETEST, SOUND IN EACH DIRECTION

2. BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH PLACE

- "GETTING TO KNOW THE NEIGHBORS"

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION

EXAMPLES OF CULTURES OF SUPPORT:

1. STORY OF THE DAY

- "STORY CATCHER" OR SHARING CIRCLE

2. GRATITUDE PRACTICE

- INDIVIDUAL OR SHARING CIRCLE

RESOURCES:

BOOKS:

WHAT THE ROBIN KNOWS

COYOTE'S GUIDE TO CONNECTING WITH NATURE

WEB-SITES:

8SHIELDS.ORG

JONYOUNG.COM