

# *SWEET INSPIRATIONS*

The Quarterly + Newsletter of *Inspiration Unlimited & The Paramount Wellness Institute*

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## **Getting Back to Nature: The Promise of Ecotherapy**

If you happen to take a look at some recent editions of the weekly or monthly magazines (e.g. Time, Outside, etc.) you may have come across an article or two about nature therapy (also known as ecotherapy). What may seem rather intuitive to most people is now a topic of scientific investigation, first in Japan and now across the planet. Current research findings suggest that quality time spent outdoors is actually quite good for you (mind, body and spirit). The Japanese have a name for this: *Shinrin-yoku*, which translates into the term “forest bathing,” or taking in the forest atmosphere.

The push to get people to head outdoors began many years ago with the seduction of technology (screen devices). Author, Richard Louv, coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder, a term used to describe the lack of nature exposure with kids who spend so much time inside playing video games and texting their friends. Even the new Pokemon Go game was created to get people outside (despite the fact that they are still viewing a computer screen while doing so). A disturbing headline crossed the social media a few months ago citing that kids in the UK spend less time outdoors than prison inmates. Current research suggests that the typical American spends less than 5% of his or her day outdoors. The end result ultimately compromises one’s health and wellbeing.

Spending quality time in nature does a number of things for your health including the following: 1) decreases stress, 2) resets your circadian rhythms, 3) improves the quality of sleep. If you are not already doing so, make a habit of getting outside every day. Enjoy the sunrise or sunset. Feel the earth under your bare feet. Feel the warm sunshine and gentle breeze on your skin. Soak up enough sunshine (20 mins) to create Vitamin D from your skin.... Breath the fresh air and become one with nature... you will be glad you did.



**Broadtailed humminbird in the Rocky Mountain National Park**

## **Change and Adaptation: The Status Quo is Long Gone!**

If you have been following any type of news lately, you may have noticed there is quite a bit of anger and fear in the air (particularly with politics, but we can also add the economy, climate change, the zika virus, domestic terrorism and many other topics). These emotional responses are quite common when change is in the air: fear of the unknown and frustration that things don't remain the same. I have been to a number of conferences and workshops on World affairs and the buzz from the experts is this: Change is the new Normal. If you are waiting for the status quo to return to what you knew (even 5 years ago), you are in for a rude awakening.

So.. how does one adapt to change successfully? You may have heard of the expression, "go with flow," and this idiom will take on even great importance in the coming months and years. If we can learn to embrace change, we empower ourselves to stay above the fray that pulls people into deep victimization (another word for self-produced stress).

Many cultures speak about the need to detach from outcomes and release expectations of how things are "supposed to be." As we all learn to navigate these changes we will find that those who detach and release will move on to greater heights and in turn develop a higher human potential. So don't hang on to what used to be.. learn from it, celebrate it and move on. You will be glad you did.



## **Healthy Boundaries and Negative Media Streaming**

Several year ago I had the great pleasure to meet (and hear) Dr. Andy Weil speak about optimal wellness. One of his suggestions for optimal health was to limit one's intake of negative information via the news media. I think we can all agree that the news media does puts a negative slant on a great many stories. As the expression goes in mainstream media, "If it bleeds, it leads." The media knows that fear sells as people will immedialy turn to a news source when danger is broadcast. Dr. Weil's message was in regard to eating while watching television news, but on a larger scale, I think his message is equally valid. By constantly taking in negative news feed, it begins to change our world view and keeps the ego in a fear-based lockdown mentality.

(Without naming any names, several news organizations have proven this formula to be EXTREMELY successful.

So how does one stay well informed while not compromising one's integrity for inner peace? Perhaps the answer lies in the phrase, Healthy Boundaries. Give yourself a limited time to become aware of what is going on in the world (5-10 mins in the morning and again in the evening) and they move on to something else. Remember, if something is really important someone will let you know. Have faith in your friends and family to keep you in the loop when need be, but remember to unplug from the fear-based news feeds. Your nervous system will thank you greatly...

## Resiliency: The New Face of Stress Management

Recently, I had the wonderful opportunity to facilitate a workshop for the U.S. Airforce on the topic of resiliency training. Resiliency is the new buzz word in the field of Stress Management and it spans the spectrum from the US military to corporate America. Resiliency is often described as the ability to bounce back. Inherent in this definition is the idea that you are bouncing back from some crisis that has knocked you down and knocked you down hard. It is no secret that the world today is undergoing a lot of change, from the economy and job market to healthcare issues to racial strife to dramatic climate changes that bring loss of life and property. With change comes stress, and it is no exaggeration to say that many people are getting knocked down and knocked down hard. Simply stated, the art of resiliency is getting back up, back on your feet again; standing strong. People who study the art of resiliency are quick to list specific attributes that contribute to this ability to bounce back. These include but are not limited to: optimism, flexibility, perseverance, faith, courage, patience and persistence.



Another take on the art of resiliency is the alchemy described metaphorically as three bones: A backbone, a funny bone and a wishbone. When used in the right percentages this magic alchemy can get you through any problem. Let's take a closer look:

**Backbone:** More than just courage, a strong backbone includes integrity (an inner strength of morals and persistence). Your backbone is comprised of an internal strength that comes from the depths of your self-esteem and self-efficacy (a "can do" attitude). Your backbone is the rudder that guides the ship through the most violent of storms. Moreover, your backbone is that which gives you a sense of groundedness and provides healthy boundaries. Finally, a backbone separates the victors from the victims. Strength, valor and integrity are the fibers of this bone.

**Funny Bone:** Ageless wisdom reminds us how important a sense of humor is to deal with life's hardships. To be able to laugh at yourself (without losing your self-esteem), is as essential asset to behold on life's journey. To find the ridiculous in the sublime, to have a light heart, and to be our own best audience is essential when faced with the mundane irritants to the s hardest of life's challenges.

**Wishbone:** While your backbone is important, and the funny bone is vital, your wishbone is essential to your existence at each and every moment in time. Your wishbone is the health of the human spirit. More than just hope, your wishbone is inspiration. It is faith in yourself (and your higher self). Your wishbone also includes the assets of imagination, creativity, curiosity and positivity. Your wishbone is vision. Engaging your wishbone is what sows the seeds of personal goals and transforms your lifetime dreams into reality.

All three of these bones are essential in equal measure. A backbone with no wishbone is nothing more than a skeleton. A wishbone with no funny bone is ungrounded. And a funny bone without a backbone makes one delusional.

So how is your resiliency? Is it time to start exercising these bones?

## **Fall Mountain Retreat in Vail, CO: Come Home to Colorado!**

Nineteen years ago in a small mountain town, I put together a mind-body-spirit retreat for friends (and fans of my first best-selling book, *Stand Like Mountain, Flow Like Water*). In what has now become a traditional yearly event, I am happy to say that the 20th Fall Mountain Retreat will be held on Oct. 14-16 at the world renowned Sonnenalp Resort in Vail, Colorado. The Sonnenalp Resort has hosted us for several of these retreats, and being a 5-star resort, we are pampered quite nicely, particularly for a "relaxation retreat." Because of my relationship with the Sonnenalp, we get an amazing rate on the hotel rooms, making the experience nothing less than magical. People come back year after year, from all around the country (and Canada)...I often joke that I am a supporting cast member in my own retreat. The Colorado Rockies is the main event. The theme this year is Triumph of the Human Spirit, and once again I have invited singer/songwriter Dan Sebranek to join me for a most magical experience in the Rocky Mountains this fall. Spaces are limited to 35 people. If interested, please let me know as I suspect it will fill quickly.

<http://www.brianlukeseaward.com/downloads/2016FallMtRetreatBrochure.pdf>

## **Time For a Little Humor Therapy? Why, Sure!**

Here are a few jokes to lighten your heart and put a smile on your face.. Enjoy!

### **One day at the gym**

An old guy was working out at the gym when he spotted a young hot girl walking in. He asked the trainer standing next to him, "What machine should I use to impress that girl over there?"

The trainer looked him up and down and said;  
“I would recommend the ATM in the lobby.”

### **The Magic Trick**

An Irishman and Englishman walk into a bakery. Coyly, the Englishman steals 3 buns off the front counter and quickly puts them into his coat pockets and leaves. Once outside, he says to the Irishmen, “That took great skill and guile to steal those buns. The owner didn’t even see me.” The Irishman replied, “That’s just simple thievery. I’ll show you how to do it the honest way and get the same results.”

The Irishman walks back into the bakery, the Englishmen follows. The Irishman proceeds to call out to the owner of the bakery and says, “Sir, I want to show you a magic trick.’ The owner was intrigued so he came over front counter to see. The Irishman asked him politely for a bun, and then proceeded to eat it. He then asked for two more buns and ate those too. At this point the owner is quite frustrated and says, “OK, my man, where is the magic trick?” The Irishman smiles and says, “Look in the Englishman’s coat pockets.”

### **Why Edith Changed Hotels**

Edith checked into a motel on her 60th birthday and she was a bit lonely. She thought, I'll call one of those men you see advertised in phone books for escorts and sensual massages. She looked through the phone book, found a full page ad for a guy calling himself Tender Tony, a very handsome man with assorted physical skills flexing in the photo. He had all the right muscles in all the right places, thick wavy hair, long powerful legs, dazzling smile, six-pack abs and she felt quite certain she could bounce a sixpence off his well-oiled buns.....

She figured, what the heck, nobody will ever know. I'll give him a call. So, she does...

“Good evening, ma'am, how may I help you?”

Oh my, he sounded sooo sexy, she thinks! Afraid she would lose her nerve if she hesitated, she rushed right in... “I hear you give a great massage. I'd like you to come to my motel room and give me one. No, wait, I should be straight with you. I'm in town all alone and what I really want is sex. I want it hot, and I want it now. Bring everything you've got in your bag of tricks. We'll go hot and heavy all night - tie me up, cover me in chocolate syrup and whipped cream, anything and everything, I'm ready! Now how does that sound?”

He said, “That sounds absolutely fantastic, but you need to press “9” for an outside line.”

Wel, that’s all the news that’s fit to print this time around... Thanks, as always for keeping in touch, and I hope to cross paths down the road...

Best wishes and inner peace,

*“Luke”*

**Brian Luke Seaward, Ph. D.**

**Executive Director Inspiration Unlimited & The Paramount Wellness Institute**

[www.brianlukeseaward.net](http://www.brianlukeseaward.net)