

Natural Healing

Benefiting From the Wonders Around Us



by Elizabeth Buzzelli

On a dark day in my life, when I heard of a daughter's pending divorce, her children's unhappiness, I took my tears down to the lake to sit where I am safest, beside water. I'd been hoping all summer to see a loon out on the lake, but so far none had seen fit to visit. Until that afternoon. A single loon landed a little way out from where I sat on the shore. He circled slowly for about fifteen minutes. He eyed me, made those haunting little sounds in his throat, and then swam toward me. He came around the dock. Slowly, he swam closer until he was just out from where I sat, watching me, focusing my wild thoughts, helping me with his gift of being. This elusive loon stayed with me for over an hour.

Nancy Solak, of Grosse Pointe Farms, found herself in Italy last year, walking an out-of-the-way farm road. She stepped into a rut and turned her

ankle badly. The pain was immediate and severe, her foot pointing grotesquely at a right angle. With no help around, and going in and out of consciousness, she focused on the natural world around her: the rush of a nearby waterfall; tree branches overhead—green against a brilliant blue; songs of birds. She credits nature and the beauty around her for keeping her conscious enough to wait for the help that finally came, and for the strength to get through the complex operation that followed.

Iris Underwood of southern Michigan attributes her healing after a long time of grieving over a daughter's death to the lavender she now farms. She writes of the experience:

. . . it was the lavender,
The scent of heaven on my hands,
The song of the honeybees,
That went to my heart
And healed me.



The earth beneath our feet; the air we breathe; the sky above our head—we live in the midst of the natural world and yet have come, in this technological era, to deny its existence. Slowly, as unease at our arrogance settles in, people begin to seek cures, solace, and peace in the forgotten world around us.

Herbs, long attacked by the pharmaceutical companies, have come into their own. Herbologists say ancient remedies prove to heal where human-made pills don't work. Doctors, exploring new natural therapies, are seeing progress in diseases, especially auto-immune diseases, not helped by ordinary therapies. Frankincense and myrrh, words out of the mists of time, are now routinely used as healing oils. Myrrh, a tree resin said to have been burned in large quantities by Nero at his wife's funeral, is now used in liniments and salves. Frankincense oil heals wounds. Ricki Blanchard, owner of Higher Self Book Store in Traverse City, knew to use it after a bad foot injury. She had no bruising. Danielle Devoe of Traverse City fell over her cat and hit her face

on a coffee table. After applying Frankincense oils to her cheek, there was no bruise the next morning.

Rock, the very essence of the Earth, is being used to bring solace and healing to the patients of Dr. Ruth Lerman, an Internist at Beaumont Hospital near Detroit, who has faced three battles with breast cancer herself. A vegetarian, expert in Yoga, and firm believer in nature as healing mother, Dr. Lerman now conducts a breast cancer survivors group, which relies heavily on natural processes to bring healing to the bodies of women ravaged by surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. For her healing classes with patients, Dr. Lerman has each patient find a rock, small enough to close in her hand. The following week each woman in the group explains why she chose that particular rock, that humble rock. Most of the stories have to do with being from a beloved place they love, or being associated with a child or a loved one. The rocks are gathered into a single pile and each woman, in turn, lays her hands on that pile of combined rock and tells of a bad time, a harsh time in her cancer. The story

becomes a blessing laid on the rocks, shared and eased. “By the end of the session each rock has accumulated a powerful set of blessings. Blessings everyone carries with her as she carries her rock,” Dr. Lerman says.

Water is a powerful force for many. Pasquale Buzzelli, the man who rode the north tower down on 9/11 and lived, has suffered five years of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and he has endured a long healing process. He walks on the beach to bring himself back again to what holds importance in his life. “I sit in the sand and stare out at the water. I feel peace, and think of my family and that they, one day, will stare out at the same ocean. I wonder what their lives will be like, and if they will feel joy. I know now that the healing power of nature has to do with believing that nature is a powerful

ing.” “I am trained to focus on the physical body, but my experience has taught me that healing requires attention to the body, mind and spirit,” she adds. “*Mikvah* provides a woman a safe place to cry. The living waters flow down her face, masking her tears. They fall unabashed past her nakedness, past her imperfection. The mixture is perfect in its wholeness, its oneness.”

The psychological effects of earth, air, and water on humans are no longer being ignored. Teachers urge their students to walk beside water to enhance creativity as the almost hypnotic effects of running water clear the mind and allow ideas to flow.

The study of animals, and their kinship with humans, is only beginning to be investigated. While they have a different level of consciousness, it is still one somehow con-

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force. The solace we feel is similar to the feeling we have as children when we are sick and sometimes just being held in our parent’s arms makes us feel better. It wasn’t medicine that did that, but rather the feeling that someone was there for us.”

In the Jewish religion, the *mikvah*, or immersion in a water bath, is being used as therapy after illness. Dr. Lerman, who uses *mikvah* with cancer survivors, says the immersion in water “calms the mind, blurs the vision, and muffles the hear-

nected to ours—if we will only see it.

Slowly we learn to trust what we should have known all along. Dogs are brought into nursing homes to bring that indefinable thing animals possess. Hypnosis—an intense concentration of the mind—is brought into the operating room. Healing circles form around bedsides. We are reclaiming what our ancestors knew instinctively: we are a part of nature, and it is a part of us. Divided, we are less. United, so much more. 🌿