

THE OPEN MIND Edition #1



Greetings from Devin at Your Inner Workings, and welcome to my newsletter where I will share tips & techniques for health & healing, mind/body research news and also details about upcoming classes and workshops. Feel free to write me with feedback and suggestions!



RETURNING TO THE SOURCE ***(Finding Your Wildness)***

In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu says: "Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature." Living here on the Central Coast, it is easy to spend a good deal of time in nature, as we are blessed with fine weather, a gorgeous countryside, and of course, the magnificent ocean, mother-of-us-all.

And yet, when we get stressed, whether it be at work, or in personal relationships, or through the craziness of current affairs on the political scene, we may temporarily forget to seek refuge and replenishment in nature. The tendency then is to look elsewhere for relief, and possibly turn to food, drink, other mind-altering substances or various diversionary activities to seek relief. Often the results are extra pounds or more serious health issues, plus a sense of anxiety and dissatisfaction when the relief turns out to be short-lived, or illusory. It's as if, in our distress, we unconsciously cut ourselves off from nature -- our own nature, that is -- our individual expression of capital N Nature.

Luckily, even when we are stuck in circumstances where we can't instantly get to the water, the trees, the grass, or the mountains, we can conjure them up powerfully in the imagination. Science has shown that when we hold an image firmly in our minds, the brain reacts just as if it was there before us as a so-called "3-D reality". That's why when a vivid picture of a favorite food forms mentally, we may actually salivate and feel hunger. Or when we think of a cherished romantic encounter, there is a similar arousal in the system as if the real deal was occurring.

We can call upon this imaginative power when stressed in several ways. One is to practice, repeatedly, visualizing a favorite place in nature, spending time there mentally, bringing it into as clear a focus as possible and engaging the senses – sight, sound, taste, smell, feel. Then allow yourself to feel the internal changes that occur. When you do that, you can “bookmark” it by mentally labeling it as your Calm or Safe Place. Or, utilizing a common hypnosis technique, you can “anchor” it in the mind by touching the index finger and thumb of your dominant hand together. When you do this over and over repeatedly, while deeply relaxed, the brain will respond in the future by calling the image up from the subconscious whenever you use the gesture. So, instantly you can transport yourself. And, just as you would experience if you were physically there, your breathing will naturally slow down, your blood pressure will drop, and stress hormone production will fall. Even dopamine & endorphin production may go up. It does take practice to get the maximum benefit, but then it becomes a wiser way to change your internal state than most of the other options. And best of all, it’s totally FREE!

I remember reading many years ago about research that showed that patients in hospitals who had a single tree within view outside their window had better health outcomes. More recent research has demonstrated that people living near parks and green space have less mental stress, are more physically active and even have extended life spans! The results were even more striking when bodies of water were nearby. In fact, there is a growing body of research showing reduced stress & depression, better weight control, less impulsivity in decision making, improved mental focus, and improved immune system functioning when there is significant contact with the natural world. So it makes sense that we should not only get out in nature as much as possible, but “get in” nature also by utilizing the imagination when we are trapped indoors or in the middle of anxiety-producing situations.

Qi Gong is another time-tested technique to accomplish this effect. Because it originated through the ancient Chinese developing exercises & meditations based on nature (the movement of wind, water, animals, planets, electrons, etc.), it gives us a pleasurable and healthy way of feeling and experiencing those aspects of being, connecting us to the greater whole. So, by whatever means you have available, find your wildness, both within and without, and remember it’s always present. I like to call that “Returning to the Source”!



ONGOING QI GONG CLASSES

Mondays, 10:45 am, Los Osos Fitness, 1078 Los Osos Valley Rd., Los Osos. Non-member drop-ins allowed, \$10 paid directly to teacher.

Tuesdays, 12 noon, FitnessWorks, 500 Quintana Road, Morro Bay. Non-member punch cards available, just call (805) 772-7466 for details.

Fridays, 10:30 am, Tidelands Park, Morro Bay (field by the restrooms) BEST PLACE TO DO QI GONG! \$10.

CALL (805) 709-2227 for info or to sign up.

SPECIAL WORKSHOPS & CLASSES IN JANUARY



INNER ENERGETICS -- Qi Gong Fundamental Practices

Los Osos Fitness, 1078 Los Osos Valley Road

DATE: To Be Arranged. Late January or early Feb. COST: \$25

Qi Gong is a powerful health & spiritual development system with roots dating back thousands of years. It is an integral part of Chinese medicine. In this workshop you will learn fundamental qi gong meditations and exercises that will help you sense and work skillfully with internal life force energy for health & healing.

Practices include:

****The Microcosmic Orbit***

****The Inner Smile (“befriending” the body at a deep cellular level)***

****The Dissolving Meditation (for physical & emotional pain)***

Instructor:

Devin Wallace was certified to teach by Qi Gong Master Lee Holden and has done additional training with other western and eastern masters. Devin is a certified clinical/medical hypnotherapist & a teacher of applied meditation. He is the former director of a neurological wellness center. Devin teaches at hospitals, clinics, yoga centers, gyms and rehabilitation centers.

For details and/or to register: (805) 709-2227 or devinwalla@gmail.com



"WRITING THROUGH THE STORM"

Nationally awarded writer and expressive arts specialist Devin Wallace is teaching a three part class called "WRITING THROUGH THE STORM" (on the therapeutic power of writing) at Morro Bay Massage & Wellness Center, 736 Main. Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31 at 6:30-8:30 pm.

COST: \$75

***Research has shown that writing can help facilitate healing, "reframe" traumatic experiences, and catalyze deep personal insights.** The class will give participants experience with numerous writing techniques you can use regularly. Devin has taught the course at rehabilitation centers, clinics and schools in both Washington state and California. Devin designed an Expressive Therapy Program for the Tarzana Drug & Alcohol Treatment Centers that was funded by the federal government.*

For more info or to register, call Devin at (805) 709-2227 or email devinwalla@gmail.com.

