

The Wholeness Institute

The place for fresh starts and powerful change.

APRIL 2015



Resiliency and Hope

I shared the quote to the right from Charter for Compassion with someone this past month. She'd just learned that someone who has been mentoring her in a career area had resigned from her position; something that generally would not have been a major issue. However, what did make it more concerning was that the mentor was also going into a new career field, and my friend was very new in her own. So the concern for loss of a major mentor was great even though my friend was happy for her mentor. Life is like that sometimes ... what we need or hope for is taken away, changed, or disappears. A love, a mentor, health, a loved one, or fill in the blank. It's gone. And we are left with the awareness of the "sadness in our journey".

Within my work this month a number of people were dealing with health issues, whether back pain, valley fever, cancer, or fear of it, or migraines. And I find there are similarities in the loss of hope for an internship with her mentor and the pain of the cancer diagnosis for another. It's the loss of what we wanted, had, believed in, or assumed we would always have, or at least have for awhile. And that pain, that sadness or loss or grief, must be experienced. We must have safe others with whom we can share those feelings or they get stuck inside. This can be with a boss, partner, or therapist. But how do we also come back, or through a situation?

For some, they push through. I think of a friend I had in my doctoral program, DawnaMarie. She was diagnosed with breast cancer multiple

times, with little time to rest and recover from prior treatment. The program director asked if she wanted to take a break from the program for awhile. Her family told her to withdraw from the program as she had an extremely aggressive cancer from which she'd likely die within a year and she was beginning the second year in our program. She did not take a break. She finished chemo and radiation while she finished the class work, applied for internships, and prepared her comprehensive exams. Then she went on to go through chemo for the reoccurrences, completed her internship and dissertation, and was graduated as Dr. DawnaMarie. Following this she moved and did a year of residency in very difficult circumstances, again going through chemo at the same time. And finally moved again and began working as a clinical psychologist making major changes in treatment and planning strong programs. Her work focused on helping those with mental illness begin to leave mental health hospitals for the first time in years. She was still working on this and lobbying for changes when she died of brain cancer.

Was her degree, her energy spent working on this, the money, the knowledge gained all for nothing? Not to her - how she lived was more important to her than what was wrong with her. At every wall she turned and opened a new door.

I also think of my father. He was a man of very few words. I'm sure he expressed his words in other ways when upset. Perhaps in the whack of a golf ball, or planting or working in the yard, or from the top of the mountain as he looked over some part of the landscape he'd not seen before. The walking, exercise, gardening were all releases for him.

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"You fall, you rise, you make mistakes, you live, you learn. You're human, not perfect. You've been hurt, but you're alive. Think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, and to chase the things you love. Sometimes there is sadness in our journey, but there is also lots of beauty. We must keep putting one foot in front of the other even when we hurt, for we will never know what is waiting for us just around the bend."

Resiliency and Hope continued...

So the words were few but he had a passion to live. As he told his physical therapist once, "If I fall, I'll crawl". And he was good to his word in that he didn't give up. Even facing death, the man wanted to be in nature - see the lake, feel the blooms, or hear the ducks as they flew overhead.

Both DawnaMarie and my father showed resiliency. In psychology resiliency is considered the process of making adjustments and adapting to difficulty & adversity in our lives. And it's considered something we all have, just to greater or lesser levels. DawnaMarie and my father had very strong resiliency. In one of my favorite books from the last 10 years, *The Power of Hope*, the authors speak of 4 factors of hope: mastery or feeling empowered and able to focus on goals; attachment or the sense of closeness and trust in a loved one, ally, or mentor; survival, which is about resiliency; and spirituality, having faith and a belief in life and some form of meaning in it. These four things allow us to hope and move forward. The one I'm focusing on today is the 3rd, resiliency, and how to build it if you're feeling hopeless, or finding yourself in a difficult place; perhaps no longer sure where the beauty is in life.

According to Scioli and Biller in the book above we have to engage in 6 activities or beliefs to strengthen our own resiliency:

1. First, they suggest we all need survival-based trust - reaching out to others to help you, support you, and comfort you. In other words, don't go it alone! Don't just buck up!
2. Take the second step, find the people who can and will be in your safe circle of people who will cry with you so that you can move forward.
3. Third, use personal terror management. This involves both being with others who can support us emotionally as well as recognizing that we may not be in the same place when we make it through, but we can make it through. Hemingway said, "The world breaks everyone, and then some are strong in the broken places". Those who are able to use personal terror management know this. They know they will be different in the end, perhaps more compassionate or aware. Perhaps they will crawl. But they know they are not alone in going through this and so it reduces the fear.
4. The next tool is spiritual terror management. Reach out in your spiritual beliefs, recognizing that we may have to grow in the dark times spiritually as well. St. John of the Cross called it the dark night of the soul. The times that we are growing spiritually, even though we don't know how we will get through. As Perna Chodron said in *When Things Fall Apart*, "To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. To live fully is to be always in no-man's-land, to experience each moment as completely new and fresh. To live is to be willing to die over and over again." We can reduce our terror by the knowledge that so many who have led us spiritually have found the same truth: hang on when the tough times are there; you can and will get through them and grow through them.
5. Following this is the focus on liberation beliefs, or being aware of possibility. It is possible to recover. It is possible to find a new mentor. It is possible the old mentor will continue to mentor us. It is possible we won't have a relapse. Life is full of possibilities. And if we only focus on the possibility of failure or illness or destruction, we miss the rest of what life may offer. DawnaMarie was no fool. She was very bright. She knew there was every possibility that the cancer might take her. But she also knew there was possibility that she could complete a dream and help someone else. She put her effort and focus on that.
6. Our sense of spiritual integrity is also essential. I love Scioli and Biller's definition of this: "meaning and purpose as well as a heroic affirmation of life". I find this to be one of the 6 tools that people can be limited in the most, the sense of a meaning and purpose in life. It is often the one that takes time to work through and develop and redevelop throughout our lives. For someone I know this meant that her dream of a doctorate became refocused as a dream of motherhood. But her purpose had shifted and she remained aware and fought for it. And this is where some falter. This is truly the time to reach out to others when you find that "heroic affirmation of life" not present, and the will to live gone. I listened to a short story about Angelina Jolie and the way she's gotten through her recent health problems. She used Louis Zamperini's life and what she learned from him when she met him to get through her difficult time. Check out *Unbroken* to see how he survived. He "fought to the finish", something she also chose to do. See <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/angelina-jolie-inspired-unbroken-hero-amid-cancer-fears/story?id=30081788> for a link to the story about her and Zamperini.

If we focus on each of the above, going through each one to see what we need to strengthen, we can become more resilient, and make it through those tough times, we can experience hope. As the quote says "we will never know what is waiting for us just around the bend."



BOOKS & MOVIES

Movie or book: *Unbroken*
by Laura Hillenbrand

Book: *When Things Fall Apart* by Pema Chodron

Book: *Raising Resilient Children*, Robert Brooks & Sam Goldstein

April - The Month of...



Some interesting issues celebrated in April include [National Counselors Awareness Month](#). There are various degrees, licenses, and certifications within the mental health field, and counseling is one of them. This month we encourage you to say thanks to your children's school counselor as this is one form of counseling being emphasized this year.

In addition, but on a more concerning note this is also [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#). The focus this year is on campus violence and making sure you and your loved ones are aware of the fact sexual assaults happen on every campus, and more importantly how to get help on the major university campuses in AZ. First, know that on campuses alcohol is involved in the vast majority of campus sexual assaults. This means you must be careful in how much and what you are drinking, and very importantly, who mixed the drink as well as what is in it. Watch the bartender, open the beer yourself, watch the beer come out from the keg into the glass you're given. In addition, do not leave your drink unattended- whether it is scotch, beer, or soda. You never know who has slipped something into it. Also, beware of the parties or bars that require men to pay but women enter free. Keep your cell charged and on you at all times. And travel or go out in groups. Keep your friends around you and check in with each other. Don't leave without each other, and if you are left behind, get a friend to pick you up. Last, trust your gut.

For more information on this issue:

General: https://well.wvu.edu/articles/tips_for_preventing_sexual_assault

For parents: http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam_2015_understanding-sexual-violence-tips-for-parents.pdf

To learn how to help a friend who's been assaulted: <https://shs.wustl.edu/SexualViolence/Pages/How-to-help-after-a-sexual-assault.aspx>

For a sexual assault hotline for anyone: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Be proactive and aware, but if something does happen, male or female, please get help.

[National Humor Month](#)-consider going to a comedy club, watching a comedic movie (see <http://splitsider.com/2015/03/the-20-best-comedy-movies-of-all-time/2/> for some ideas) or watch an old Red Skelton, Carol Burnett, or I Love Lucy show.

[National Puppetry Day](#) on April 29th-play puppets with a child or check out Arizona Puppet Theater.

[National Guitar Month](#). And listen to some music you haven't before-whether Eric Clapton, Pepe Romero, Chuck Berry, or Jimi Hendrix!



Lack of Resiliency or the Brain?

I want to mention that many times I've worked with individuals post-cancer treatments or brain surgery or who have inflammatory processes throughout their body who struggle deeply with resiliency. This is not because they are not trying hard enough, but because inflammation negatively impacts both our mood and how it is regulated. If you know someone or are someone having difficulty in one of these situations seek out help. I have been studying this for a couple of years and finally a new field is emerging, that of psycho-oncology. I will be attending a week-long summit in August to learn even more about this and how to best help people who have this inflammation and other issues specifically related to cancer. Do not shame yourself, or someone else, instead call for information if you are struggling post-treatment or post brain surgery.

NAU: NAU Police at 928-523-3611 or <http://nau.edu/Health-Services/Health-Promotions/Violence-Prevention/Sexual-Assault/Get-Help/>

UofA: Oasis Program against Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence at 520-626-2051 or https://www.health.arizona.edu/hpps_oasis_program.htm

ASU: Call 911 from any metro campus or https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/resources_education/students

Broccoli Cauliflower Salad

Ingredients:

2 cups cauliflower . cut in bite size pieces
2 cups broccoli , cut in bite size
½ cups celery
1 cup frozen peas
1 ½ cups cooked and chopped bacon

Dressing:

2 cups mayonnaise
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup Parmesan cheese
2 teaspoons vinegar
¼ teaspoons salt
¼ cup chopped onion



1. In a large bowl toss cauliflower , broccoli, celery, peas, and bacon.
2. In a medium bowl combine mayo, sugar, Parmesan cheese, vinegar, salt and onion. Mix well. Pour over salad and toss to mix well and serve. (Recipe & picture by Chef in Training at <http://www.chef-in-training.com/2015/02/broccoli-cauliflower-salad>)

Recipes for Spring!



Kale Chips

Ingredients:

2 lbs kale
1 ½ ,tablespoons vegetable oil Or infused oil of your choice)
¼ teaspoon salt
a sprinkle of black pepper

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.

1. De-rib the kale and tear it into large pieces. Rinse the leaves and dry completely with a salad spinner or paper towels. Place the kale chips in a large bowl and drizzle in the oil. Massage the oil into the kale leaves to ensure that the oil has reached all of the nooks and curls of the kale. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Lay the kale out in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
2. Place the pan in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until kale is lightly browned and crisp. Let cool for 3 minutes before serving (the cold air helps the kale crisp up even more!). Serve immediately! (Recipe & picture from Natural Chow)

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