

My Love for Romania

Whether you admire or skeptically question my wanderlust, let me be honest – I have my own moments of doubt. Like when the fifth plane required to reach Cluj-Napoca, Romania, was delayed. I stood in line beyond the gate, my forehead pressed up against the glass, and watched the sky suddenly turn black. Sheets of rain pummeled the tarmac, and my fellow passengers let out a collective sigh. Not allowed to return to our gate – and certainly not allowed to dash through the lightning and downpour – we all waited. This pause in nowhere-land, neither departing nor arriving, was just the encouragement my inner critic needed to come alive.

Questions poured in at a rate as fierce as the rain outside. Is this trip really necessary to share my message? What will it serve? Is this a resourceful way to use my energy? Am I getting ahead of myself? The whirling doubt took center stage, accompanied by the tangible ache in my heart that appears when traveling so far from my husband and children.

Then, just as quickly as the storm appeared, it was gone. Sunlight broke through the dark sky, and we were allowed outside to board. The forward motion shifted my doubt, and my own inner wisdom found its voice. A journey in the right direction – the one guided by our sense of purpose – isn't always comfortable. Brene Brown's words rang in my head: "You can choose courage or you can choose comfort. You can't have both." Really? Well, okay then. Because my greatest lesson over the past year has been that within discomfort lies my most profound opportunity for growth. As I buckled my seatbelt, I thought, "Bring it on," ready to accept whatever this leg of the journey would deliver.

And deliver it did. The gifts of this journey continue to arrive, right up into my final hours in Cluj. Seeing my dear friend, Carmen, fills my heart with joy. Carmen was my primary

liaison with our parent company, Plant Extrakt, and with the Romanian Association for Gemmotherapy and Homeopathy (ARGH). And then, I had the opportunity to reunite with my mentor in Gemmotherapy, Dr. Sorina Soescu. What a delight it was to be in her company. She was at my side as translator and co-presenter for my weekend seminar on Restoring Emotional Immunity. Bringing my new ideas on Emotional Immunity and micro-dosing extracts to a room full of physicians and pharmacists could have been intimidating, to say the least. That might have been true in any other circumstances – but not here, not among this group of openhearted and open-minded individuals, all searching for new ways to help their patients. I was so richly rewarded by their enthusiastic response. And at the end of the two days, Romania no longer felt so far from home.

But my time in Cluj didn't end there. Pushing a bit beyond my comfort zone, I found two reasons to stay for a full ten days. First, I committed to intensive lessons and discussion with Dr. Neli Olah, Plant Extrakt's chief biochemist and professor of pharmacology at two local universities. I've dreamt for years of finding a way to integrate my holistic clinical experience with Neli's pharmacological knowledge. Moving to Cluj and enrolling where Neli teaches seemed a bit drastic, so I suggested we collaborate on a book. And to my great surprise, she agreed!

This week, fueled by green tea and local cherries, Neli and I were successful in our work together on 25 extracts. I think we were both concerned that the gap in our languages and scientific knowledge could get in the way. Instead, it fueled fantastic discussions that I regret were not recorded. I am so grateful for Neli patiently sharing her wisdom and time so generously. I hope this experience has opened the door for many future discussions.

My next goal was to support the start of a Romanian Gemmo Moms group. What a delight it was to gather with health coach

extraordinaire Dumitrita Margineanu, pediatrician Dr. Dana Campaen and the first twelve Gemmo Moms of Cluj-Napoca. There is so much to be gained by empowering mothers to care for themselves and the immunity of their children. I know Dana and Dumi will grow this group into something beautiful.

The truth is, I really don't know what it is with me and Romania. After all, it is really far away! It's far from Texas both geographically and culturally – and I don't speak a word of Romanian! When I am here, I do feel worlds away from my family and life in America. Because I am worlds away. As a coach, I would be prompted to ask how that feels. Truthfully, the answer isn't so clear. I feel one part frightened, and another part free.

If I am not connected with my family as a wife and mother, then who am I? Well, how about a 59-year-old woman passionate about sharing what she knows about health and healing, even if it means traveling solo and sitting out a thunderstorm before boarding her fifth flight to reach a destination? It sounds like the truth, and I wouldn't have missed this experience for the world.

Teaching in Dreamy Belgium

It's been an honor for me to teach on Belgian soil, where Gemmotherapy became a standardized therapeutic resource. Add a generous host, engaged students, and a dreamlike rural setting, and the experience rises to a level of its own.

Although I traveled to Belgium during my previous life in Europe, it has been seventeen years since my last trip. My visits at that time had a very different focus. They were to the towns of Liege and Tongeren, famous for bustling, city-

wide antique markets. Fueled by a passion for collecting and restoring unique pieces, I made many trips from my homes in both England and Germany. In this current chapter of my life, hustling through those crowds feels far from appealing. I was delighted to be in rural Belgium – Lillois, to be exact – where the ancient brick buildings, fields of flax and rolling hills, dotted with sheep and cows, captured my heart.

Two things rank at the top when I travel to teach. The first is access to good vegan food (it's true!) and the second is teaching in a setting filled with light and access to nature. The food was covered beyond my wildest dreams by my host Brigitte's husband, who is a master in the kitchen. He turned out meals which I will dream of months from now. As for the setting, even approaching this ancient farm made my heart soar.

Over four days, I shared my Gemmotherapy curriculum with a backdrop of rolling fields and forests, a cobblestone, sun-drenched courtyard where we met for lunch, and footpaths to wander and clear our heads between sessions. If this sounds dreamy to you ☐– it was (and I do hope you join me in the future).

I had planned to teach my standard Foundations of Gemmotherapy modules, but it only seemed fitting to seize this opportunity and share a preview of my latest work. A few weeks ago, I introduced the topic of Emotional Immunity. My work draws parallels between physical and emotional immunity ☐– and continues to evolve thanks to Christine Terrell, my designer. With the patience of a saint, she hears me out and provides creative graphics that communicate the ideas behind Emotional Inflammation. This inflammation, just like physical inflammation, accumulates over time and leads to chronic symptoms.

Here you can see the parallel roles of the physical and emotional immune systems:



When our nervous system spends days, weeks and months in the sympathetic state (commonly know as Fight, Flight or Freeze), and emotional inflammation builds, these symptoms begin to develop:

- Poor attention span/memory loss
- Mood instability
- Sleep disruptions
- Fear and anxiety
- Overwhelm
- Depression/grief
- Absence of creativity
- Loss of joy

You may recognize some of these symptoms and even observe that over time, one that was acute can become chronic. After years working with Gemmotherapy extracts to restore optimal elimination, I am thrilled to discover their impact on the subtle emotional body via the nervous system. By easing the return of the parasympathetic state (commonly known as Rest and Digest) with micro-doses (1-6 drops) of very specific extracts, I am seeing remarkable results.

Our casual setting in Belgium provided the perfect opportunity for a first run of my findings, allowing me to smooth out any bumps before presenting to a room full of physicians in Romania.

Speaking of Romania, it is beautiful timing that I am making new connections between Emotional Immunity and the nervous system just before reconnecting with my first mentor in Gemmotherapy, Dr. Sorina Soescu, and the brilliant biochemist for Plant Extrakt, Dr.Olah Neli. Trust me ☐— a few hours bouncing ideas around with these two made the entire trip across Europe completely worthwhile. Check in with me next week to see how my time in Romania unfolded.

Vulnerability Check

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of connection and the path to the feeling of worthiness.”

– Brene Brown

Have a look at that picture above and see, can you spot yours truly? Yep, that’s me in the back. If you take a closer look, you will see the face of vulnerability smiling back at you. That’s my face that says, “I can’t believe I am really doing this, but I am.”

So, how did I end up in that picture – and what’s with the vulnerability? Good question! It all began when I decided to put some focused effort into busting out of my routine and learning something new. Over the years, I have dabbled in crafts now and again, but never real art. All of my creative energy of late has been directed at bringing forth ideas on healing and writing. I felt the call to step out of the limits I put on my creativity and challenge myself.

Registering for an all-day mixed media class at our local co-op gallery seemed to be the perfect start. And it was – until I arrived and discovered my classmates were all professionally trained, practicing artists from a wide variety of backgrounds. Of course, they were all arriving with their personal selection of real artist materials, clearly ready for some serious work. Feeling way out of my league, and having shown up empty-handed, I found myself retreating. I quickly searched the room for a back door to sneak out. None was handy, and bolting for the front door felt a bit too obvious. Oh dear, I was stuck – and there was literally no place to hide. And... you know what? It turned out to be a very, very

good thing. Unbeknownst to me, when I signed up I got the bonus ticket for a personal growth course in being vulnerable.

What happened next was really quite sweet because the uber-talented instructor-artist Susan Best didn't even flinch when I exposed my zero credentials for being there. After her insightful introduction to the elements of design and how they relate to mixed media collage, everyone was invited to begin. The act of doing always gets me out of my head and my cycle of thoughts, so I didn't waste any time. I knew from experience that if I hesitated, I would lose any morsel of courage I had found. Off I went to peruse the shared materials table. Within minutes of sifting through the eclectic mix of papers, my innate, yet untrained, love for color and pattern overrode my discomfort. Suddenly it didn't matter who else was in the room or what their credentials were. It was just me and my own experience using my brain in a way I haven't for years.

Connecting with this inner but often neglected passion was my ticket to stay. The next three hours flew by, and as our time drew to a close, I found myself wanting to hold on to something very special that was bubbling up from within. I was challenged at the time to put a name to it – then I read Brene Brown's quote and saw one of the words I was looking for: worthiness. Webster's says worthiness is the "quality of being good enough" and that was certainly true. Seeing the class through – and engaging to create something I never would have ordinarily made – felt by far good enough. It had nothing to do with the quality of my work, trust me, but rather the sense of pleasure that comes when you are able to drop all expectations and just be. Just beyond the thin veil of vulnerability, there was a rich fulfillment in just being me, no title, no labels, or illusions. What a wonderful reward for trying something new.

Care to Join Me in Europe?

Six short weeks from now, I will be packing my bags and heading for a teaching tour in Europe. Whether you can make it in person or must travel vicariously with me on Instagram, you are most welcome! All programs are open to the public with prior registration.

Fancy a trip to Belgium? I'll be presenting materials from my Foundations of Gemmotherapy 1 and 2 courses just south of Brussels in Lillois-Witterzée, Brabant, Belgium. Hosted by herbalist Brigitte Florani, owner of Flor Alternative, this four-day program is June 15-18. The course will be taught in English with French translation. Get registration details.

Has an adventure in eastern Europe always been on your list? Then join me in Cluj, Romania,

June 22-23. Supporting Immunity in Babies and Children will be the theme for this two-day seminar held at the University of Cluj-Napoca Center for Biodiversity. This event is sponsored by the Romanian Association for Gemmotherapy and Homeopathy. For registration details, contact me directly at Lauren@laurenhubele.com. While my workshop is only two days, I am lucky enough to have an extended stay in this beautiful, historic city. I'll be taking advantage of the opportunity to work with Dr. Neli Olah on a Gemmotherapy materia medica. Dr. Olah will be providing the pharmacological actions of each extract, and I will share my clinical experience. It's pretty much a dream come true for me! Also, the end result will be a wonderful gift to students of Gemmotherapy.

What about traveling a bit further northeast? At the end of June, I will depart Cluj for Kiev, Ukraine. There, I will present materials from Foundations 1 and 2 in English with

Russian translation. The four-day program is July 1-4 and will be held at the Demyan Popov Homeopathic Center. Sponsored by my student Lena Kozolets, this will be the first-ever teaching on Gemmotherapy in Ukraine. The event also aligns with the release of my books in Russian. Register by calling Kozlovets Lena at +380674925566 (viber/tel/WhatsApp). And if studying Gemmotherapy in Kiev is not enough of an attraction, here are 15 reasons to visit this fascinating city.

From Kiev, I make my way to Foix in the French Pyrenees by the first weekend in July. There, I will return to my regular coaching schedule, offer a few workshops locally and promote the French release of my *Acute Care* and *Building Immunity in Babies* books. More information is forthcoming on my teaching schedule in Foix.

So, what do you think? Do any of these opportunities speak to you? Let me know if I can answer any questions or share more about any of the local areas in order to sway you. ☐

Changing Our Stories

“Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable.”

– Mary Oliver

I'd venture to guess that like me, you have faced a relationship or two you came to see as beyond healing. Perhaps you tried everything, then reached a point where giving up seemed to be the only next step. Your experience may have convinced you the other party just could not or would not change.

As a coach, I frequently hear similar narratives, so I know they are common. It is interesting that in reaching what appears to be a point of no return, we create an ending to the story (at least from our perspective). Sadly, this limits what can be, and we close the door to infinite possibilities.

I have a story like this, and it involves the father of my daughters. For nineteen years, we have not spoken. This has been painful to our daughters, who have led dual lives between their parents. Over the years, any attempts I made to move past old stories were met with distrust. About a year ago, I came to the realization that his distrust may very well have stemmed from areas I still needed to heal. It was my wish to reach a place in which I could, with all honesty, be open-hearted and in a position to receive.

In the meantime, two important things happened. The girls' father decided to move to the Austin area, and not long after that, both girls announced their engagements. Clearly, we were moving into a new chapter as a family. Last fall, we approached the first celebration, and suddenly everything shifted. The old stories were dropped, and new stories began. We just became two middle-aged humans navigating this thing called life – who happened to share two really amazing daughters.

Just last week, we all joined together in our new home and shared Easter brunch. While everything appeared normal, in truth it was quite significant. As I joined my family members around our table, I soaked in every detail. There they all were – Joachim at my side, Sebastian complaining about upcoming finals, Meghan and her fiance, Justin, discussing last minute wedding to-dos, and Kate and her husband, Joe, sharing stories from their weekend getaway to Mexico. All pretty status quo – until I made it around the table to the places set for two additional members. And there sat the father of my daughters and his girlfriend, who we animatedly engaged, enjoying it all. To an outsider, it looked as if we

had been doing this for years. But the truth is, this was the first holiday in nineteen years that my daughters did not have to make a choice in which part of their family they would be with. This year marked the start of a new way of being for all of us – a step toward wholeness and inclusion.

In my sharing of this very personal story, I encourage you to take your inner skeptic off duty and embrace the idea that all things are possible. Place your attention on yourself, and work on your own ability to remain open and unattached to the outcome. By doing this, we can allow for a resolution more magnificent than we could imagine. That has certainly been true in this situation.

Author and psychologist Mary Pipher shares this advice in her latest book, *Women Rowing North*: “We can’t change our pasts, but we can still change our stories. It isn’t just long histories that influence our lives; it’s also the narratives we tell ourselves about that history.”

I hope my experience might encourage you to consider stories you hold about painful relationships. Instead of writing your own end to the story, might you consider the possibilities of another narrative?

More Like Home Each Day

Last night I sat on my screen porch engaged in a favorite activity of sketching out some connecting ideas on paper as darkness descended and a soft rain began to fall. Ruby sat perched on the window ledge, overseeing the deer grazing in our backyard. Strains of Joachim’s jazzy guitar chords mingled with the low hum of Sebastian’s power tools from the garage.

This more than anything feels like home. We have each found a space to connect with ourselves.

While family gatherings, meals together, and visits from friends fill our newly built home with love, the fact we are finding ways here to each connect with our authentic selves is what makes it feel more like home each day.

At the end of August, I shared a post on The Meaning of Home. There I questioned the idea of home and whether it was an actual place or a feeling. I came to the conclusion that connecting with my sense of purpose led me to feel that I belonged. This I began to see as necessary for me to feel at home. And the last year, residing in several houses here and in Europe I discovered that sometimes the discovery of that connection was immediate and in other places, it developed over time. There was also a place or two where I was never able to connect. Those structures never felt like home and for me, there was always a faint sense of unease.

There is nothing but ease for me in this house that will be our Texas home for years to come, hosting family celebrations, welcoming friends, and providing refuge when the crazy world we live in is just too much. It will see Sebastian through his college years and through (I am certain) countless creative endeavors in his ever-expanding workshop. It will provide office space for Joachim on the days he can work from home and the privacy he appreciates for playing guitar.

As for me, I'm a bit of a nomad. I've come to love and feel a sense of belonging in several spots in my home. My light-filled office overlooking a tree filled lot is my designated space, But where I spend the delicious early hours of the morning when I have the entire place to myself fluctuates. On days my office is feeling more zen-like, and the piles of papers not distracting I find sitting on my cushion and contemplating my oak close to perfection. Bundling in a quilt on the screen porch, observing how it fills with light while

taking in the building chorus of birdsong is also quite divine. And then there are some mornings that I don't make it any further than the sofa with my cup of tea, Lucy, our Great Pyrenees, at my feet and Ruby nestled in my lap and that is heavenly. And those are just the spaces I enjoy before dawn, but that for me may just be the most important time of day. It's time I can connect with myself and my purpose. It's a time for meditation, for jotting my creative thoughts, and for being with whatever comes up.

So for those of you who so kindly ask if I am settling in the answer is yes. Yes in a way I am not sure I've ever allowed myself to settle anywhere else. It's not driven by a frantic need to put everything in its place that I've experienced in earlier chapters of my life because I've learned it's not really about the stuff. It's about me and how I feel.

What about you and your sense of belonging? Do you have a place where you can connect with who you are and your purpose, even if its only for a few minutes each day? If your answer is yes, congratulations. If it's no, why not? What steps can you take to make this happen?

Be sure to follow me [**@LaurenHubele**](#) on Instagram for updates.

An Ode to Oaks

On the 17th of March, just one year ago, we returned from our morning swim at Barton Springs to the sound of chain saws cutting through the quiet of our neighborhood. Across from our Travis Heights bungalow, a team of men was deep into the work of clearing the property of each and every tree. While we knew the house and lot had been sold, we stood with gaping jaws

transfixed by this level of destruction.

Neighbors gathered, and we attempted to console one another each other with reassurances that surely the giant oak, protected by city ordinances, and would remain. This historic oak, majestically filled the view from our living room, shared its root system with our neighborhood fox and often, at sunset, provided a resting place for a barred owl or two. We watched and waited as the day went on and just as we were certain the job was complete the foreman climbed the oak, and its branches began to drop.

My grief was shared equally by my husband Joachim and neighbors, but there was something more I felt. It was pity. I experienced a profound ache for those who have never loved a tree, who had no sense of respect for their role on our planet. That tree, well over a century old, had stood tall and strong before the new owner of the property was even conceived. It had withstood countless phases of development and had been carefully preserved when the neighborhood was first established in the early 1930s. And yet now because homes that fill the lot are the trend, and indoor square footage is of more value than all the qualities of a tree, they are being removed from neighborhoods en masse. I don't know about you but I happen to value hundred-year-old trees. Actually, I value all trees.

It was the downing of this great Live Oak that served as a final push for us to leave our rapidly transforming corner of Austin. And it should come as no surprise we found the perfect lot full of trees, and a builder that designs around them. Today my office window looks out on this beauty. Each weekday I have the honor of watching its silhouette come into focus as dawn breaks. I know it holds many lessons for me in its stillness and strength. If I were a poet, I would construct an ode to my new oak, but alas I am not. However, I am privileged to know about this gift of words left behind for all to enjoy by the late Mary Oliver.

When I am Among the Trees

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

– Mary Oliver –

Be sure to follow me [@LaurenHubele](#) on Instagram for updates.

Welcome, Alicia!

Last week I shared my humbling experience of being caught off guard by all of the newness I encountered following our long-awaited move. To make it all the more challenging, at the very same time there were three exciting changes underway in my business. While each was planned to be rolled out sequentially over time, somehow the stars aligned with a different plan. Please allow me to introduce you to each of the changes for

2019.

Alicia Philley

After nearly a year of support and easing me into the idea and value of a remote office assistant, Alyssa Johnson will be moving on to dedicate herself to her own growing business. Alyssa came on board just before all of the months of house moves. During this period she offered incredible stability through my professional and personal transitions. Thank you Alyssa!

Training with Alyssa the past weeks is Alicia Philley, pictured above with her family. Alicia will be taking on Alyssa's duties and more, stepping into the expanded role of my executive assistant. Her time will be spent supporting clients and store customers, and as project manager for my training programs and speaking events. She will be available to you by phone (512-956-2206) or email (office@laurenhubele.com) 8:30 AM – 12 PM CST, Monday – Thursday

While new to the position, Alicia is not new to me or my practice. Her family members have been long-time clients and she has had a front row seat as my practice has evolved. Alicia comes well-prepared for the work ahead with a background of serving as an executive assistant in New York while she pursued her degree in painting. After taking several years off from her art career to focus on her children's health, Alicia returned to painting and showing her art two years ago. (www.aliciaphilley.com)

She has resided in South Austin now for ten years with her husband and two daughters. When not working for me and taking care of her family, Alicia paints, take greenbelt walks with her dog Auggie and reads.

Gemmotherapy with Lauren Hubele

You may have already paid a visit to our new store platform but if you haven't please have a look! While in the planning for well over a year, our life circumstances just didn't allow for all that was involved to test and implement new software for extract sales. Although there is still some work to be done, the all new Gemmotherapy with Lauren Hubele is up and running. Those of you with a tech background will note it is directly embedded in my website and runs on WooCommerce, which offers us considerable more flexibility than the former platform.

Online Scheduling

And just a head's up. If you are a client and book your appointments online you will soon notice a new look to our scheduling software. This update has been on my to do list for the past year and will be launched by the weekend. You will find the tasks of paying for appointments, managing time zones and rescheduling to be much easier.

So, if it's alright with you, I am going to take a breather from all of this change and adjusting to new. I think I am good on change for quite some time. While change can be exhilarating, it takes energy – and winter is not typically the season for expending it. Winter is for building our store of energy in preparation for the burst of new growth in spring. Although I won't have the luxury of hibernating these final weeks of winter I will be treasuring the opportunity, when possible, to turn my energy inward, nesting into my new home, teaming up with Alicia to plan the year ahead and re-establishing some grounding daily routines.

Be sure to follow me **@LaurenHubele** on Instagram for updates.

When Everything is New

Today is a great day. It's already well past noon and I haven't melted into tears at all! I claim this as a big victory as we complete week one in our new home. For months now I've longed for an end to all the transitions. Yet here I am, completely overwhelmed and feeling so lost. So why is that? How can it be that I have counted the days to this blessed event and now I'm a bit of a mess? That's certainly been the question I have asked myself each morning.

One of the answers I get back is that I was totally unprepared for all the *new* I have encountered. I don't know why, but I never took into account that literally everything that I would do each day would feel new. Not new in a "wow" way but in a awkward way. Like how you feel when you're learning to ride a bike. The new wasn't good or bad. It just is, well, new. It turns out that figuring out "new" requires a good store of mental stamina and emotional resilience. Unfortunately, I entered our moving week with both of those tanks running low, making myself a prime target for meltdowns.

And so I'd begin each morning so gosh darn determined to maintain a state of gratitude for this beautiful new forever home, but within hours my mood would take a dive. Actually, I was lucky to make it through breakfast those first 48 hours without tears in the midst of all the move-in chaos. Being frustrated with myself and trying to feel a way I didn't certainly was not helping the situation.

And then it all began to change. What helped me turn the corner? Did I power through all of the boxes from the kitchen or arrange my new closet in Marie Kondo style? Hardly. It actually came out of not pushing harder. It came from

remembering what I know about the healing power of self-compassion.

It didn't happen all in one day but rather bit by bit. I was able to rally up compassion for the part of myself that felt lost and unrooted, compassion for the me that was exhausted from schlepping boxes, and yes, even compassion for the me that got lost both coming and going to the grocery store!

So what did compassion for all those messy parts of myself look like? Well, it looked like reviving bits of the morning routine that I've honed over the years. By starting my day with something familiar I was able to provide some simple stability when literally everything around me was in motion. It looked like setting up my yoga mat and meditation cushion in the midst of a wall of boxes in my new office and lighting a candle. It looked like pulling out a journal and writing just a paragraph each morning to connect with myself. It looked like digging through boxes to find my green tea collection and making myself a cup or two each morning. And then today it looked like a brisk morning walk in the brilliant sunshine.

Now to be clear, I'm still surrounded by chaos and will be opening boxes for another month. But by cultivating self-compassion on a daily basis I'm beginning to take root in my new home.

My personal challenge was moving, but each one of you have surely faced a change of your own. Whether the change was a new baby, a new job, a new boss, or a new partner, self-compassion will be your ally. All change responds well to self-compassion, but it's easy to forget when you are in the midst of it all, like I did.

While I am now quite capable of making it through the day without collapsing into a puddle of tears I'm still feeling off. My remedy? More self-compassion and more time. Building

on my simple morning routine will enable me to restore my mental stamina and emotional resilience until I feel grounded and connected with this new home and the me that resides within. Stay tuned for next week's post on even more change that is underway.

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Is it done yet?

As I take a final climb up Les terrasses du pech de Foix and look out over this magical little city, I am filled with a flurry of mixed emotions. Within me are waves of such immense gratitude for the remarkable experiences, a thread of the desire to cling to what now feels comfortable and familiar and a fearless spark of excitement for what lies ahead. Tomorrow morning I pack out of my sweet urban flat that has been my home and refuge for a month. From here I head deeper into the Pyrenees Natural Preserve to be closer to nature. For the next 12 days, I will reside in the tranquil Hameau of Laborie, with its total of 30 inhabitants that I believe include the donkeys and goats. There is no logic to my inspired decision, there never is. I just know I am meant to explore and see what lies just beyond.

These first weeks were to be all about writing, and that mission has been accomplished. Every morning starting at dawn I have written for as long as I can stand to hear my own words rattle in my head. On some grey drizzling days I fell so deep into my work that it was well into the afternoon before I took notice. And then there were the days of crisp sunlight unique to mountain areas that played through the front windows taunting me to come out for a walk along the glistening Ariège. There were times when my writing flowed like a stream

and other times I felt a struggle and strain to articulate what is oh so clear in my head. Nevertheless, the writing got done.

But what is considered done in a writers world? I've come to learn a new definition of done since I have written books. There is my first done – the explosive download from my head into some organized fashion. Then there is the next done – done enough to share it with my team of trusted critiques who with compassion patiently proof my mixed metaphors and tangled tenses, politely point out sections of utter nonsense, and kindly ask me to get the heck out of the way of what needs to be said. This is the done where I have arrived. The next part is less writing and more crafting. And when I have integrated all of the suggestions, the entire manuscript of 18 chapters will go back to my trusted friend and editor Tim Owens whom I simultaneously love and hate. And when I am ready to quit, he is able to push me to write in a way I never thought possible. Tim will give it the final eagle eye before it gets passed along to Christine Terrell. Christine is the masterful designer who makes my books come alive with images and diagrams, and she's also a dear friend. She no doubt will have some say about how the chapters flow and what needs to be called out and highlighted to aid the reader's experience. And then, only then, does it goes to the publisher.

So many stages of done! Sometimes the process feels like an endless set of flight connections which at any time can go awry, leaving you stranded in an airport terminal from hell for who knows how long? That's why I am such a fan of direct flights! Unfortunately, I have yet to discover the direct flight to book publishing.

I intentionally chose Foix, a more urban setting, to reside without a car and write my book. I so enjoy the ease of having my daily needs met on foot and the way it connects me with the community. To pop into the organic shop every few days for fresh veggies, walk to de papeterie for a new writing pad or

pens, or simply stroll past the charming storefronts each afternoon to clear my head is a simple way to live. When I wanted to leave town, which was rare, I had at my disposal a remarkable bus system and a train that traveled from Toulouse to the Spanish border every 1-2 hours daily. Did I mention one of the stops is a short 5-minute walk to the thermal baths of Aix-les Thermes?

While I was spot on about living without a car, I erroneously thought this urban setting would allow me to live the life of a hermit. Remaining anonymous for my month-long stay in Foix has been far from the truth. This is a curious population, and although I am an introvert, I crave one-to-one connections and learning people's stories. So while my writing has happened, I also created a small community here for myself that is nothing short of remarkable.

I can hardly wait to see what surprises await me in Laborie. Maybe this is where the hermit lifestyle will take shape, or then again maybe not. Because I will now have a car I plan to explore a wider area with a particular interest in the Saturday market of St. Girons and the village of La Bastide-de-Serou that is nestled halfway from between Laborie and Foix. I will be checking in again next week to let you know how I'm getting along with the goats and donkeys, and anyone else I happen to meet.

Be sure to follow me [**@LaurenHubele**](#) on Instagram for a daily feed of photos from [**#30daysofwriting**](#) in the Pyrenees.

A Visit from Lena

I teach my *Foundations of Gemmotherapy* series a few times a year, and I'm always delighted by the fascinating mix of

students it attracts. The group tends to be a blend of Homeopaths, Acupuncturists, NDs, Nurses, and moms, usually scattered across the US and Canada. Occasionally there will be a student from England, France, Romania or Australia, which are all areas where there is considerable interest in Gemmotherapy. However, in September during the group introductions, I met my first student from Kyiv. Lena, an entrepreneur, and mother of five has had a passion for natural medicine for over fifteen years. Despite the fact that Gemmotherapy is unavailable in Ukraine, Lena felt called to learn about this intriguing therapy.

The path that led Lena to Gemmotherapy is an interesting one. Sixteen years ago she began her search for natural solutions for her children when their symptoms were not resolved by conventional medicine. Through homeopathy, she found solutions for her sons' croup and panic attacks. Lena was spurred to study natural medicine on her own after her physician homeopath was unable to find the correct remedy for some ailments. To begin, she immersed herself in books while her children were young, and then as time permitted she enrolled in a formal training program in Kyiv.

Looking for a Solution

For sixteen years now homeopathy has been the primary support for her family's health and has served them very well. That is until there was an outbreak of *Staphylococcus aureus* at her youngest son's school three years ago. This form of Staph often leads to the manifestation of painful carbuncles. In the case of her son, this would re-occur every month, and before long it had spread to her entire family of seven!

The conventional medical approach to this in Ukraine, as in the U.S., is a course of strong antibiotics and the surgical removal of the carbuncle if it does not heal on its own.

During this time period Lena reached out to many homeopathic

physicians, and while the remedies provided some relief, and the outbreaks occurred further and further apart there was not a complete resolution.

After nearly three years of struggling with the lingering effects of *S. aureas* Lena asked her Romanian homeopath physician about Gemmotherapy. She could see there was a problem within her family that neither conventional medicine nor homeopathy alone could resolve, and she was determined to find a solution.

Finding Gemmotherapy

The idea of Gemmotherapy made sense to Lena. She knew that our bodies need drainage and what she discovered on the internet led her to believe it could be a second instrument for her to use as it worked on another level. So in her search to discover more a Russian homeopath led her to my books which then led her to my training programs.

After the *Foundations of Gemmotherapy* course began, two members of Lena's family experienced outbreaks of *S. aureas*, and she was quickly in need of Gemmotherapy extracts. Getting extracts from the U.S. to Ukraine would take weeks but the Universe was conspiring on Lena's behalf. There just happened to be a lovely Romanian student in my class. After a quick email introduction Dumi became Lena's Gemmotherapy angel, and before long her family was benefiting from the support of Gemmotherapy extracts.

Bringing Gemmotherapy to Ukraine

Intuitively from the start, Lena knew there was more to this than the needs of her own family. With years of experience running her own bookshop in the center of Kyiv, her entrepreneurial spirit saw an opportunity in bringing Gemmotherapy to Ukraine.

Without hesitation, I offered my support to Lena in anyway she needed. We met a few times on Zoom, and Lena's game plan began to take shape. When I decided to make this trip to France, bringing us just a bit closer geographically, Lena's husband encouraged her to come and spend some days with me. And that is exactly what happened.

It was a remarkable four days together. Lena came prepared with her questions about the uses of Gemmotherapy, the organizational structure needed to support the sale of extracts and how to spread the message. But you can be sure we also talked about our families, food and even a bit of politics. We have had lovely walks through the cobblestone streets of Foix, and along the banks of the rushing Ariege. We've spent time in the kitchen preparing plant-based meals and sharing recipes, too. After the first twenty-four hours, we both felt as if we'd known each other for years.

I can't even begin to express how mentoring her in this endeavor fills my heart with joy. I have been blessed over and again along my path with remarkable and generous mentors. To be able to pass along my lessons is a gift beyond compare. By Lena's final day, it was down to all business. The day began with a joint call with our parent company, Plant Extrakt, in Romania to discuss logistics. Our conversations then turned to translations for labels, shipping practicalities, and next steps. But to be clear we definitely reserved some time for another walk along the Ariege, some shopping and for preparation of one more soup together. In fact, I wouldn't rule out a joint effort on a vegan soup cookbook in our future!

To promote the sale of Gemmotherapy in a country where it's unknown is a challenge I am quite familiar with. I've learned so many lessons along the way and am delighted to share them. Lena will need to create a buzz and she will do that first with my books that she has currently begun translating into Russian. She has begun a social media campaign on Instagram

and Facebook promoting the extracts themselves and plant-based meals so that when the extracts arrive there will already be some interest. Lena also aspires to host a Foundations of Gemmotherapy seminar this summer in Kyiv, and if it comes together I may find myself on a new adventure to a part of the world I've never been. No complaints here.

And so I ask you to join me in sending Lena well wishes. Another brave pioneering woman, forging a path for others to follow to live fuller, healthier lives.

Be sure to follow me @LaurenHubele on Instagram for a daily feed of photos from #30daysofwriting in the Pyrenees.

And while you are on Instagram you may also want to follow Lena @gemmo_in_ukraine and brush up on your Russian !

Writer's Retreat for Beginners

I think I was ten when I first dreamed of being a writer. Of course, my dream was enhanced by my pre-adolescent imagination and had little to nothing to do with the realities of life. I never paid heed to how as a writer I might put a roof over my head and feed myself, let alone feed a family. I imagined sitting in a scented walled English garden pouring out my heart into notebooks while dangling my toes in a rushing stream. It was an image I carried with me for years. By the time my grown-up self actually lived in England, I had long lost touch with the dream of my ten-year-old self. Yet to be honest, during my months in England, as I bobbed in and out of the depths of depression, it was writing that saved me. Because through my writing I could connect with a part of

myself that had disappeared from all other realms of my life.

I never actually became a writer. I've just always written. When thoughts swirl in my mind, I'm compelled to put pen to paper and release what is there. Sometimes it may be just a string of lists or a few disjointed phrases, but this action can feel as important as my next breath. There are times I do worry that should I pass from this world unexpectedly, someone will try to make sense of my collection of scattered notebooks, making me out to be crazier than I deserve.

To remedy that, my truly crazy thoughts are saved for large sheets of white paper decorated with sticky notes and ideas in colored ink – and I'm sure I've hidden these quite well.

The Watergate hearings began with a rumble during my middle school years and I became enamored with the form of investigative journalism born in that era. I put all of my heart and soul into the editorial role I had for my school newspaper and looked for opportunities to expose injustice in the halls of my small town middle school.

In high school, I continued my passionate pursuit of journalism. I was encouraged by the radically liberal Mrs. Adams who fueled my editorials each written with the intention to correct the latest injustice on my radar. Full of ambition, with Woodward and Bernstein as my patron saints, I wrote my way into an internship for the local newspaper. There at my spindly desk parallel to the editor smoking away on his pipe, I clinked away on a manual typewriter that surely had been rescued from someone's attic. Visually it looked like my

dreams had manifested. That is, until you happened to glance at the copy in my machine. Naturally, I'd been assigned the obituaries. Well ok then, everyone must start somewhere! I vowed to myself to be the best obituary writer that exists. That was all fine and well until I reported with great flourish the death of the wrong person – a long-widowed, octogenarian sister who happened to have a twin. Seems I inadvertently switched the names of the sisters in my enthusiasm announced the wrong one had passed. I'm not sure her family or mine has forgotten. The lesson learned, however, is that when you no longer want to be assigned obituaries, make a mistake. How was I to know that my next assignment of reporting on Little League games would also prove to be a minefield!

On to college, I went, majoring in Communications, an up-and-coming field once called journalism. I immediately found my place on the staff of the school paper and could see a path from there to that scented English garden, or at least a smoky newsroom. That was all good and well until I was blinded by love (or what looked like love). And in its pursuit, I lost touch with that passionate young girl. The girl who put her writing first above all. Where she went is another story altogether, but what is important is that I found her again.

I found that passionate girl who wanted to change the world with her writing. And because of my life experiences, the injustices I chose to pursue pertain to healthcare and a radically different approach. I began to write about taking back power – not politically – but personally and in regard to health because that was the story I've been born to share.

I also discovered along the way that I prefer to dangle my

feet in a stream in France rather than England. I learned that my writing is best fueled by real work with clients and interactions with those I teach. The everyday stories of individuals in pursuit of better health is incredibly inspiring. I am also constantly reminded just how difficult it is to make a lasting change when you are surrounded by a culture that doesn't support a natural approach to health. And so here I am tasked with sharing a message that's foreign to what is commonly accepted yet resonates with the truth that many have come to know for themselves.

Breaking this down and delivering it in an accessible and believable format is a challenge, and it requires more of me than I sometimes feel I have to give. To speak from a place of my own truth and experience is the only way this can be authentically conveyed. So did I really need to come to France to find that deep connection? Maybe not. Maybe so. Have I plugged right in as I'd hoped? The answer is yes and no. It's different because first I discovered there was some preliminary work to do. Before I could get to the rich, juicy writing I had to make friends with myself. I mean really, I thought I had checked that off several meditation retreats ago. Seriously. Apparently, I needed to be even better friends. Friends with the parts of myself I don't really appreciate, like the critical, the shameful – and yes – even the fearful part of me. Oh dear.

So how has this gone, you might ask? Well, it's interesting what living alone can do for you, especially if you are used to the busy-ness of being around family. While being completely alone as I am may sound unbelievably delightful but let me share that it is just a bit scary as well. For instance, when you are all alone there is actually no one to blame your grumpy mood on but yourself, and at the same time

there is no one around to shift that but you. That's a lot of personal responsibility!

And so here I am, and each morning looks a lot like the picture above. It's my writer's retreat for beginners. I wake, meditate, eat my fruit, make my tea and write without fail. Sometimes what I write is pretty damn good and sometimes, as Anne Lamott says, it's "a really shitty first draft". But I've already discovered this time away is about so much more than writing. It's about making friends with all of me so they can join in and help me write this next book.

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