

Four Weeks in Foix

The skies were just clearing from the afternoon downpour as I left the train station. Crossing the Ariege into the medieval town of Foix, the cobblestone streets glistened in the glow of the late afternoon sun. With my luggage in tow, I made my way along rue du Rival until reaching Place Dutilh as instructed. From there I spotted rue St-Vincent in the historic sector. Here was my flat for the next four weeks, tucked away among shuttered row houses, most dating from the 16th century.

Securing the key from the lockbox, I felt both relief and satisfaction after nearly twenty hours of travel that included 3 flights, a train, and a bus. Opening the door I exposed a steep narrow staircase to what would become my writing refuge. Beautiful, except for one minor challenge. There was no possible way in which that amazing rolling duffel that performed so well thus far was going up those stairs – with me – while it was full. Hmmm....and so there right in the doorway, offering thanks for the invention of packing cubes, I unloaded my bag. After a few more trips up the stairs than my jet lagged body desired, the mission was accomplished.

Settling in was a snap. The space is cozy yet open and light-filled with gorgeous pine plank flooring, a modern IKEA-issued kitchen, and a loft bedroom and bath. Perfect. Well it would be perfect if there was a resident cat, but I can survive! Before long Philipa and Martin, the owners, came along to welcome me with a prepared vegan soup and bowl of fruit. What a delight! And then, since the unpacking had been accomplished upon my arrival there was time for me to set out on a quick city tour on foot before sunset.

Foix is really picture perfect and extremely livable. Home to 9,000 residents it ticks all of the boxes – with two lovely rivers, a castle with foundations dating to the 10th century, a train station, a Friday market that fills the streets, and a rebellious history. Shopping is easy on foot and made even better when I discovered the organic grocers literally outside my door.

Now that you know where I am, let me share the back story to my arrival. It all began with the sale of our Mary street home last June. Before departing for Europe we arranged a short-term term lease for a furnished home in South Austin. We were delighted to find one that met all of our needs; in theory. However, upon our late August move in it didn't take long before we began to question our logic. When the three of us, one being a 6'5' 16-year-old male requiring tremendous space, and a calico, a Great Pyrenees, and budgie, began to live, work and study in the adorable two bedroom house, things got just a bit tight.

By week eight, the walls began closing in on all of us and the harmony we were all accustomed to was difficult to maintain. It was all complicated by the fact that on top of my teaching and coaching, I had set this time aside to finish my book, *Restoring Your Immunity*. Connecting with this project in the tight quarters was becoming more difficult by the day. And so it came to be that during my pre-dawn writing one fateful Saturday morning, a nagging question would not leave me be. "Why are you not in France?" My logical brain was on it, France was not "in the plan". The "plan" was to finish my book in Austin in preparation for our move to San Marcos in January. That was "the plan" for months and so far the plan had served us. And besides, Joachim and I were working on establishing a rhythm in which we worked from Europe in the

summers and the rest of the year we would work in Texas to be near our children. The problem was, currently things weren't working so well...at least for my writing.

So I ponder this question further until sunrise when I wake Joachim with a cup of tea and my wild idea. What would you think, I say, if I were I to take my work and return to France until mid-December? I can finish my book, practice my French and further test our idea of a part-time life in the Pyrenees. I hadn't even rolled into the full pitch when he endorsed it wholeheartedly. There is absolutely no good reason not to do this, he told me, and within minutes I was booking a flight.

As writing was my primary goal and the Pyrenees were already dusted in snow, I chose the urban setting of Foix, which is just a 45-minute drive south of Toulouse and bordering the natural preserve for the Ariège Pyrenees. I could be car free, arrive by train and take care of my daily needs on foot which sounded delightful. I'll spend four weeks directly in Foix and then for my final 11 days, hire a car and venture to the very rural setting of a hamlet near Castelnau-Durban.

I am filled with gratitude for this opportunity and plan to fill each day with heartfelt writing and walks to take in all of the breathtaking beauty, and if a little more French creeps into my vocabulary all the better. I look forward to sharing this adventure with you as it unfolds.

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

What it Takes

An essay from Lauren's forthcoming book, Restoring Your Immunity

"Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue constantly.

~ Maya Angelou

There was a period of my life I lived out as a fearful, exhausted and overwhelmed woman. You can learn more about her in my post, Developing Purpose. When reflecting on what it took for me to transform to the woman I am today, three qualities come to mind. Those qualities are courage, creativity, and commitment. Of course, I had good teachers and therapies to support this transformation, but without these qualities, the changes I set out to make would not have held.

You too will need to discover those qualities within yourself to be successful in restoring your immunity. There's a big noisy world out there that doesn't exactly encourage the lifestyle you will begin to adopt and you are going to have to get comfortable with that fact is critical. In my work as a family health coach, I have had the honor of observing clients engage with their own courage, creativity, and commitment as they began making changes. Let me share a few of their stories.

Courage

Courage is essential when the lifestyle changes you adopt bump

up against the norm of your family, peers, or colleagues. To take those first steps forward requires being completely OK with being THAT person. Because truthfully, it will be you who needs to pass over Aunt Lou's dairy-laden scalloped potatoes as well as that slice of chocolate cream torte in the window of the Italian bakery on your romantic getaway.

You will more than likely have to be the one at your office lunch meeting who specifically orders their salad without cheese, only to find it coated in parmesan! You may also discover that you no longer embrace those weekly late night outs with the guys or gals on the town with the same zeal as before. In order for you to discover that courage within, you must become comfortable putting yourself and your needs first, accepting that is not selfish, but rather what self-care looks like.

Here's a recent example of courage I saw in my practice. Living in a small town in East Texas, Dee knew finding local company or encouragement on her path to health would be a challenge, but she accepted that she would need to manage alone. It had become clear to her that the way she was taught to feed and care for her body was no longer serving her. She dealt with daily digestive symptoms and interrupted sleep. It was taking a toll on her emotionally, causing spikes of anxiety, and beginning to affect her work performance. Something had to change, and without an ally among her hometown friends or family members, she drew on the courage that she discovered years ago when she took on a career path that was out of her comfort zone. She chose to stop making excuses for the healthy choices she needed to make and accepted she was on the right personal path. As her physical symptoms improved, so did her confidence in what she was capable of. Whether Dee realized it or not, by her staying true to her body and her convictions she actually gave her peers permission to do the same. Being courageous is far from selfish – it actually allows us to serve others by our

example.

Creativity

Creativity is what comes into play when we choose a path less traveled. This is particularly true when the path is one that leads to restored health and, ultimately, restored immunity. It will take a creative mind to step back and even consider there may a different approach than those pursued in the past. Creativity is also needed in a very practical way every day as we navigate a world that doesn't eat like we chose to.

Creativity is needed to solve the following...

How do I still go out to lunch with friends?

How will I manage the string of upcoming holiday parties or family celebrations?

How do I create foods that I'm excited to be eating?

The answers to each of these questions involve stepping outside of the box of how things have been done in the past. Start by locating small shifts that can be made. It takes a creative spirit to be willing to fail miserably and try again until we meet success.

There is no finer example of embodying this kind of creativity than my niece, who is also my client. Raising five children and living with the symptoms of Crohn's takes a creativity all its own. When she decided to turn the tables and embrace a plant-based lifestyle in the middle of Montana, she would need to be highly resourceful.

Determined to change her health story, Molly not only flipped her diet but the diet of her children who at the time were ages 1-10 years. They became breakfast smoothie drinking champs! Molly's creativity is certainly an inspiration for others, just as your creative solutions will inspire those whose lives you touch. Molly's way of eating and feeding her children is challenged on a daily basis by time constraints

and also by extended family and peers. Yet Molly has persevered by enlisting her children in daily meal prep and carving out time on the weekends between soccer matches and 4-H events for batch cooking. What Molly soon realized was that the better she felt physically, the more creative energy she had to explore new ways of feeding herself and her family.

Commitment

Commitment is a quality that must be developed internally and cannot spring from someone else's opinion of a good idea. Commitment to a lifestyle must resonate with your belief system. If you're unsure of your own belief system regarding your health and healing have a look at my post titled [An Invitation](#).

To be committed you must believe in what you are doing. A commitment is strengthened when it aligns with our truth and we begin to appreciate the way we feel. Just take a look at other commitments you've made in your life. Whether it's been to a particular relationship, to raising their children, finishing an advanced degree, or learning a language, you have drawn on your own inner strength to see it through.

Can you draw on the same motivation and apply it now to the pursuit of restored health and immunity? It is commitment that truly holds all of this together. You can have all of the courage and creativity in the world, but without commitment, it's all for naught.

My client Lydia had tried it all, and while she had some success, she still had a few nagging symptoms. She wanted to feel strong and vibrant and knew a "diet" wouldn't deliver the results that lifestyle changes could. Lydia knew the only way to make progress was to stay on track. As a working mom of two young children, Lydia knew all about courage and creativity but now she needed to commit to a new lifestyle. Her desire to be healthy and strong for her family provided the motivation

she needed to get started. However, it was the pleasure she felt as her symptoms began to resolve that kept her committed. The better Lydia felt the deeper her commitment became to the changes she was making.

These are just three short examples of what I see unfold in my practice week after week. Normal people like you, ready to feel better and willing to put to use their own courage, creativity, and commitment.

Reflection

To gain some clarity in where you stand, take a moment to reflect and write your answers to the following three questions:

What obstacles will you face that will require you to be courageous?

What situations will you encounter that would benefit from creative solutions?

What are some examples of successful commitments you've made in the past?

[Previous Post](#)

[Next Post](#)

Developing Purpose

An essay from Lauren's forthcoming book, Restoring Your Immunity

If we wish to live well in the world, not just amble along through life without any examination of our being, then we must engage in the effort to find meaning in our lives.

—Eido Frances Carney

What I have learned personally and in my work as a family health coach is that change requires motivation, and motivation must be supported by a purpose. In the post, Restoring Immunity from the Inside Out, I shared a bit about the personal purpose behind restoring my own immunity. However, please indulge me with a few more minutes of your time. I believe it's important to have a sense of just how weak I was, both emotionally and physically, seventeen years ago when my own journey began.

Imagine me then, a 41-year old breastfeeding mother of a 3-month old. Although this was my first child, I was fearful and exhausted as I sat in the Heidelberg, Germany, practice of my MD homeopath. I was still trying to regain my strength post-C-section and suffering under a dark veil of postpartum depression. It had been just 7 months from surgery to remove melanoma cancer, and I had faced two back to back staph infections in the past twelve weeks. As if all that weren't enough, I had a sinus infection and was barely managing 2-3 hours of solid sleep a night. I was teaching high school full time and juggling the emotional highs and lows that two teenage daughters can offer.

My practitioner looked at me from across the room and saw a woman headed full speed toward a physical, mental, and emotional crash. When I looked in the mirror I don't even know if I saw someone looking back. I had become that disconnected with myself, emotionally and physically.

While logically I knew the conventional treatment methods used over my lifetime were no longer successful, I simply did not possess the bandwidth to imagine a different way of caring for

my health. But that's exactly what my homeopath proposed to me: a radical change that would require self-awareness (at least enough to be able to report my experiences back to her) and to eventually discover a purpose for healing.

I stared across the room at her, thinking that she must be out of her mind. Could she really be asking me to do one more thing than I was already juggling? Impossible. And yet I had no better alternative. Here I was, a complete mess. Going back to conventional treatment didn't make sense as that had contributed to my current state. Doing nothing wasn't working either. My options weren't looking good.

In truth I just wanted all this to go away. I knew so little about my body and how it worked, and what I did know was just enough to scare me. From my perspective, I had a body that had betrayed me, and I lacked any trust in what it might do next. My hope was for the magic pill, which she wryly stated did not exist. On quite the contrary my practitioner expected me to learn how my body worked and to make lifestyle changes that would support my health rather than undermine it.

Oh dear heavens!. Now I was certain she was crazy.

She later shared with me, that (at the very same time I was sure she should be committed for insanity) she was considering whether she could get through to me in time because she knew my clock was ticking.

With small practices and protocols, my work with my practitioner allowed me to reconnect with my true self and discover the joy of everyday living. Once my self-awareness kicked in I began to realize that I always have choices – even in very limited situations. I could choose thoughts and actions to support my health or just as easily I can choose those that damage it. When I was exhausted, stressed, and overwhelmed I couldn't see the choices, and I felt condemned to continue along the path I was on.

Making positive choices is liberating, and one step toward liberation leads to more.

Once there was enough distance from my emotional and physical suffering my purpose for healing began to emerge. While I was born with a family tendency for cancer and addiction it did not have to be my story. For myself and my three children, my daily purpose would be to change my own narrative about my health (and that of my family's).

It didn't happen overnight. It happened by being mindful of the choices I was presented with one at a time. These choices are there for you as well in every waking moment. They provide an opportunity to open the door to living your life at its fullest – the life you were born to live.

Ready to take the first step together?

Take some time to reflect and write down your answer to these questions. Through this simple exercise, your purpose may just emerge.

What would you like for your health today?

How will your life be different when you have that?

What are you willing to do to make it happen?

Complete this statement:

I aspire to a life that _____ and I am willing to do _____ to achieve that life for myself.

Add this to your belief statement you wrote keeping them both as visible reminders of where you want this path to lead you.

[Previous Post](#)

[Next Post](#)

An Invitation

An essay from Lauren's forthcoming book, Restoring Your Immunity

When we deny our stories, they define us.

When we own our stories, we get to write a brave new ending.

-Brene Brown

Illness

Trapped in a cycle of confusing symptoms destroys any trust we might have in our body's ability to heal. It also steals the joy out of everyday living. When every bit of focus and energy is directed at physical symptoms and creating our own storyline, we totally lose sight of the bigger picture. With this hyper-focus we can't possibly see past our own suffering. We vacillate between bewilderment regarding past symptoms and the fear of what might come next. This is an awful place to live. I know that because I have been there. We might have had different symptoms, plots, and characters in our story but the felt sense of hopelessness is our common ground.

A Path to Healing

I'd like to invite you to join me as I share my own story and the path that unfolded as I sought to restore my own immunity. I have grown familiar with my own plot as a health coach as I

hear it day in and out. It goes something like this: girl (or boy) gets sick, girl takes medication, medication causes new symptoms, girl takes more medication, medication causes anxiety, girl can't sleep, girl becomes depressed, girl feels exhausted, fearful, and sick all of the time. Maybe your storyline isn't quite this extreme or maybe it is worse, and I am very sorry if that is so. You, your struggle with your health are the reason for my writing and my work. I want to help you ease your suffering if even just a bit.

Although I would love to claim my work holds all of the answers needed, and that if you simply follow the steps I did you'll be strong, vibrant and healthy. That, unfortunately, would not be true. What is true, however, is that you will take away a nugget or two that will help move you closer to your goal of feeling better. You will learn something that will allow you to access the joy in your life and open your eyes to what's really important to restore immunity. Of these things, I am very sure.

Laying the Foundation

So where to begin? While we are completely programmed to take an action step, that won't be the case here. Doing so would actually bypass critical groundwork. There is a hierarchy for restoring the immune system, and I have some surprising news for you. The first step is not a liver detox or any organ detox for that matter! The very first step is to tap into your own belief system.

Let me explain why. Self-awareness is THE first step in a change process. Through life experiences, you have shaped your own belief system about healing. Without an awareness of these beliefs, it's impossible to advocate for your needs or know what is in alignment with your truth. You will find yourself adrift and lost. By connecting with yourself first you are

able to develop your inner compass. This compass will come in handy in the future as you seek to improve your health. A good inner compass will sound alerts when you veer off course, make decisions that are not congruent with your beliefs or hear something that just doesn't feel right.

Reflection

So our very first step is to consider these simple yet profound questions. I suggest taking a quiet moment to reflect upon these questions and write out your answers in a journal for safekeeping.

- What have you come to believe about your own body and its ability to heal?
- What lifestyle have you created for yourself to support your beliefs?
- What is your role in your body's healing process?
- What informs the decisions you make about your own health?
- Where do you receive your guidance in making those health decisions?

Let your answers sit for a day or two and then come back to them. Ask yourself:

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Is there anything that needs to be dropped?

Can you take your answers and create a few sentences to form your own healing vision statement?

Consider beginning with, " I believe my body....."

Write this up and keep it somewhere where you would connect with it daily. Perhaps set it on your nightstand, tape it to your bathroom mirror or to the inside of your journal.

Getting clear and connecting with your own truth is required to find your way back home, back to a state of well-being. I am looking forward to supporting your work. Let's connect

again next week to see how Gemmotherapy fits in with all of this.

Coaching: Experimenting with a new way of being

I love experiments. Whether my experiment is in the kitchen combining new flavors and ingredients, out in the world discovering new ways of living this chapter of my life with my husband, or in my practice, with new approaches to deepening the healing experience.

All experiments are successful in that they reveal information. I learned from my wise scientist husband that there are no failed experiments. That is actually a pretty profound and liberating revelation. The experiments that provide the results we least expect can be the most rewarding. Think about this in your own life. Can you recall a time this proved to be true? It certainly has been so in my professional work and personal life. It's when I finally could admit to having more questions than answers that the "rich and juicy" information came forth.

It was my letting go of any expectations of outcome that led me to study the fields I have thus far – homeopathy and then Gemmotherapy. I can now say this is true for the art of coaching. I really did not know where this coursework would take me, but I did know I needed to try something new. I wasn't content with the feedback I received from some clients who felt they had failed to experience Gemmotherapy's full benefits because they returned to old habits. The last thing I wanted to do was encourage this negative self-judgement. Yet, I felt my toolkit was lacking in skills to deepen self-

awareness and build stamina to make lasting change. I knew my personal health journey had required more than protocols and dietary changes, but what had I received that led me to lasting change?

In my daily prayers and meditation, I asked for clarity and guidance. It wasn't long before I heard from a respected and familiar educator, Joel Kreisberg. Joel, who I knew from his homeopathic trainings, had just organized a new coaching program within his school's Teleosis Institute. Reading his personal invite to join the program I received a strong and quick "absolutely not for me." This is always a clue for me to take a step closer and examine my reaction. What was **that** about?

As a lifetime learner, the idea of being exposed to new skills is always intriguing. Why, then, did I feel resistance? The thought of embarking on a full-time program while running a busy practice and training program of my own felt absolutely overwhelming, for one. And coaching? Really? There are so many coaches out there, and the field is so undefined! While I'd had a remarkable personal experience with business coach extraordinaire, Gail Hurt, I just didn't see how this was a fit for me.

The idea, however, percolated within my subconscious and, of course, references to coaching began to pop into my everyday life. Urghh, I kind of hate that as much as I love it. And before long Joel sent out another message offering a "sample" course. This time it didn't require a full year commitment but was a single class that would count towards the program if I chose to move forward. Ok, I thought, that lowers the risk. And then – get this – the course was called "Narrative Healing: Engaging Writing as a Tool for Healing." What happened next was that the writer in me responded to Joel's offer before my inner skeptic even had a moment to think. That turned out to be a very good thing.

The sample course Narrative Healing was a dream setting. It included a few familiar colleagues, a masterful teacher and a rich, rewarding curriculum that in many ways confirmed what I already knew to be true. Yes, it increased my weekly workload and had me up at night after a full day of seeing clients, but the reward of more writing made it worthwhile. The curriculum was not too edgy, concepts discussed fell into alignment with my established belief system, and before the course concluded I had committed to the year-long program. Done.

Then came the next course. Foundations of Health Coaching. I cruised into that in my blissful state of confidence, and after the second class, I thought my head would explode! What is this stuff? Ken Wilber's quadrants, learning cycles, awareness practices and more. Just how was I going to wrap my brain around all of this new information with my limited bandwidth? I felt like I'd been dropped into an immersion language course against my will!

What was happening? Oh, **that**. It's called resistance, the stage we can get stuck in when exposed to change. Hmmm. I knew that and I sure didn't like how it felt. But just what was I resisting? That question was answered over the next few months as I began a personal voyage of self-discovery that was completely unexpected. More questions arising than answers again and again. The experiment was underway and a new way of being would emerge after some time.

Today, 18 months after starting down this path, I'm so excited about what the future holds for my practice. I've taken the new ideas learned and integrated them to offer a richer, more meaningful experience. My work now begins with building self-awareness so that the areas that need attention are naturally illuminated. We co-create a plan with practices and protocols to assist your journey to a destination you have established. It's the perfect setting to experiment with your own new way of being with support to help you reach your goal. You can read more about my offerings [here](#).

If any of this sounds appealing, I'd love to talk. And if you find yourself reacting as I did you might just want to make a note and see what you hear from the universe in the weeks ahead!

Be sure to drop in next week when I share Cassie's coaching story.

Why Coaching is Important

I was born to be a teacher. There is not a doubt in my mind. The first clue should have been when I rounded up the preschoolers in my neighborhood to teach reading classes in my family garage. I was four. My passion to teach was ignited early on, and I spent twenty-five years as a professional educator. As teachers we share what we know with others in order to broaden perspectives, spark interest, initiate conversations and inspire further exploration. The gift of teaching is a beautiful thing. I have many teachers who have touched my life in deep and meaningful ways, as I am sure you do as well.

In my years of teaching I often wondered, however, if there was something beyond teaching. Was there more that could be offered to help students make room for the information they heard? Might there be more beyond the delivery of important messages, information that we can never be certain how or if it is received?

When I left the classroom to create a practice it wasn't long before the same concern arose again. It was my curiosity that led me to the concept of coaching. While coaching can mean many things today, true coaching takes teaching to the next level. A skilled coach will lead their client to a deeper

level of self-awareness, enabling them to see for themselves what might be blocking their path. With powerful questioning, a skilled coach can illuminate actions that will break down barriers for the client and create practices that lead to a new waying of being.

I have a dear colleague to thank for leading me to the Narrative Coaching program, and eighteen months ago I enrolled with my clients in mind. My goal was to gain the skills needed to support lifestyle changes that I asked my clients to make. I wanted to expand my current tool kit beyond protocols of Gemmotherapy, Homeopathy and Diet to put an end to cycles of self-sabotage. While my intention was to serve my clients, it wasn't long into the coursework that I discovered I, too, was being coached into a new way of being. The transformation taking place within me further solidified my belief in the power of coaching. Admittedly the benefit of personal growth was not always pleasant, for growth can bring on discomfort when we resist!

Today I know without a doubt that I'm here to deliver a powerful message about restoring immunity, on both a physical and emotional level. I can deliver this message in a variety of ways. I can stand before a roomful or a screenful (online) and passionately teach this message, I can write books with beautiful graphics (thank you Christine Terrell) to explain this message, or I can lead one-on-one sessions with clients to increase awareness of the state of their own physical and emotional immunity and co-create actions to restore it.

My own healing process has convinced me that all of the amazing Gemmotherapy, Homeopathy and Plant-Based diet protocols are only useful when they are taken with self-awareness and combined with actions to move one forward toward a state of wellbeing. Restoring immunity requires more than optimizing organs and the lymphatic system.

Restoring immunity also requires making daily choices that

support our emotional wellbeing in regards to:

Where and how we live

Relationships we choose to develop or end

Work that fulfills or drains us

It's often unclear what can be changed, and that's exactly where coaching comes in.

I invite you to come on a journey with me in which you choose the theme of that journey. I'll help break that theme into attainable objectives and weekly practices that will increase your self-awareness and establish new habits.

Here are the three options offered as of 1 September 2018 to Established Clients:

An up to **45-minute coaching-style follow-up**. To be held bi-monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually. Your session will include an update to your Gemmotherapy/Homeopathy protocol, as well as a practice or two to support your personal goal. These appointments can be family-centered or for an individual. \$105

An up to **15-minute phone call for acute symptoms** that have appeared suddenly due to an illness, accident, or change in circumstances. These appointments are for one established client. \$40

A **coaching package of eight 45-minute sessions** scheduled consecutively, every 2-3 weeks. At the start of this package, we will establish the topic you wish to address and co-create 3 objectives. You will set the agenda for our discussion each session and I will support your work by providing an updated protocol and a practice to increase your self-awareness or build a new habit. Coaching packages can be for an individual or for a parent caring for children. Total price is \$720 (in two payments).

Here is what is on offer for all New Clients:

An Intake Package of 3 Sessions that are organized in this fashion:

- Session One: A 45-minute session reserved for Client sharing of health history and current symptoms.
- Session Two: A 45-minute session with an interview format for the purpose of establishing the first protocol and a co-created healing topic.
- Session Three: A 45-minute session to review early results of protocol, answer questions, and discuss a coaching package to meet agreed objectives.

At the completion of session three, the client will receive a written protocol with suggestions for future adjustments and a copy of Lauren Hubele's book *Gemmotherapy for Everyone: An Introduction to Acute Care*. \$335 (\$170 due upon booking appointments- family pricing available)

A coaching package of eight 45-minute sessions scheduled consecutively, occurring every 2-3 weeks. At the start of this package, we will establish the topic you wish to address and co-create 3 objectives. You will set the agenda for our discussion each session and I will support your work by providing an updated protocol and a practice to increase your self-awareness or build a new habit. Coaching packages can be for an individual or for a parent caring for children. Total price is \$720 (in two payments).

I am so excited about this next step in my practice and for the opportunity to engage with each of you on a deeper level in the months ahead. Please feel free to ask questions and request clarifications as to what this might mean for you and your own health journey.

The Meaning of Home

As expected, my return to Austin this weekend has been a unique experience. Each August for the past ten years I have returned from Europe like clockwork to our home on Mary Street. That first week is always the most challenging. Adjusting from the slower, quieter village life days in Europe to the abrupt shift of urban stimulation takes some effort. Before long, however, I'm able to rediscover my personal "Austin-zone".

The summer images of still, damp forests, toes in icy streams, the visual beauty of historic architecture, and heartwarming visits with German relatives fade all too quickly. But soon these images are replaced with the ever-changing beauty of morning swims at Barton Springs, the evolving Austin skyline and treasured meals with my growing family around the table. I am so fortunate to have these diverse, rich, rewarding experiences that each nourish me in their own unique way.

Last spring, with deliberate intention, we chose to shake up this pattern, when we listed our Mary Street home for sale. We set our sites on the goal of greater fluidity between our lives in Texas and Europe. Since that intention was set we have ridden the unpredictable waves of transition, sometimes with grace and other times not so much. Our plan to establish an affordable home base in a community that respects its natural resources, within a reasonable distance for our children is well underway. The foundation of our San Marcos home has been poured, and all of the intricate decision making – from tiles to lighting – is happening now.

This new construction will become our Texas home for the months we're not in Europe, but with only a foundation visible

important questions have arisen.

Where is home right now?

Where did the concept of home go when I turned in our Mary Street keys?

Have we been homeless all summer?

Throughout these past months I have been led down an unexpected path that has required me to reconsider the idea of “home” and brought up these questions.

What is my definition of home?

What makes a house a home?

Is home always a house?

In pondering these questions, I’ve come to a surprising realization: perhaps the structure we call home is actually secondary to our feeling and experience. I can recall multiple times over my fifty plus years when all I yearned for was to go “home” and yet it wasn’t a particular building that fulfilled my longing. Often returning to the building known as “home” increased the longing. Have you ever had that experience yourself?

Could “home” be a feeling instead? A sense of belonging that comes from deep within? Possibly even more than belonging, perhaps home is related to a sense of purpose. Maybe the two even go hand in hand, when we have a purpose we feel we belong. Hmmm that is something we all might want to ponder.

When we have a purpose, we belong. This might provide an explanation for the fact that when I sit in the *hofgarten* of Joachim’s family surrounded by relatives I without doubt feel at “home”. It might also explain why I could refer to our mountain top *gîte* in France, which never contained a single personal item of mine other than my clothing, as “home”. Both experiences evoke a sense of purpose and belonging in me, and the sensation feels very much like the “home” I longed for as a child.

This idea of purpose and belonging can be further put to test when I consider our final weeks on Mary Street. While I no doubt experienced the feeling of “home” for ten wonderful years on Mary Street, that feeling dramatically shifted once the staging began to put our house on the market. When my practice was dismantled and packed away and a good part of my kitchen put into storage I completely lost my sense of belonging and purpose in that house.

So this leads me to the present moment, my returning from a summer abroad to a furnished rental. Rather than walking into our Mary Street home, in which each every corner was familiar, I stumbled in my jet-lagged state into a space entirely unknown. Not only was this new structure void of our familiar furnishings, but the original setup did not allow space for our individual interests. So we’ve spent this first weekend bringing in some essential items, as well as carving out space for us to gather as family and spaces for each of us as individuals. It’s not a big house, so we’re having to be creative!

We will have the perfect opportunity to test my new idea of home in the days just ahead. Will it feel like a home now that I’ve created my early morning space to meditate and write and a corner for my standing desk to teach and meet with clients online? Will it feel like home now that Joachim has a quiet spot (to work through his scary data problems only he could enjoy) with his guitars nearby for an occasional respite of jazz? And Sebastian. When he has his jewelry bench up and running and a place to complete this semester’s homework undisturbed will he, too, feel at home? Time will tell. But it already feels as if we’re off to a good start.

What does all of this talk of home bring up for you?

Have you considered your personal definition of home?

How has it changed over the years?

Do you relate to my proposal that our sense of home is connected to our sense of purpose and belonging?

I'd love to hear your thoughts as I, too, continue to consider this meaning of home.

Romanian Adventures

Exactly five years ago I landed in Romania for the first time in Bucharest and was quickly drawn down an entirely new and unexpected path. This first experience in Romania opened and expanded my mind in surprising ways. The information I gained led to my deeper understanding of how we can restore our immunity with the right tools and lifestyle.

In 2013, it was my heart that spoke when I requested an opportunity to study with Dr. Sorina Soescu of Constanta, Romania. Dr. Soescu had made quite a name for herself across the country sharing her passion for natural healing using both Gemmotherapy and a diet of plant-based foods. She had published a series of books and ran a bustling family oriented practice. I knew if I wanted to learn more about these extracts she would be the one to teach me. Sitting in her practice day after day, observing her work and hearing the repetitive success stories shared first hand by mothers was life-changing for me. I knew I wanted to offer my clients not only this same level of success but also to empower them to make dietary choices that would support their health and wellbeing.

It was Sorina that led me to Plant Extrakt as a possible source for Gemmotherapy extracts, and within in a few months I was returning to Romania once again. This time I arrived in the university city of Cluj and after a morning-long meeting at Plant Extrakt the idea of a private label extract for my practice was born. But my travels to Romania did not end there as Joachim and I returned together in 2014 to Bucharest for my

presentation at their national conference, and Sebastian joined us in Timisoara in 2015 when I presented once again.

With each visit, I not only learned more about Gemmotherapy but I also learned about Romania through my interactions and observations. Not surprisingly, I've come to appreciate the many simple heartwarming gestures of Romanian hospitality. I had the opportunity to observe in each city the remarkable juxtaposition of ancient and modern times – often viewed in a single glimpse. I have been impressed by the deep pride Romanians have of their history and culture and listened with deep interest to first-hand accounts of the revolution of the last century. And then there is the food... surprisingly I have enjoyed excellent meals in more vegan restaurants in Romania than anywhere I've traveled!

This summer's trip offered a remarkable opportunity for me to team teach with my mentor, Dr. Soescu. Over the course of two days, we shared our passion for restoring immunity with diet and Gemmotherapy with over 60 participants who had traveled to Cluj from across Romania. In a stunning lecture room with floor to ceiling windows, we discussed natural healing with a backdrop of the terraced farmlands of the Center for Biodiversity. Built so it was integrated with the existing monastery ruins, the energy of the space was remarkable.

While the participants were primarily physicians, this enthusiastic group also included a Veterinarian from Hungary, an Integrative health coach and her husband both from Cluj, a few pharmacists and several others who came to learn for personal reasons due to health challenges.

For the most part, the room was filled with professional health practitioners and for that very reason I chose to turn the table and proposed that they must each be their own first patient and listen for themselves and their own health challenges this weekend. Going further with this concept, on the second morning, I invited them into my practice as if they

had arrived for an intake session. With my prompting of questions, each participant completed a checklist on themselves. When teaching practitioners it is my desire to challenge them to learn through their own body first. In order to more deeply connect with the restorative process and be authentic in our work, we must fully experience the effects of dietary changes and extracts in our own lives.

This morning I sit with my hotel room windows wide open over the cathedral square listening to the harmonizing of church bells and orthodox chanting across the city. Only a few hours remain to take in the Cluj and today this view is preferable to a morning walk through the busy streets. I've enjoyed my plate of the best melon only August can deliver and a cup of green tea. I savor these moments of solitude and stillness, appreciating them all the more knowing that the coming week will be a blur of activity as we embark on the long journey back to Texas by way of Germany. And so I will stay and just enjoy this moment and all it offers.

Ahead for me is a return to family in Germany. A few days filled with goodbyes until next summer, and then the adventure continues because it truly never ends. We will be returning to Austin on Friday to our furnished rental which we will call home for the coming months. As we began our *work from anywhere* experiment this summer the word *home* has taken on a new meaning. Be sure to check in with me next week when I'll be sharing some further thoughts on home that I believe will challenge you to consider your own definition.

Notes From Europe: Back at

Oma's Home

I'm writing today from the terrace overlooking my mother-in-law's well tended garden. It bursts with blossoms of every color and the stone path leads to vegetable beds that, with care and nurturing, have produced an abundance of goodness for over fifty-five years. At the moment, the tomatoes hang heavy on their vines and the salad all begs to be picked. Like many parts of the world, spring came earlier this year and now at the start of August, daytime temperatures soar well above the norm. Everything in the garden has reached its peak at the same time making for bountiful meals but leaving little left to enjoy for the rest of the month.

After ten summers of settling ourselves into Joachim's childhood home we have a well established pattern. Days are structured around a morning swim and an evening walk in the forest. The hours in between seem to be absorbed by meal planning, meal prep, meal enjoyment, and meal clean-up. Clearly there is a lot of eating, but rest assured all of our meals are plant based, seasonal, and mostly direct from the garden.

In past years I would say that this is when we embrace slow living, however, having had a month in the Pyrenees on top of a mountain, even this easy going schedule seems fast. No doubt in another day or two we will adjust and appreciate soaking up the rich time with family in the area and Marianne.

As I transition into family time, I will take a pause from these weekly posts returning the week of August 20th to share my experiences teaching in Cluj, Romania.

Keep up however with my daily happenings @LaurenHubele on Instagram.

The People You Might Meet

The retreat I led early on this month was held at La Maison du' Cedre owned by **Jean and Marie**. Over the course of my days on their property I came to appreciate the beautiful gardens of their place as well as the warmth and hospitality the couple exude. Seeing copies of their books I grew quite interested in the work they did as practitioners. When we ran into them days later at the Lavelanet market, they invited us to spend a morning with them. It was then we learned of their years of travel around the world teaching the ancient Hawaiian spirituality of Ho'oponopono. This practice of reconciliation and forgiveness has been passed down by indigenous Hawaiian Healers throughout the South Pacific.

As passionate teachers, authors, and therapists, Jean and Marie are a fascinating couple. A year ago last spring, having the desire to create a space for their clients to spend some days of rest along with therapy, they bought La Maison. As with any endeavor of that magnitude they have put in a great deal of hard work to create a space that aligned with their vision. They are a remarkable example of how a couple can manifest a dream. However, they were quite open about the fact that the outcome has yet to meet their expectations. They shared that they have been warmly received as a couple by the community and claim to have met more people in their year in Lavelanet than in ten elsewhere. Yet professionally, the concept they created has not taken off. Open to how they are to share their gifts they contemplate other uses for La Maison as well as relocating to their home in Avila, Spain the hometown of Marie.

Muhammad and I actually met last summer when my family ventured out to the Mirepoix market. Needless to say I was

overjoyed to see him again this year in Lavelanet. He and his engaging teenage daughters run a bustling market booth with the most exquisite vegan Syrian food. Yes, I will admit, it was my stomach that served as my first guide. It was nearly lunchtime the day we first met and would be several hours before I could prepare my fresh finds from the market. We chatted politely as I tested their freshly made falafels and walked away munching on a small bag full. With four hungry munchers in my group the bag was empty in moments which was a very good thing. I was then prompted to turn back and learn more about Muhammad and his family. Of course last summer the migration of Syrian refugees to Europe was at its peak and their story was of particular interest.

Muhammad shared with me their journey that had actually begun in 2016 leading them first to Germany and finally to the Ariège region of France. He and his wife Mona traveled with five children in order to protect them from the peril that fell on so many Syrians. They fled like thousands of others with aching hearts, not only to leave their homeland but also the heart wrenching unknown fate of their oldest son. It is now five years since they have any word from him. With tears in his eyes Muhammad reminded me he is not alone in his pain. And for him, while it does not lessen the impact, he has others that share his experience. He is happy to have found safety for 6 of 7 of his family members and has built a business to sustain them and formed a community of support in Foix. Muhammad is not living his dream but he is finding his way given the circumstances of his life. He finds joy in his daily life through time with wife and children and when he is not preparing the most delicious Syrian food, he is a potter, his trade in Syria.

Twenty years ago **Michel** set out to create a setting to fuel his passion for herbal studies. Restoring an ancient farmhouse and creating gardens of medicinal herbs was just the start. To make use of his knowledge and the harvest of plants he soon

created his own drying system and distillery. Then, to allow others to experience and learn from him, an eclectic set of accommodations were added one by one. I wish I could say my favorite, but each has a unique charm and mystique. There is a gorgeous Mongolian yurt, truly authentic as Michel had it shipped home after one of his excursions, a gypsy caravan so kitted out I think my rustic phobic daughter might even consider a night there, a large stone gite with dormitory style bedrooms and get this – a perfect replica of a Russian log constructed sauna. The energy required to bring this purposeful vision to life permeates the land and it is impossible not to be inspired by his creative ingenuity. A recognized expert in his field, Michel established the way in which he wants to live and then found the means to support himself through his teachings and boutique quality products. Michel and his wife along with their assistant prepare a remarkable selection of creams, balms, tinctures, and extracts from local plants and those he collects from his annual excursions abroad. They have also extended their work and life to Morocco where they have a second home in the Atlas mountains. Michel spends each April living in the Berber region teaching herbalism and continuing his own studies of desert plants and their properties.

Francois and her boyfriend Bruno bought land and a small house in La Coume just over a year ago. They set out to be self sustaining by raising sheep and learning the art of permaculture. I met Francois when she delivered a sample harvest of herbs and vegetables from their 1 acre test garden. Seeing my interest, she offered an open invitation to come pick what we could use in the weeks ahead. When I arrived the next evening looking for more of that picture perfect lettuce she had shared, Francois and her boyfriend offered to give me a tour. This being only their second growing season they explained they were still in the learning stage and had planted a menagerie of all they knew was possible to grow in the region. Like all organic gardeners, they shared that there

are still many lessons ahead particularly when it comes to protecting their plants from pests. They saw this as a period of trial and error and sometimes felt they had more error than success. What I witnessed certainly looked like success to me as I looked up and down the bountiful and well cared for rows. There before me were flourishing rows of fava beans, green beans, celery, potatoes, multiple varieties of lettuce, basil, parsley, nasturtiums, and more zucchini than I had ever seen and a greenhouse bursting with towering tomato plants. I could not help but marvel at their ingenuity and determination to live the life they desired and to find a means to make it sustainable.

Paulette, 72, still lives in the family home where she was born in La Coume. She is a voracious gardener tending her collection of potatoes, herbs and flowers rain or shine. Paulette still carefully washes her clothing in the water source just outside her door and hangs it dry like a still life painting from former times. The laundry display however was replaced each day that France played in the world cup, and in its place was a gigantic French flag hung with pride. Paulette loves her country and Ariège as much as she loves her gardening. She confirmed she must see local sights yet shared that her personal favorite is the view right out her own window that opens to the mountains. She tells me that in her youth the mountains we see were not the dense forests of today. Instead, they were covered in grassy meadows that she had to cut herself with a sickle in her youth at the end of each summer. The grasses were then dried in the sun and rolled up to feed the sheep over the long winter. The fact that Paulette consciously sets aside time each evening to open wide her shutters, observe the setting sun and give gratitude for another day tells me so much about this woman. She exudes a positive spirit and finds joy in her simple daily chores and natural surroundings.

This is just a glimpse at those that have enriched our month

here in the Ariège region of the Pyrenees. The people and the accessibility to nature in its purest state will have us returning again and again. This month has served as a successful experiment for Joachim and I. We set out to test whether we could keep up with our professional commitments and at the same time consciously slow our daily pace and simplify our life. The time change allowed for us to flip our work days providing a natural space each morning breakfast on the terrace and venture off for a hike in the forest, a trip to the nearby waterfalls, or on Fridays a trip to the Lavelant Market. This ability to create spaciousness at the start of our day fed our work hours that began after lunch and continued until 9 PM. We feel so fortunate to be at a place in our lives to give this a try and at the same time have taken conscious steps to make it a possibility. While these final days are a bit bittersweet, we will depart with such gratitude for each daily experience.

Our son Sebastian is headed our way now to join us and at the end of the week we pack up and head out for three weeks of family time in Ohringen Germany. Join me next week and I will share a bit about our life in Ohringen.

Keep up on my daily experiences by following **@LaurenHubele** on Instagram. You'll also find all of my photos at **#Notesfromeurope2018**.

My Version of France

When I share with fellow Americans that I am spending a month in France I can only imagine what must come to mind. Images of bustling outdoor cafes, rich meals, baguettes, pastries, exquisite cheeses, shopping and yes some of the best wines in the world. While there is nothing wrong with this part of

French culture, if you know me at all, you can guess that this would not be my French experience, □ There was a time, twenty five years ago, when that list served as my guide. I sought out all of the above in addition to the best café au lait and of course meringues! However, since I am now living a different chapter of my life, I have different priorities.

To be clear, France has not changed. You can rest assured all of that and more is still readily available. What has changed however, is my discovery that there is so much beyond. There exists a completely different set of sensory pleasures that I could only appreciate as I began to change myself. Once I learned to embrace simplicity and become comfortable with quiet and solitude; noise, crowds, and stimulation were no longer appealing and my eyes were able to focus on what lie just beyond.

The Villages

In my humble opinion, the best flavors of France can be found when you depart from the cities and make your way to village life in the countryside. Here you will feel your heart rate slow and begin to take notice of your surroundings. You'll smell the scent of honeysuckle in full bloom that covers the iron gate to the cemetery; see the grandmother who still washes her clothing at the water source and hangs it out to dry; watch the child who has been sent for morning bread at the boulangerie; marvel at the unbelievably teeny delivery trucks designed to maneuver the narrow roads; hear the old men who have gathered at the cafe to discuss their view of the latest news and long to pick from the mirabellen trees heavy with fruit along the edge of the main road. All of that and the village cats who steal my heart as they sun themselves on the rock walls. My list could go on and on, each addition enriching the layers of character that blend to create the village experience.

The Beauty

Then, there is the accessibility to natural beauty that one can experience without lines, crowds, or an entrance fee. A highly accessible network of walking paths wind through the countryside connecting villages and offering the opportunity to enjoy impeccably protected areas of pure natural beauty. There's nothing like sitting on moss covered stones and dipping your feet into a rushing mountain stream to remind you of what is real and important. This summer I've grown to treasure the morning mist that rolls over the peaks after sunrise as well as the steam that rises from the forest after a summer downpour.

While there is not a museum of masterpieces for miles, there is the everyday art of slow living which is accessible to all who care to witness and partake. Whether we speak of the flatland villages of Alsace, those along the rugged coast of Brittany, or high up in the Pyrenees mountains, it is the village concept and community that brings me back to France.

I am so grateful to have the privilege of this time in France and equally grateful that I am able to share it with you. Thank you. And now I'm already looking forward to sharing next week's note in which I introduce you to some of the lovely individuals who have enriched my time here this summer.

If you'd like to catch a glimpse of my everyday adventures be sure to follow me on Instagram @LaurenHubele.

A Gemmotherapy Immersion

Retreat in the Pyrenees

As I entered the gated entrance to La Maison du Cedre, I sensed an unfamiliar apprehension. While I normally embrace new teaching experiences, this would be my first time teaching in France. Questions swirled within me of what and who might lie ahead. Before these seeds of doubt could take their grip I came across a small gathering of women. I soon realized that these were some of the very women who would be forming our retreat community for the next 6 days. The warmth and kindness generated by the open hearts I encountered touched me deeply. At that moment, any anticipatory anxiety about the days ahead melted away, leaving no room left for fear.

Entering the hallway of the wooden shuttered building, I was greeted individually by each woman. However, it didn't take long to spot the one brave male participant who failed at appearing inconspicuous in this all female crowd. Inviting them into our meeting room they each found a place in seats that had been carefully arranged into an intimate circle.

As I gazed into the expectant faces I knew I was exactly where I belonged at that moment in time. It was clear to me that the learning to take place would expand well beyond any lessons I had prepared. While each had signed up for a professional growth opportunity we together would take a journey leading us to deepen both spiritually and emotionally.

It was a year ago last July that Stephane Boistard and I cautiously approached an idea of collaboration. We sat on my sundrenched terrace in Ilhat, just 10 minutes up the road from our current location. The idea was a bold one as we had only just met in person and our approach was vastly different. Yet, there was something there that we both spotted, an opportunity to blend our styles to deliver a unique experience.

As lives will do, each of ours took interesting turns in the

months that followed. It was February before we could make a final commitment for a summer retreat. But here we were and the reality of it all set in as introductions began. I soon discovered just who those generous warm souls who greeted me belonged to. To save all of us in this dual language setting was my translator for the week, a Japanese acupuncturist and herbalist from Brittany, joining her was a naturopath from Toulouse, a dietician and herbalist from Belgium, a singer and choral conductor from central France, a psychologist from the Basque region, an energy healer and bud harvester from the southwest coast, a professor of chemical engineering and bud harvester from Lille, a midwife from Brittany and another naturopath and a student of naturopathy from central France. Each of these courageous beings said yes to a deeper dive into the study of Gemmotherapy and to discover a holistic approach to restoring immunity.

I was sure to present materials that would bump up against their belief systems as well as ideas that resonated deeply with their own truth. Their feedback and sharing would do the same for me, giving us all exactly the blend of experiences that would push us to grow.

Each and every day held important lessons for me. I find it so humbling to witness the boundaries of what I believed to be my own limitations crumble. Each and every retreat I lead is just another reminder to step out of the way of Divine order. I may hold the responsibility for setting the agenda, but the way it plays out is precisely what was meant to be. At no time have I seen this so well defined as this week.

When we began to find we were too much in our heads, Stephane was readily available, creating opportunities for us to connect with nature. Whether we spent short breaks with the trees in the garden of La Maison du Cedre, searched for the ancient stone meditation huts in Roquefixade, or waded in the crystal clear pools above the cascades at Montseguer it was always exactly what was needed. The blending of his unschooled

approach, my experiential offerings, and wholesome plant based meals together in the garden produced a harmony we could not have planned.

Now we have bid our farewells, yet the chords we have formed run deep. I am forever grateful for this opportunity and sense that this is not the end but the beginning of something beautiful to come.