

# Notes From Europe

Although I had viewed countless times the address of our home for the month of July on Google maps, nothing quite prepared me for the narrow ascending gravel road that lay before us. Yes, I knew that the farmhouse was located just outside the local village on a dead-end road, but this incline was something I clearly missed. Grateful Joachim was at the wheel, I found myself holding my breath as he shifted gears and the tires struggled to maintain traction. In all the details I had investigated, here was one I had somehow ignored. I am the big picture planner in our partnership; he usually attends to the details and this was one we both had missed. The house was of course set at the very top of the hill on a level plain that overlooked the dense forests below. While the view was remarkable, I was immediately thankful to have groceries for the upcoming days, I would be avoiding trips down until I recovered from this shock. So, it seemed, living in the mountains might require me to develop some new skills and overcome a fear or two. Hmmm, another detail.

Having survived that experience and happy to be out of the car after two days of travel we quickly set about the task of settling in. There is something grounding about the blending of our energy with that of the house itself. My next hour or so was filled with my making friends with the kitchen. As important to me as the breathtaking views would be the meals I planned to prepare each day with local produce. I busied myself with unpacking our fresh produce from market shopping on our two day road trip along with the organic staples I bought in Ohringen. Joachim investigated the cookware and appliances at our disposal, rating each on its functionality. With the kitchen well stocked and the tools tested it was not long before I had a simple classic of aubergine, tomatoes, mushrooms, onions and Herbes de Provence simmering on the sleek gas range in the smartly remodeled farmhouse kitchen.

Joachim then took on the task of setting up what would serve as our dining room in the garden for the next four weeks while I pan roasted a packet of ready-made gluten free gnocchi and put together a simple salad of local melons to start. We were both surprised by our ferocious appetites, so it was no surprise there wasn't a bite left. After a quick cleanup an evening walk directly from the house into the forest was all I needed before falling into the deepest most restful sleep we had in months.

I awoke to full on daylight at 7 am on day one of this much anticipated experiment. The question being put to test was whether I can create a life that allows for a balance between the rich busy-ness of family and urban living in Texas and the remote simplicity of time in the Pyrenees Mountains in France? I expect to gain considerable insight these next four weeks with the feasibility of it all revealed. It certainly helps to have a willing partner and one who shares a similar longing to live at a slower pace. I am also fortunate to have children who, if not completely agreeable, certainly cheer us on and humor our endeavor. Because our ideas of rustic simple living do vary, my daughter Kate was particularly relieved today to learn we had a house with running water.

Today, the primary goal was to allow ourselves the opportunity to come down from the two month long emotional roller coaster of selling our Austin home of ten years and packing it all away in storage until a new house can be built for us in San Marcos. It's amazing how much easier this is accomplished given our setting. Knowing our first work day was just ahead we spent the afternoon creating comfortable workspaces for ourselves. With just a bit of furniture rearranging and out of the box thinking we were able to put together a standing desk for me with a beautiful view of the mountains as well as an outdoor option on the stone terrace that overlooks the garden. I could certainly get used to these options. Joachim claimed the dining room table which we don't expect to be using given

our preference to dine outdoors and taking full advantage of the fact that we can.

And not to be forgotten was the fact that I set out to overcome my fear of the crazy steep road that leads to our house. Two times down and one up and I think I've got it. I was even able to breath the last time!

As I look at the days that lay ahead, the word rhythm comes to mind. I see this time as an opportunity to establish one that allows me to live the life I aspire to live. Finding rhythm to our days is quite different than setting a routine. Rhythm allows for the highs and lows, the demands of the day, and the rich moments that feed our soul. What thoughts come to your mind when you think of your daily rhythm? I'll certainly be thinking more in the days ahead about establishing a rhythm that allows for spaciousness and yet productivity. Looking forward to sharing further thoughts and experiences with you next week.

Follow me on Instagram, @Laurenhubele, to keep up with my daily excursions in the Pyrenees.

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## **Notes From Europe: Dream Big**

Have you ever set your sites on a dream and worked to make it happen? Perhaps you have your eye on one right now and with a few shifts it could become your reality. Here's my story of a recent dream come true with the hope it will encourage you to take your own bold, brave steps.

Since moving my family stateside from Germany, ten summers ago, I dreamt of spending the full summer in Europe. Although

we loved our life in Austin, some heartstrings were still firmly attached to Germany. We have inched our way toward this goal over the years and are so fortunate to have a second home with my mother-in-law whenever we choose to visit.

Last summer my dream took on an unexpected dimension with my discovery of the magic of the Pyrenees mountains. Despite frequent excursions in France, the Pyrenees region had never been on my radar. That was true until I received an unexpected invitation from a new found Gemmotherapy colleague, Stephane Boistard.

While Stephane was the reason for our travel, it was the majestic mountains and deep ancient forests that left me awestruck. This was a place that made me yearn for more; more quiet, more solitude, more beauty. My heart ached from being filled to the brim each day. Before our time was even over I had created a vision of returning the next year for a full month of working from a small country gite. Of course it made it all the better that Joachim decided he would join me as well.

As we made our plans last summer sitting on the terrace overlooking the rolling hillsides below, it all seemed pretty straightforward. In reality however, there were a few more hurdles to cross than expected.

This dream summer plan was underway well before there was even a hint of selling our family home let alone constructing a new one. While the steps involved have been strenuous, they didn't deter us. Never would we have planned to move all of our

belongings into storage, our son into an apartment with our pets, and complete final negotiations on our home sale all days before our travels. But hey, we did it and I feel all the more empowered because those added steps moved us even closer to the life in two countries that I have longed for.

Feeling that our energy stores needed some fueling, we choose to begin our trip in Germany. A stopover in Oehringen is allowing us a perfect few days with Joachim's mother Marianne. Here we will rest up and regroup before renting a car and heading southwest for a month. Three days of no papers to sign or decisions to make coupled with some walks in the forest and Oma's amazing cooking is the cure we need.

So what big dream have you been mulling over? Is there a step you might take in that direction?

Keep up with my travels this summer with this weekly Notes from Europe series and follow LaurenHubele on Instagram for a daily dose of Europe.

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## **Fall 2018 Schedule**

Back in April I shared the exciting news of our planned Family move. As with so much in life there is "the plan" and then how it actually unfolds is an entirely different other story. So

while the “other story” of our family move is taking shape I can in fact share with you my summer schedule. Where I will be, when, and how I will continue to offer care is very clear! See below for the details whether you are a client of mine, a customer of our Vital Extract store, or both.

Thank you for your continued patience as we discover this new chapter in our life.

## **Client Services**

**Now – June 22** Remote Appointments via Zoom, Acute Appointments via phone Tue/Wed/Thur 11am-5pm CST.

**June 26 – July 26** Remote Appointments and Acute Appointments via Zoom Tue/Wed/Thur 7 am- 12 noon CST. I’ll be teaching and working from the Midi Pyrenees, France.

**July 27 – August 24** No Appointments, Acute Online Submissions Only, Hubele Family Holiday in Germany.

**August 27** Remote Appointments via Zoom, Acute Appointments via phone resume 11 am – 5 pm CST.

## **Vital Extract Store**

**June 15** – Final Day for Local Pick-up of products at 511 East Mary Street.

**All Summer**– Online orders filled and shipped Monday-Friday

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## **A Family Move**

Eleven years ago we traveled from Heidelberg, Germany for a

summertime visit to Austin. We had been on the lookout for a stateside home and a dear family friend, and long time Austin resident, thought it might just meet our criteria. Within days, our family fell head over heels in love with Austin and in particular the neighborhood of Travis Heights. We were captivated by the massive historic oak trees, Stacy Park, and the historic bungalows that had been so well preserved. Shortly after our visit we put in an offer on 511 East Mary and have never regretted the decision. Since our arrival, Austin has grown by leaps and bounds and we have watched the effects of that growth slowly penetrate our neighborhood in the heart of the city. The quaint and simple cottages that drew us in are now being destroyed or moved out. The very trees we treasured were cleared and mega homes that fill the lots now tower over the remaining craftsman homes.

When these changes came to our East Mary Street early this year we began considering our options. Returning to Europe was certainly on the list but our dream had been to live between the two continents with a home base in each place. Austin has become home to Sebastian, and our two grown daughters and boyfriends have made it their home as well. So what to do?

Sebastian's recent goal of transferring from Austin Community College to Texas State, San Marcos helped us out. Having observed several Austin friends settle into to the thriving art community of San Marcos certainly added to our interest. Just 40 minutes down the road, it would still be within a commute distance for the few days of week Joachim needed to be at his Clarksville office and certainly close enough to meet up with the girls and boyfriends for family gatherings. What we didn't know at the time but what clinched the deal was the dedication of the San Marcos community to maintaining nature preserves within and around the city.

And so it has been decided. We have located a gorgeous wooded lot in an established neighborhood in the hills just above Texas State University. Plans are being finalized now for a

lovely family home. Our current at 511 East Mary Street is now on the market and within the next month or so the three of us along with our beloved pets Ruby and Lucy and the Vital Extract store will transition down the road to San Marcos. Our first stop will be a rental house which will be our respite while our house is constructed.

What does that mean for my practice? For those of you who meet me on Zoom already, my family move won't impact you one bit. However, you loyal Austinites who have helped build my practice will face the greatest change. As of April 12th, due to the unpredictable parade of realtors showing our home I will be transitioning all who are willing to remote appointments. I expect to continue with a remote only practice through my summer months in Europe. By the first of September I will have a better feel for what I can then offer in person. We will continue offering local pick up of Gemmos and remedies, until we physically relocate in San Marcos.

I will certainly be able to provide you with a two week notice. Once we've relocated, we will be happy to ship your order by post with the same care provided to the hundreds of customers who reside outside of Austin.

I am thankful to all of my clients, colleagues, and friends who have made my time in Austin a time of growth, discovery, and success. Stay tuned as we make this transition and celebrate a new beginning.

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## Why Retreats?

Just last weekend I was privileged to lead a Gemmotherapy practitioner retreat in Leyden MA. I made a conscious decision to arrive early in order to spend 36 hours in silence. Not



only was this a gift to myself but also to those attending as I had, "fully arrived," before diving in to their schedule. We had a grace filled three days together and as an introvert I certainly give credit to my days of silence for my ability to stay present.

There was certainly a time in my life in which the idea of a silent retreat would have sent me into panic. Trust me, the last thing I wanted to do was be still and hear my inner dialogue. Today it's a different story. Quite frankly, I can't get enough. While I previously considered retreats to be an, "escape," from life, now I see them as exactly the opposite. A retreat is a time for tuning in, not tuning out. It provides the opportunity to quiet the noise of our busy-ness, and connect to what is really happening and what you really are feeling. Here's some good information on the benefits of silence.

I used the word privileged to begin this post and without a doubt this word is used appropriately. I fully recognize all that is entailed to make a retreat, given family obligations and financial restrictions. I do feel privileged that I am at an age and comfort level in life that I can partake in such a rich experience. The truth however, is that one doesn't have to fly off to a spiritual setting or book into a center to make a retreat. Mini retreats can be created right where you are by carving time out of your ordinary, everyday life. It's all about perspective.

A retreat to a new mother may be 30 minutes of sitting in silence with her cup of tea. To those in the 9-5+ world it may be stepping outside for a 15 minute mindful walk in a nearby park. You can even create your own full day retreat by heading out to state park on your own or unplugging from your phone and laptop for a 24 hour period and reacquaint yourself with the art of "being" rather than "doing". If my ideas are not detailed enough to inspire you, The Chopra Center blog offers this plan for creating your very own DIY retreat. May this

serve as a personal invitation to bring some retreat time into your life. Set an appointment with yourself and make it happen. Start small, dream big.

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# **A Crash Course in Gemmotherapy**

## **What are Gemmotherapy extracts?**

The term “Gemmotherapy” originated from the “gem” or bud of the plant that is macerated to create the concentrated extract. It is these first buds or shoots that develop in the Spring that contain the most powerful growth material (like stem cells). This growth material in plants is called meristem cells. It is the presence of these cells in each extract that promotes active cleaning, fortifying and restoring of organ tissue and ultimately optimizing organ function.

The 60+ extracts available today come from specific trees and shrubs in Europe which have recognized medicinal uses dating over the centuries. Our Gemmotherapy extracts are produced according to guidelines outlined by the European Pharmacopoeia and are closely monitored by the health ministry branch of the European Union. This is only true for extracts imported from Europe under the supervision of the FDA. Once in the U.S., Gemmotherapy is viewed as an herbal supplement.

## **Why consider Gemmotherapy?**

Today, most of us, children and adults struggle with a lowered immunity as reflected in the wide range of chronic symptoms

experienced. The root cause of a compromised immune function lies in the inability of the body to optimally rid waste product from diet and metabolic action. The waste product that cannot be eliminated then overloads the work of the kidneys and if prolonged, congests the lymphatic and circulatory systems, the liver, and eventually the very organ systems dependant on this cleaning process.

When metabolic waste begins to accumulate through lymphatic stagnation, the pH of the body can no longer remain neutral and states of acidosis develop. Healthy cell production cannot occur in a state of acidosis; tissue begins to degenerate, reducing performance of the organ or glands in the areas affected.

Shifting these states of acidosis is exactly where Gemmotherapy shines and outperforms both herbal extracts and supplements.

## **Who can benefit from Gemmotherapy?**

This gentle yet powerful medicine can be used on newborns to geriatric patients. It provides immediate support for acute illness and infections, leaving the affected organs clean and fortified at the end of treatment and supports the immune system in resolving chronic symptoms.

While I do believe the work of Gemmotherapy extracts can certainly be a missing piece for many, it would be wrong for me to say Gemmotherapy extracts alone are the answer to your symptoms. To restore your immune system Gemmotherapy extracts will need the support of a healthy lifestyle enhanced with a plant based diet, daily movement, and restorative sleep to be successful.

# Why I use Gemmotherapy.

As a Homeopath, I faced more unresolved cases than I was willing to accept. This fact led me to revisit my own healing experience in which dietary changes and drainage therapies had made a profound difference. I wanted to capture and provide similar results for my clients. One therapy that I had been prescribed post cancer was Gemmotherapy extracts.

Since integrating Gemmotherapy extracts along with supportive dietary changes into my protocols, I have found tremendous success with clients from 5 days of age to those 85 years and beyond. I have found the extracts to be the perfect first protocol to optimize elimination before the body begins the drainage and detoxifying process stimulated by a whole food, plant based diet. Once elimination is optimized, Gemmotherapy eases any aggravation of symptoms that can occur with Homeopathic and other natural treatments.

You may want to consider learning more about Gemmotherapy and what it can do for you by booking an intake session for yourself.

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## Goals and Growth

*“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.  
Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”*

*– Jalaluddin Mevlana Rumi*

# Goals

I've been setting goals each new year since I can remember. As January gets underway I take them on, tirelessly pouring myself into meeting them by year end. Note the use of the word tireless rather than joyful. If this sounds at all familiar you may want to read on. Turns out there is another way to do this.

While I was well aware of my pattern of driving myself I was not fully aware of how hard I really was on myself in order to meet my goals. Since the goals I set are always just out of my reach I assumed the only way to meet them was to work even harder.

Fortunately for me, and those I live with, I began to experience a great discomfort around this driven, harder working me. To be real honest, I didn't really like her. She got things done alright, but the process was becoming less sustainable. The real problem was that with a lifetime of book writing ahead, my goal was to write more rather than less.

I knew something needed to change and it was most likely me. Interestingly enough, this realization came when I was midway through a Narrative Health Coach program. I enrolled in the program in early 2017 to discover a better way to help clients who were challenged by the lifestyle changes they needed to make in order to restore their health. I selected Narrative Health Coaching above the plethora of coaching programs now available because it focuses on the personal storyline of individuals and how to shift it.

# Growth

While I enrolled to help my clients, the personal awareness I gained was divinely timed. So here I was learning about the power of personal narratives – the story we believe to be true

about ourselves – and my own personal narrative began sending off alarm bells. After a point, the bells were so distracting I knew addressing them was my only choice. I decided to engage with the experiential learning style that has served me very well over my lifetime and hire a coach for myself.

I wanted specifically to develop a kinder, gentler approach to my writing goals. While I do very well with organizing time schedules and systems to meet my goals, I was in need of a set of eyes to cast a light into my blind spots. I found exactly that in an Integral Master Coach™, who happened to be a published author as well.

As this year closes, I am wrapping up four months of being coached. I could not be more pleased with the growth experienced and the tools I take away in order to support all future writing intentions. I began my 3rd book last month while I was still meeting with my coach. Confidently, I set off, but after two weeks I crashed, old habits colliding with the newly formed. I was so grateful to have the support I needed in order to take a few steps back, reflect, and try again with greater success.

The Narrative Health Coach training program I am enrolled continues into the first half of 2018. I enter the mentorship stage in January which permits me to soon offer coaching plans for new clients. I am thrilled to be able to provide a bridge for those who, like me in my writing, want deeply to make a change but need new skills and support to do just that. Stay tuned for more information as my plans develop.

## **Changes**

Looking ahead, I embrace the newness and potential of 2018. I bring a new perspective to book writing and enter the final stretch of Narrative Health coursework that will lead to certification by the International Consortium for Health and Wellness Coaching. These two goals along with my teaching

schedule led to my making a slight reduction in office hours for clients.

As of January 1st, my practice hours for clients, local and remote will be:

**Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 11-4:30**

Now in closing, I suggest you take some quiet time in the days ahead to reflect on your own personal goals for 2018. Consider the story you tell yourself about those goals. Might there be a kinder, gentler approach? Might some growth and support in meeting your goals be in order? If so, consider what that might look like for you and take the steps to see that your needs are met.

Wishing you all a kinder, gentler 2018.

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## **Lauren's Favorites: A Gift Giving Guide**

If Oprah can have a "Favorites List" then I guess we should have one too! Over the years I have shared with you my 'must haves' for enjoying the benefits of a plant based diet.

If you have a veggie lover in your life or if you are well on your way to being a veggie lover yourself, here is a gift for you! I have packaged up a little list for your gift giving needs this holiday season.

Enjoy!

**Vitamix**– Check out why I love it so much!



**Pressure Cooker–** The WMF Pressure Cooker is my Favorite!





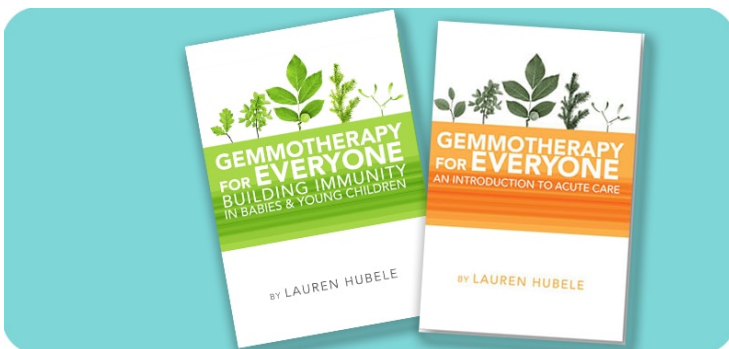
**Veggie Bullet**– I finally broke down this year and added this handy little tool to my kitchen.



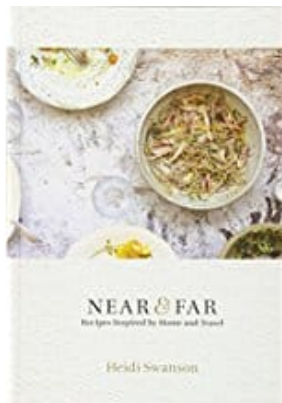
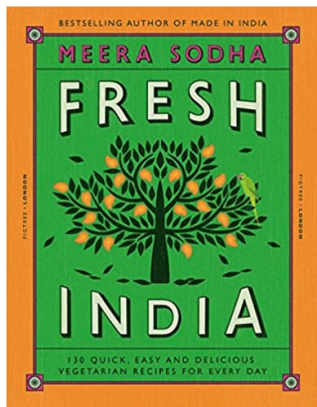
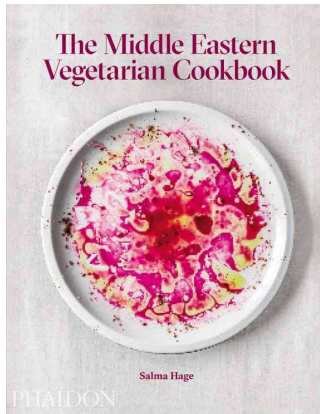
**Gemmotherapy Acute Care Kit**– Be prepared to support your immune system at all times!



**Gemmotherapy Books**-Learn how plants build and restore our immunity for healthier bodies!



## Cook Books— My three favorite additions to my collection!



**Immersion Blender**– The quickest way to blend soup-expand your horizons with this handy tool!



**Knives and Cutting Board**– These basics will keep the chopping, slicing, and dicing quick.



**Spiralizer**– Add some quick fun and innovation with veggie noodles!



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## **Heroic Pet Efforts: UPDATE!**

### **Update!**

I am so thrilled to share that Sweet Grace, as she has been known in our household, has joined a forever family! For three months now Grace has hung out with Lucy our laid back Great Pyr and Ruby the feisty calico. She has made amazing progress in her health and emotional state. I kept her dosed daily with Gemmotherapy. First, we began clearing the toxins she likely

encountered in the flood waters with Walnut extract for a month followed by supporting her aging kidneys with Juniper. Though still a fragile senior dog, her vitality has increased dramatically.

While my initial hope was to reunite Grace with her Houston family, that hope dwindled by the week when my social media efforts were met with no response. Once two months had passed, we made the family decision to begin a search for a permanent home. While we loved Grace, she had a deep fear of men, and I live with two. She also needed a steady routine which our European travels would not support. We all felt she would better settle into a home with more feminine energy and without the constant transition to a housesitter.

## **A New Home**

Grace is now getting exactly what every senior dog needs and deserves, a quiet and easy going household with someone home all day, a backyard to enjoy as she likes, and a very dear tibetan spaniel roommate who is just as happy to leave her be as she is to cozy up for a nap. Grace taught me many lessons in her short stay with the greatest being her perseverance in spite of loss. I can rest assured that her new owner will provide all that she needs and more these final months/years of her life. Most importantly a steady dose of love and care that will continue through the end of her days.

You can read Grace's journey into our home and heart below.

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## **Grace's Story**

5 September, 2017

Wherever in the world you may be reading this, you have most certainly been touched emotionally by the horrific unfolding

of news since Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast. The enormity of it all continues to be more than overwhelming. So many stories and so much love, all at this critical time when we Americans have been questioning whether or not compassion still existed in our country. Austinites, who remained well out of harm's way, have been granted a tremendous opportunity to give of themselves these past days to make a difference. Austin's Mayor Adler opened the door and heart of our city for incoming evacuees and they have been well received.

Today I want to spotlight the work of one amazing animal rescue organization that will get my donations until the end of my days. Austin Pets Alive! fully staged and staffed an impromptu tent shelter in a Katy, Texas parking lot, 30 minutes from downtown Houston, and began receiving animals early last week. Staff and volunteers from the Austin based program received hundreds of animals by the end of the first day and over the course of five more days rescued over 1700 animals. By Thursday, a call was put out for Austinites to shuttle these Houston area rescues to APA! headquarters downtown if medical care was needed or to a donated warehouse in north Austin where they would be screened and matched with foster homes.

The fact that this whole operation was orchestrated literally overnight and Facebook served as a their means of communicating specific needs was astounding. Shuttles continued into the weekend when I was fortunate enough to make a rescue run with my daughter Meghan.

Not sure of how many or what exactly we'd be transporting back, we filled her SUV with supplies and animal crates and had a bit fun with our imaginations on the two hour trip. Approaching Katy, it wasn't hard to miss APA!'s tent city and we soon found ourselves in line with a fleet of cars, trucks, and vans all up for whatever cargo needed a ride to safety. We inched our way forward over the next hour and watched kennel

after kennel be dispersed by hardworking volunteers. As we pulled forward into position and confirmed our destination was Austin, we were told we'd be transporting just one dog. Yes, just one, but she was in distress and in desperate need of a/c and a peaceful ride to receive medical care. They brought her over in a crate and loaded up one very worried golden hound mix with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Needless to say, over the next two hours she stole our hearts and by the time Austin's skyline was in view we knew she'd eventually be coming home with me.

When we approached the APA! headquarters, we joined in another long queue of cars being sorted according to needs by the young volunteers. We were directed to the building that was housing pets needing medical care. If I wasn't already impressed with APA!, what we observed next was astounding. After some communications between volunteers, a vet tech and assistant came right out to us. Due to the heat, overcrowding in the buildings, and condition of our sweet rescue, they agreed to do all they needed from the air conditioned comfort of Meghan's car. And so, for the next 45 minutes, they went through their tests and checks allowing, who we would soon call Grace, to stay put and as relaxed as possible. Three things were determined: she was old, exhausted, and had infected ears. Other than that, all our gal needed was a bath, dinner, some peace and quiet, and love. That was exactly what Grace received, in addition to some Gemmotherapy and a Homeopathic remedy for trauma.

After 48 hours, I can safely say the only condition this ol' gal is suffering from is heartbreak and I can't even begin to imagine the story she could tell. However, this morning, for the first time since meeting Grace, the rescue hound from Houston greeted me with what I know now as her "happiness bay" and a wagging tail. For now, she's got a safe place to be until APA!'s reuniting efforts are in full force and maybe, just maybe we can find the someone on the other side of her



heartache.

APA!'s work is still going strong as they shift support to include Beaumont, TX. This organization is doing an incredible job of helping pets find their way to safety and into foster homes with the aid of like minded rescue groups from across the country. If you'd like to help their work today, I know they would appreciate whatever amount you can give.

*"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."*

*~Anne Lamott*

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## **Living Creatively: Trust II**

The subject of trust is an important one when it comes to creative living. Here's the conclusion to the post I began last week.

Last spring, as I entered the final stretch of writing, Building Immunity in Babies and Children, I clearly remember a long string of weekends full of suffering. All the signs of spring teased me through the windows of my office. I would day dream of the simple pleasure of spending hours after my morning swim at Barton Springs soaking up the quiet or sitting at sunset watching the egrets fish for their evening meal at the lower falls of McKinney State Park. Instead, the task driver in me had set a deadline. A deadline meant no

languishing about.

## Suffering

While a daily dose of nature was in the schedule, it was time blocked without a bit of slack. I had a job to finish and that required my focus on my laptop as I attempted to knit together, with some clarity, strands of key points needing to be expressed. I had made the decision, based on advice from my advance readers, to blend what were 5 chapters on chronic symptoms into one smooth read. For some reason I was finding the task excruciating. I was ready to be done. I was so ready, that I told everyone who would listen. This went on until finally my gentle, tolerant husband sat me down and said these important words,

*“Listen to me, this has never been about being done. For you, this project has been about helping parents. If you quit before you find the clearest way to communicate your message, all of the time you have put into this will be without meaning.”*

His words hit hard and were absolutely sobering. They were powerful and clear enough to shift my focus. They helped me realize I had lost two essential elements in the process that could bring joy:

1. Purpose
2. The craft of writing

I had chosen instead to create a story line for myself of the suffering writer and clung to it with all my might. With this change in perspective, I no longer was working to finish but working to be clear, and that is exactly when the joy returned to my writing. My purpose returned when I could visualize an actual parent from my practice sitting right in the room with me asking for clarification as I explained a particular topic.

# Finding Joy

In my desire to rework passages in order to bring a greater clarity, I remembered the love I have for connecting words in a way that leaves no doubt in their message. I began to trust in the pure pleasure it delivered and let it serve as my barometer. When it slipped from my sight I knew I needed to adjust course.

As I embark on a third book, this post serves as a deep personal reminder for me to set the right intention from the start. I'll happily commit right now to place my trust in the joy of the process. In order to stay true to that, I'm starting off by inviting a few important folks into the party with me because it's more difficult to wallow in misery while there's company looking on. I'll soon meet with a few of my trusted colleagues to serve as my brain trust, to challenge the expression of my ideas. Since I will share a bit of my personal story this time, I've asked a dear friend who I've known since we were 11, to keep me accountable for showing up authentically and completely. I'm so excited I honestly can hardly wait! Who knows, I may fall so in love with the process that I won't want this next endeavor to end.

*"Trust opens up new and unimagined possibilities."*

*~Robert C. Solomon~*

It's been my pleasure sharing this series on Creative Living, inspired by Elizabeth Gilbert's most recent book, Big Magic. If you are just joining in you certainly won't want to miss all of the other posts! Start out here with my post on Courage.

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# Living Creatively: Trust

Where do you place your trust when you are working on a creative endeavor?

It turns out that question is much more complex than it appears at first glance. In my exploration of Elizabeth Gilbert's, *Big Magic*, I found this chapter to be by far the most challenging to grasp and in the end the most eye opening. It took me several reads before I could grasp Gilbert's message and then one more before I could see that I actually do a version of the misplacement of trust she portrays.

Gilbert begins the Trust chapter explaining that most creatives, famous and struggling, get it all wrong when it comes to trust. It seems common practice to buy into the myth that suffering and making go hand and hand. This idea is so prominent that we have generations of artists who only trusted their agony and suffering and were skilled at perpetuating it in their own lives. This by no means is a historical phenomena, it is rampant today. As examples, she shares stories of the heroin addicts who emulated Charlie Parker and the alcoholism among the writers of the Lost Generation. This misplacement has been passed down and today there are countless painters, writers, musicians, and even tech start-up geniuses who believe they must place their trust in misery over joy to bring about great work.

Boldly debunking this myth, Gilbert proclaims that when we accept an idea, and form an agreement to bring it to life, our trust belongs to the joy of our work. The love of what we do should be our guide not our suffering. By lightening up and embodying the pure and simple pleasure and trusting in it enough to invite it to stay we can deliver masterful work without the agony.

I especially appreciate a section of this chapter in which

Gilbert reflects on the process of her friend and colleague Brene Brown. Brown comes to the creative process from the world of academia known for its long suffering stance and she admittedly suffered greatly through the writing process of her bestselling books. It wasn't until Gilbert offered another approach that she could see through her own martyrdom.

What brought Brown joy was storytelling and if she could find a way to capture that voice her process would take on a whole new light. This was in direct opposition to the dark and heavy place she typically drew from. So, with Gilbert's help, she came up with a way to trick this process, and I so love what she did! When she was hard pressed against a final deadline, she gathered two trusted colleagues to join her at a Galveston beach house. There, she told them the stories she wanted to share in the compassionate storytelling voice she is known for. They in turn recorded her words on paper so that her own natural tone could be captured. Not only was this brilliant and successful, but it was even a bit playful and the three girlfriends together brought a joy to writing in which Brown had never before experienced to the completion of her book. She reported writing faster, better and with more trust than ever. In this process, Brown was able to tap into her own deep well of Big Magic, the very subject of Gilbert's book.

The first time or two I read Gilbert's reflections on the suffering in this chapter on Trust I would wince and think how fortunate I was not to take on that habit. I never drank my way through a project or abused my partner or family but then I had to ask myself this, was I allowing myself to feel joy and did I place my trust in it? Not so much. I feel joy when the idea first arrives and in the process of making the commitment to bring it forth. In fact, I am experiencing that right now as I work out the outline for my next book project. This part absolutely has a light almost playful presence. I also feel joy when I clear the space physically and mentally in my schedule for the work ahead.

But, the story changes completely when I get down to the business of writing. Even that term, business, is important to pay attention to as I shift from a lighthearted state, experiencing the deep connection to my writing, to the business of getting it done. Once in this “production mode” I become a task master and lost is the earlier sense of playfulness and pleasure. And to be sure, there are no breaks in sight for the task master once deadlines are set because I am absolutely fearful that the work might not get done. What a profound realization and one I am so grateful I have brought to light before this next project is fully underway.

Join me next week for Trust: Part II as I commit to a new way of being at the start of my third book project.

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## **Persistence II**

Last week I began sharing a personal story on persistence that began with the visioning of a natural health clinic in Austin. If you missed Part I you can catch it right here.

At the close of the meeting I stumbled out into the thick August air in complete shock. What had I just witnessed? What had swept into the room and co-opted our meeting? There was that same shock one feels when witnessing a traffic accident. The biggest question however was whether this was new or had it been there all along? Had I been blinded by my ego in its desire to bring about this vision? That is still a question I wonder about today.

By the end of that long day the practitioner who led the meeting emailed to say that she was no longer interested in a group venture and then one by one, each practitioner stepped away for a variety of reasons. By the end of the week I had

spoken to all involved and each individual was prepared to let go of this idea for one reason or another. While I tried desperately not to take their change of heart personally, the pain however was very personal. Let me share right now, it hurt like hell. It was the worst breakup ever as I had not just lost one partner but five!

Just what did this all mean for me? Where did it leave this plan, that had seemed so divinely guided, that now was discarded? So many questions led me into a period of deep soul searching but not before a few weeks of pure undeniable grief. It seemed as if an entire season had passed before I felt secure enough to venture out into the light of day. I was more than certain that I wore my failed vision like a cloak that could be spotted miles away. I believe we call that shame. This shame came from not seeing this coming and not being able to stop it. Wow.

Sounds like I took on quite a bit of responsibility for how this would all play out, right?

Since in my exuberance I had shared my work on the creating of this amazing clinic with everyone I knew, of course they all would be asking what had happened. Urghh. How could I face anyone? This feeling hit a very familiar chord. I was transported back thirty years; as often strong emotions will do to a very old wound. At nineteen, in a very similar fashion, I had experienced a shame of being caught off guard. Just weeks after the publishing a big splashy announcement of my pending engagement in our small town paper, my fiancé had a sudden change of heart and ended the relationship. I could not have been more shocked or hurt. On top of the personal pain, the fact that I was living in the quintessential small town America, completely exposed, did not help. There I was dealing with all of the shame stuff Brene Brown so eloquently describes. Yet Brene at that time, was busy growing up just like me, and not quite prepared to dish out her quotes of wisdom, such as this classic, she shares today,

*“Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.”*

Had someone, anyone, been available to share this concept with me, the next year might have not been so excruciating and this recent loss might have not hit so deep. Fortunately, I was now thirty years wiser and much more resourceful and found my way out with some divinely guided support and teachings.

And this time I finally learned the greatest lesson in regards to my “cloak of shame”. It happened when I let myself be seen. I discovered that the, “failed plan,” that had been so personally devastating to me, was really no big deal to anyone else. I mean really, no. big. deal. Now that was news! They were all busy working their stuff and were not attached to what I achieved or not. What a revelation, an incredibly freeing! Once I got that, some incredibly beautiful things began to unfold. Because I allowed myself to show up, even in my wounded vulnerable state, the guidance I needed came.

So what remained when this big plan crumbled? My desire to serve, my passion for natural health care rooted in my own personal healing experience, and the steady whisper of desire to be a practitioner that I had quieted for years. All of that remained, and it turns out that was enough, even more than enough.

The answer to every question I asked was to go within. Everything would be provided, I just needed to get clear and create a path I wanted to travel. Teachers would be provided and those that needed the help I could offer would follow. The very core of what I had attempted to do with the group was to build something to fill the gap in healthcare. While I had conjured up a grandiose plan, maybe there was an approach that was not so complex. Maybe there was an answer that I could provide on my own.

So what did I do? I became a student of everything I needed to



know in regards to the body healing both spiritually and physically. I found my own unique path, not one that had been traversed before and my period of isolation, of solitude, provided me with the strength I needed whenever doubt arose. I read voraciously and traveled to be with practitioners who modeled what I believed, in the practice and personal lives, because it all must be in sync. And when the answer I needed required me to get on a plane and fly across the ocean, I did, multiple times. One of these trips is when I met Dr. Heiner Frei, a story I tell about in this blog post.

Before long my persistence paid off. I rallied the courage to open a small practice and my work has continued to evolve ever since.

As I shared in the beginning of the post,

*Persistence comes from the heart of that deep love of what we do, it is our core, our willingness to move all obstacles just so that the work we are called to do can continue.*

It is truly a love for what I do that gets me up each morning and helps me to work through the obstacles of the day. I do this because never before in my life have I felt so sure I was doing the work that was connected to a greater plan.

In this story, persistence paid off, big time. But your story doesn't have to be so dramatic. Persistence can take many forms. It is exactly what is required to be able to return to your work after a bad night of sleep, or family demands that beckon, or repeated unsuccessful attempts. Giving yourself permission for a pause is always warranted but it's about the coming back, remembering the joy it brings, and the deep love you feel for what you do.