

French Adventures: Part II

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Home again and adjusting to the 100 degree temps, fuller days, and all that it takes to live right in the heart of a city with nearly one million people; I am inclined to reflect on more of my experiences in the Pyrenees. (Read Part I here!) There are undoubtedly some stark contrasts between the village of Ilhat, nestled in the foothills of mountains, and this bustling place in Texas that I call home. Yet, surprisingly, there are similarities as well.



Both Ilhat and Austin offer a sunrise and sunset with unique beauty each its own, both are filled with native birds that begin each day in song, and, while vastly different in species, the Pyrenees region and Austin are both homes to magnificent trees. While sitting with my tea each morning on my porch these past few days, I have given myself the opportunity to marvel at the beauty and resilience of our Texas trees. These wonders continue to thrive against all odds

in this inhospitable heat and unpredictable supply of water. What strength they have! (Which I surely call upon as I struggle to keep myself from melting into a puddle before the end of each day.) While I was captivated by the misty and mystical Beech tree forests deep in the Pyrenees, the canopy of shade from my Mexican White Oak, here in my Austin garden, provides a welcome daily respite.

I've taken to having my tea underneath this powerful Oak these past few jet lagged mornings, granting myself time to witness the awakening of each day. It's been a good way to reground myself in Austin and appreciate the beauty I often take for granted. Too often the scenery of our daily lives becomes merely the backdrop for our to-do lists and the purposeful act of observing it with fresh eyes can be revealing. I've been a lover of trees all of my life, but for different reasons at various times. Of course now, with all I have learned about the healing gifts the buds of trees hold for our bodies, my passion has obviously grown.



When I was 11, my parents moved us from the bustling California Bay Area to a farm in the Sacramento Valley. Far removed from neighbors and my childhood friends, I turned to nature for comfort. I would ride my bike along the canal road that lined our property and sit for hours alongside a wild and ungroomed stretch of **Putah creek**. When that was not an option, I found solace deep inside the curved branches and shady thick

leaves of a Fig tree. There's no telling how many adolescent hours I spent up inside that tree, but, now reflecting on the fact that the buds of the Fig tree support digestion on a physical and emotional level, it is no surprise that this tree provided me with exactly what I was in search of.

Sadly, I outgrew my tree-climbing and for many years life seemed to separate me from what trees had to offer. It wasn't until I moved to Heidelberg, Germany and began to share hikes with Joachim that the importance of trees came back into my life. From that point onward, they played a profound role in both my physical and emotional healing, leading me eventually to study the benefits of the extracts made from tree buds that we call Gemmotherapy.

This summer I learned even more about trees from my new dear friend and colleague **Stephane Boistard**, who I met this past year over our shared curiosity and intrigue with Gemmotherapy. Both practitioners and authors, we each bring an entirely different set of experiences and perspectives to the topic and it was a true gift to spend time in one another's presence.

Stephane told of how his interest in trees began when he was a young child and his parents arranged for him to escape the city and spend his summers with families who worked in the French forests. Later, he would join them in their work as forest caretakers, learning both the practicalities and the mysteries of caring for trees. His passion grew and he eventually chose to leave his study of architecture and pursue an advanced degree in forestry. It was his research here that led him to discover the natural healing powers of the forest itself.

Ten years ago, Stephane came upon Gemmotherapy and immersed himself in the subject and is now the leading expert in France. He is an outspoken and respected proponent of ethical care of forests in his home country and this informs his own

line of Gemmotherapy products. He has formed a small collective of bud pickers and producers in the area, allowing for a successful cottage industry with a line of 40 extracts sold to individuals and Naturopaths throughout France. Having now tried their product, I can say it surpasses any extract I have experienced! Stephane is also the author of, Gemmotherapie Les Bourgeons Au Service De La Sante' Guide Praticque et familial, which is currently the top seller in natural healthcare for Amazon France.

So, where might this friendship and love for Gemmotherapy and trees lead the two of us? Thus far, into some pretty exciting territory that includes translation and distribution of my books in France, all new teaching exchanges throughout the coming year, and the vision for a Gemmotherapy Summer School in the Pyrenees Summer 2018.



When it comes to trees, following my curiosity and wonder has definitely proven to be a very good thing for me!

French Adventures: Part I

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Have you ever had a holiday in which each and every day stands out with defined, unique, and rich characteristics all on its own? This has been exactly the case for me these past two weeks. It all began when, accompanied by my family, our flight from Frankfurt, Germany touched down in Toulouse, France. There, three generations of Hubeles, from 82 to 15 years of age, embarked on quite the adventure! I knew in advance that this would be a trip to remember, but now, upon reflection, I see there may still be lessons that have yet to reveal themselves.



So, why the Pyrenees you may ask? Truth be told, the idea came by way of an unexpected email that landed in my inbox early last January. The sender was a complete stranger to me, Stephane Boistard of Lavelanet, France. I would soon learn that Stephane is the leading French expert in the field of Gemmotherapy, particularly the tree-to-bottle experience, and he was seeking a like minded colleague who shared his passion. An author, scholar, and producer of Gemmotherapy extracts, Boistard reached out to see if we might learn from one another. Our mutual curiosity and openness led to the development of an online friendship.



We would meet monthly on Skype and share our current challenges, plans for the future, and exchange ideas regarding the extracts and their healing capabilities. It soon became clear we should meet in person and since my family traditionally spends some of our summer holidays in France, why not add the Pyrenees this year? The opportunity to explore a new location in France known for its rugged spectacular beauty AND meet Stephane was certainly too good to pass up.

As a family, we have learned over our years of travel that we prefer to settle in to one home base and then explore day by day from there. We found just the perfect setting for that on the outskirts of the sleepy village of Ilhat, home to less than 30 residents. Our home for ten days sat at the end of the road and there we were rewarded with 360 degrees of splendid mountain scenery. The sunsets were as spectacular as the morning fog that rolled in over the mountain tops. A terraced lush garden was filled with raised vegetable beds and fruit trees. Lucky for us, the Mirebelle trees were bursting with juicy ripe fruit throughout our entire stay. (And, by the way, Mirebelle plums happen to be my all-time favorite fruit!)

A trail just beyond our driveway led straight up to the mountain ridge, offering vistas like I have never before experienced. While our location was remote, the bustling town

of Lavelanet was a mere ten minutes away, and there we would find a twice weekly market and two fully stocked organic grocery shops.

As if this all was not enough, we had the ultimate privilege of sharing our home with Titi, truly the soul of the property. Ear-less from an early encounter with skin cancer she was truly one of the loveliest cats that I've met (don't tell Ruby.) Titi led the life we all dream of; she spent her mornings lounging on the sunny deck or garden table, moved to the shade of a fruit tree in the afternoon heat, and made her way each evening to a cozy kitchen chair to retire for the evening.



While I will save sharing my conversations with Stephane for a follow-up post, please let me indulge in some gushing over our most memorable daily excursions.

We arrived in Ilhat at nightfall and, with some help from the locals, found our way up the gravel path to our house. As darkness comes quickly in the mountains, the only exploring we did was inside the ancient stone walls of the three story building that would be our home away from home for the days to come. Bedrooms divided up and luggage unpacked, we met around the kitchen table for a simple snack and tea before heading off to bed.

The next day began with the promise of rising summer

temperatures so, after an early breakfast of fruits, we took to the path we had spotted the night before. Up we climbed for over an hour before reaching a magnificent ridge trail that offered views of what appeared to be endless layer upon layer of higher and higher mountains: the Pyrenees. After a strenuous hike, we were rewarded with an invitation for an amazing vegan lunch prepared by Sabine, Stephane's wife. Following lunch, the hiking maps were spread across the table and our days ahead began to take shape.



Day two took us to the highly recommended Mirepoix Market, famous in the area for its mix of local craftsman and international food. I was immediately surprised by the number of booths advertising vegan menus. This was not the France I had experienced in years past! The find of the day was the falafel booth run by a Syrian family with a proud sign announcing that the products sold were both gluten free and vegan! As you probably know, the next thing I would want to find is a fresh juice stand, and of course I did.

The following day, thinking we would tackle the easiest local hikes first, we scheduled what we thought would be short morning walk around the perimeter of Lac de Montbel. Appearing as if it is from another world, Montbel, is an absolute gem of well preserved nature. Let me sum up our experience with this

one statement: The pure magic we experienced those first three hours of solid hiking dwindled rapidly once we discovered we were only halfway around the lake, out of water, and the afternoon sun had increased the temperatures!

Roquefixade is the quintessential mountain village, home to the ruins of a Cathar Castle, without any of the tourist kitsch. It had every perfect component, including a teeny market square, a travelers inn for hikers, a bevy of curious cats, and breathtaking views. Our hike to the chateau and summit took us through lush forests and along narrow ridges to reach a point in which one has vistas of Spain to one direction and Toulouse to the other.



Nebias, home to a magical forest and green labyrinth, was also highly recommended by my friend Stephane. His descriptive explanations placed it high on our list and he did not fail us in the least. This forest is straight out of The Lord of the Rings and one can be sure there are fairies lurking just behind the trees. I'd revisit that forest again and again, but the labyrinth was another story for me. Somewhere tucked away deep in my memory bank was a less than pleasant encounter with a labyrinth in England, chapters ago in my life. Funny how those memories came flooding forth when I became turned around among the giant moss covered stones. Full disclosure, a bit of

panic I hadn't experienced in years paid a short but unwelcome visit, soon to disperse once I spotted the forest trail just beyond the exit.

Up a winding mountain road from the small village of Monteferrier is the entryway to the St. Barthelemy Trail. The climb takes one through a timeless enchanted forest of Beech trees before reaching the high grassy mountain ridge. We chose this hike after having enjoyed the higher elevation of Roquefixade and wanted one more similar experience before returning to Germany. This was truly a matter of saving the best for last and I believe it was everyone's favorite outing.



Please be sure to check back in next week for Part Two that includes our follow-on visit to Murten & Laupen, Switzerland!

Mit Fahrrad: With Bike

When recalling the activities that brought me the most joy and sense of freedom in my youth, bike riding certainly makes it to the top of the list. It sits right up there with swimming and perching myself high in the fig tree with a book on a warm summer day. During the time of my 20's and 30's, I have very few memories of bicycling, so it came as a delightful

rediscovery at 40. Moving just across the bridge from Heidelberg Altstadt, my bicycle became my primary means of transportation out of practicality. I fully embraced the freedom it offered. Never needing to wait in traffic or search for a parking place, my bike transported me to work at Heidelberg High School, to appointments, or downtown for shopping. My car was there for journeys outside of the city and for my girls when they began driving. It was with great reluctance that I gave up this freedom upon moving to Austin, out of fear for my safety. Just because Texas drivers may “drive friendly”, that does not always mean they share the road well with people on bicycles.

While the first walk in the Freidrichsruhe Wald may signal my arrival in Germany, hopping on a bike and pedaling into Oehringen to pick up some groceries is the next. Last summer I did not drive a car during our entire stay in Germany and so far I haven't driven these first four weeks. However, a day hasn't passed that I haven't taken a bike ride. Some days it may be a short trip to the local organic grocers, others an evening loop with Sebastian that takes us down along the Ohre river and through the pristine Hofgarten.



In years past, we would set aside a few days to travel by bike through France with Sebastian. However, this summer we settled

on day trips right here in beautiful Baden Wurtenburg. Sometimes it's just the three of us, but when we are lucky we get to participate in a *Hetzer- Hubele Radtour*. And let me tell you, these tours are pretty amazing for a host of reasons! Just a few of those being:

1. It's put together by Uncle Reinhold (brother of Marianne) who happens to be a planner extraordinaire.
2. I don't have to plan it.
3. I get to spend an entire day with some of the nicest people I know.
4. The scenery is spectacular.

But there are a few drawbacks as well. Starting with:

1. I get my butt kicked every time by Marianne, my 82 year old mother-in-law who passes me on every hill!

Now that you know the basics, let me share with you the beautiful tour we had last Friday. From Marianne's house we headed to the Oehringen station and loaded our bikes aboard the train bound for Schwaebisch Hall.



If you don't know about this picturesque city, you need to read this. Only 20 minutes from Oehringen, it sits down in the Kocher Valley offering visitors a brilliant contrast of sleek modern and well preserved historical architecture. I had not been for several years and was struck by the superb integration of a new shopping district into the old town. I

certainly hope to return once more before our summer adventure ends.



From Schwaebisch Hall we headed north following the *radweg* along the Kocher River. The views from the rolling hills, through the forests and along the rushing stretches of the river were almost too much to take in. I found myself continually distracted by the beauty of a grove of trees, a patch of wildflowers, or grazing cows causing me to fall to the tail end of our group, there was just so much to see!

It is quite a task to manage 50 miles in few short hours so there we kept up a good pace... rather, at least some of the group did! A few drink pauses along the way and we hit our lunch stop midday in Kuenzelsau. Finding a series of benches along the river front, we enjoyed our packed meals and conversation.



The next half of the trip took us again through beautiful countryside and charming villages. Before long we were back on a trail I know well that connects the small village of Ohrnberg with Oehringen. This stretch of the radweg was purpose-built two years ago in preparation of Oehringen's hosting of the 2016 Landesgartenschau. It is a scenic stretch again along the Ohre and is popular with local families on the weekends.

What a day we had! 50 miles of pure nature, pleasant conversations, delightful company, and with another plan proposed for one more ride together in the weeks to come.



Not written in English, but here is a map of our journey if you're interested. This site in English offers some further

information of the entire 332k Kocher- Jagst cycle route.

A Heidelberg Daytrip

There are places and periods of time in our lives in which we enter one way... and exit another. The years spent in Heidelberg, Germany were just that for me. In reflection, I remember the pains to be equally as intense as the joys, with this period serving as an awakening to experience both. Each high note and every deep low vibration served to bring awareness to the fact that there was an incredible strength within, that I had not even begun to access, along with a force far more powerful than I could even imagine, that could serve as my guide.



Oh Heidelberg, where I walked the banks of the Neckar and the terraced vineyards, soul searching for answers and breaking down barriers that no longer served me. Heidelberg, where I navigated the complexities of divorce and child custody, lost the only community I had come to know, faced a fear-rendering diagnosis of melanoma, let go of all of the pharmaceuticals

that held me together for years, experienced bullying and harassment in the workplace for the first and last time, and finally came to the realization that I had everything it would take to stand up for myself in the face of each and every circumstance.

And then, Heidelberg, the years in which I gave birth to my third child, a son who would teach me it was time to learn new ways to do things, where I made the first connections with my biological family and found answers to questions I had carried for 40+ years, the place I discovered the healing power of my own body through Homeopathic treatment, and discovered the joy in being my own best friend.

In returning and walking the same streets and paths as I did in those times of fear, self-doubt, and mistrust, I could not help but marvel at the transformations I had allowed to occur. Just as in *The Alchemist*, the years that would follow provided the perfect setting to experience true healing and personal growth.

"...when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it."

And so, on a typical Heidelberg summer day with mixed skies full of showers and sunshine, Sebastian and I set out to see what memories would join us. Upon arriving at Heidelberg HBF, we hopped upon the Strassenbahn heading to Bismarkplatz. Halfway to our destination, we decided to forego S-bahn and walk, given the weather and the fact we could wander as we like. After some discussion, we decided to make our way into the Altstadt and for a snack at one of the new vegan restaurants. (Something completely unheard of ten years ago!)



Along the way we passed Sebastian's favorite playground as a child and I couldn't help but share a story. Always an early riser (and I do mean early), preschool aged Sebastian and I would often head out as early as 7am on Saturday mornings in search of the first bakery that opened and a playground. Feeling adventuresome one Saturday, we made it all the way into the Altstadt and he was thrilled to have the entire playground to himself. I secured a tea for myself and settled onto a bench only to be startled by a loud and emphatic "schimpfen" from the man who lived in a flat directly above the playground. Clearly our good fortune conflicted with his attempt to sleep in on a Saturday morning.



We carried on our walk down Maerzgasse, making our way over the aged cobblestones deep into the Altstadt. I marveled at how quickly a 15 year old can cover the distance that might have taken hours just a few short years ago! With luck on our side, we approached the café of our choice just at the moment that the sunny skies turned black and quickly dropped enormous amounts of rain. What a delight to sit in the cozy café, sip some tea, and watch the storm wash through the alleyways, as eventually the skies returned to sparkling sunshine. We made quick work of our shared plate of gluten free pasta and gorgeous lemon basil sauce and were soon ready to head out once again.

In giving Sebastian the choice of walking through the Hauptstrasse full of shops or along the river, I must say I was not surprised at all with his decision. We wove our way through the narrow streets until we came upon the Alte **Brücke**, a classic symbol of Heidelberg with the picturesque schloss in the background. Having taken the obligatory photos, ones we never captured as residents, we set on our way along the river's edge. Everything fresh and sparkly from the rain, with the warmth of the sun on our backs, it could not have been a lovelier walk together as we shared clips of memories that spontaneously popped into our heads.



Once we came to Neuenheim, the village just across the river from central Heidelberg we caught the S-Bahn towards Dossenheim where we would be meeting up with a dear friend and

former neighbor.

Dossenheim, a village just outside of Heidelberg, is nestled into the picturesque terraced vineyards and was our home for our final three years in Germany. The walks we took in those hills, rain, shine, or snow, taught me the healing power of spending time with nature. It was here that I began to reconnect with my creative spirit and intuition that would guide my coming years. (A remnant of those sometimes unconventional ideas still lives on and it's a little known fact that I once started a goat farm. It's a great story requiring more space than this, but here is the short version: About a year prior to our moving to the U.S., I was inspired to begin a small farm co-op with five local families, all with young children. It was quite the endeavor and believe it or not eleven years later it's still going! One original family remains as well as these two crazy goats! What a treat for Sebastian to see them once again and to see the stunning area in its entire summer splendor.)



The day was over all too soon and as we entered the train station heading home to Oehringen, I was thrilled to hear Sebastian suggest a return trip in order to see what we had not been able to fit into our day.

Friedrichsruhe Wald: A Hubele Whole Family Favorite

Fully arriving in Germany cannot occur until we take our first walk through the Friedrichsruhe Wald. It is truly a grounding source for all of us. For me, this connection began with my first trips to Oehringen 17 years ago, when Joachim and I's Sunday visits were completed with a walk in the forest. Independent of the season, this was as important as the meal we shared.



Before long our visits included Sebastian and his kinderg wagon (stroller) and, eventually, it became the place for Oma and Opa to take 5 and 6 year old Sebastian for some freedom to run and explore. As our lives progressed getting there took a bit more effort, but the fresh air and towering trees always made it worthwhile.



While each of us has our own relationship with the Freidrichsrue Wald, mine has certainly evolved over the past years due to my work with a therapy made directly from the buds. What I have learned of Gemmotherapy has certainly paved the path for a deeper respect and connection to the trees and the forest. Always the history teacher, and an eternal student, I still have so many questions as to the origins of the area around the forest and Joachim's own family connection. While I don't have all the answers, yet I will fill you in on the bit I have learned.

My mother-in-law's childhood home sits on the edge of the Friedrichsrue Wald. She and her siblings grew up with the forest as an extension of their home. It held opportunities for foraging and further adventures as a child. Joachim also has fond memories of playing in the forest with his brother and cousins while his mother spent the afternoon helping the family with farm chores.

The area around the forest drew attention in the early 1600's when the Count of Hohenlohe developed a hunting park in the forest and the surrounding area now occupied by the Wald and Schloss Hotel. Sadly though, what he created was destroyed during the 30 year war.

In an attempt to recreate the Count's concept, the Prince of Hohenlohe, Friedrich II, built a small castle to be used as his hunting lodge and an expansive garden to enjoy. With that development, much of the forest was cleared to make way for the growing of crops. When Friedrich II passed away the area was named Friedrichsruhe in his honor.

The area continued to be maintained by members of the royal family until post WWII when what was once the schloss became a hotel. Today this hotel sits directly across from my mother-in-law's family residence, which is now home to her brother and his family.

Returning to subject of the forest, it is a protected space and nature preserve that continues to be enjoyed by families from the village of Friedrichsruhe as well as guests of the hotel. Rich in history and beauty, it continues to thrive and offer those who enter it a connection to nature and what is real and true. This is exactly why it has become such a ritual for us to pay a visit as soon as we arrive, very much like honoring an elder member of the family, and ending each day with a sunset walk through its calming presence.



Working from Germany, Hubele Style

There was never a question as to whether we **could** transition our work and our lives to Germany for the summer. But whether it would happen with grace and ease this year was the question!

Arriving

After ten years of traveling back and forth from Austin to Germany, I find it amazing that we can now accomplish this in one flight, directly into Frankfurt. When all goes well, like it did this week, it is a seamless journey. A night flight out of Austin could not be more perfect for delivering us into Frankfurt and allowing us to be under way on the autobahn by 3pm local time.



The two hour drive to Oehringen takes us past the village of Dossenheim, where we last lived among the terraced vineyards before moving to Austin, as well as Heidelberg itself where Sebastian was born. So many memories and they all flood back in as we pass each exit sign. I doze on and off, still traveling in my head between Austin and Germany, my subconscious drifting into the past and back to the present.

Just a bit after 5pm, we arrive to what seems like the exact

picture of what we left behind a short eleven months ago. The neat and tidy house of Joachim's childhood, the roses in perfect bloom, the precise rows of the vegetable garden in full swing, Marianne's welcoming arms and delicious smells drifting from the kitchen.



After hauling our luggage up the stairs and washing up, we sit down to a much awaited meal of fresh green salads direct from the garden and a delightful mixed vegetable soup seasoned with ginger and chilies. Nothing tastes better than that first meal after a long journey. A bit of unpacking and walk through the neighborhood was about all we could handle before collapsing for that first deep sleep of jet lag.



Settling In

The morning sun fully rose in our bedroom window by 5am, signaling the new day and it wasn't much longer until I gave into it. After our traditional swim, we all started out with

organizing ourselves, creating individual work spaces, and sorting out any immediate needs. Still much ahead of the lists, however, we found ourselves quickly out of steam and up against technology challenges we had hoped to not encounter. A trip or two into town, some extra long internet cables, and by nightfall it finally seemed we accomplished all that was needed.

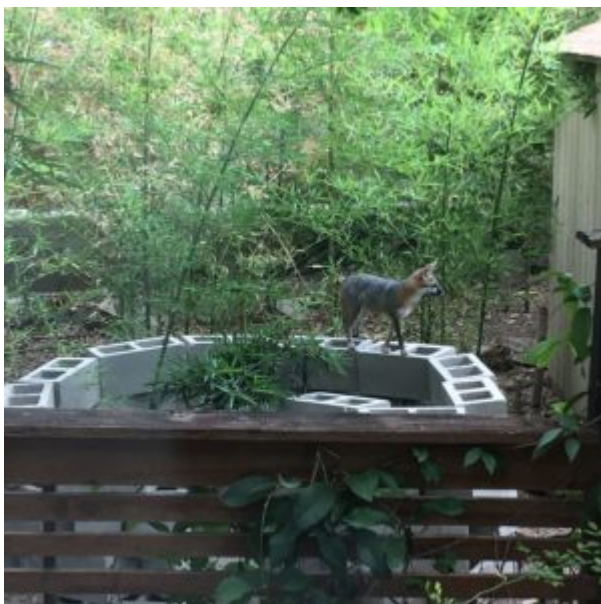
For the next month, all three of us have commitments to keep so establishing some organization was important. Joachim will be continuing the role he plays with the Austin start-up, Square Root, working between his team in India and his Texas colleagues. Having just finished my latest book, my workload was already feeling slightly like a holiday with only a month of remote client appointments and an online course I am completing. Sebastian has plans to be apprenticing with a local metal worker, which I will write more about later, and is also completing an online course for Austin Community College.

Day two arrived with a bit more ease. Following our morning swim and a breakfast on the terrace, we each settled into our workplaces with functioning internet, the garden got tended, groceries bought, and the midday meal prepared all in harmony. Shifting the start of our workdays from morning to the afternoon and our family time together from the evening to morning, may take a few days to flow but we will get there. Any efforts on our part are richly rewarded by quality time with our German family, a life slightly slower than what we lead in Austin, and an abundance of local and organic fruits and veggies that make family meal preparation all the more enjoyable.

Family Lunch & A Fox Update

If you happened to read last week's blog post, you discovered that my latest book *Building Natural Immunity in Babies and Young Children* is now in the final edits and design stage. Now comes the fun part for sure as I watch my words come to life with illustrations and designs by the uber talented Christine Terrell.

Thank goodness the bulk of my writing was complete before I came to realize the gray fox family residing within perfect viewing from my office window. Seriously, who wouldn't be mesmerized by the free spirited play of four baby foxes under the close watch of their mama? I've read that when the gray fox feels safe and protected they will alter their nocturnal schedule, which this family has done much to my delight. The kits seem to be allowed out for a play in the late morning and again in the early evening. What a treat it is when I can catch them romping and wrestling just out my window! All is well until mama, sensing I have too much interest, leaps up on a brick planter to give me a few warning growls. Needless to say, they are slightly distracting and I am quite glad they didn't make themselves known a month ago!



Over the long weekend, however, I was able to pull myself away from my fox watching long enough to plan and prep a fabulous Memorial Day lunch with the whole family. Because we are a family of non-traditionalists, it should come as no surprise that while the rest of America was grilling away, I was in the kitchen dry roasting cumin, coriander, and coconut. Yes, I am still obsessed with Meera Sodha's, Fresh India. And, yes, I know this will be the third time I feature her cookbook in my blog, but the recipes are amazing and I do LOVE Indian food! So, if you would kindly allow me this one last gush, then I will let it rest and move on to something new. Honestly.

This time around, the girls and I shared the cooking which gave us an opportunity to have our own Indian feast. Meghan asked to make salad and tried out the **Hill Street Station Salad** of chopped fennel, red onion, sweet peppers, and cucumber. We replaced the Greek yogurt in the sweet and spicy lime dressing with a cashew cream and the whole thing was divine.



Kate took on the **Courgette Kofta in a Ginger Tomato Sauce** which could truly have been our meal in itself if I hadn't insisted on trying a few new recipes as well. Then I couldn't decide between the **Mangalorean Plantain Curry** and the **Weekend Dosas** filled with **Coconut Potatoes** so... What a feast we had!



Here's the plantain curry recipe to convince you to buy your own copy of Fresh India and discover your own family favorites.



Dry roast **2 tsp each of cumin and coriander Seeds** and **2 Tbl of fresh grated or desiccated coconut**. When toasted, remove from pan and grind with mortar and pestle or in a spice grinder as fine as possible.

Put **2 Tbl of coconut oil** in heavy pan to heat and add **250 grams of finely chopped shallots**. Once soft, add **4 cloves of finely chopped garlic**. On medium heat, cook until soft, careful not to burn.

Chop and add **4 large organic tomatoes** and cook until they collapse. Add the ground spices **1 tsp of chili powder, ¼ tsp of turmeric, 1.5 tsp of salt**, blending well,

Remove top and tail from **1.2 kilo of ripe plantains** (they will

have black spots on the skin and be slightly soft) and cut into quarters with peeling still intact. Halve each section then peel adding pieces directly to pan with tomatoes and spices. Stir well to coat.



Cover with **1 can of organic coconut milk and 100ml of water**. Cook until plantains are tender. Transfer to serving bowl.

In small skillet, heat **1 Tbl coconut oil** and quickly fry **15 fresh curry leaves**. They will crackle and harden within a minute. Pour oil and leaves over top of curry and serve.

Lastly, because I am never quite sure when I will get my kids all together at the same time, I took this opportunity to get a photo for the back cover of my book. Trying to get them to be serious for any length of time is a challenge, but I think we captured one moment here.



This mom is pretty proud of her plant based crew!

A Fox & A Final Draft



Last March, deep in the woods outside Leydon, MA on a brisk predawn walk, I had my first encounter with a gray fox. It was quite dramatic as it bounded down the ice crusted hillside, capturing my attention as we appeared to be the only two creatures up and active early that morning. There was one brief moment when we both locked eyes and then, in a split second, she was off on her way.

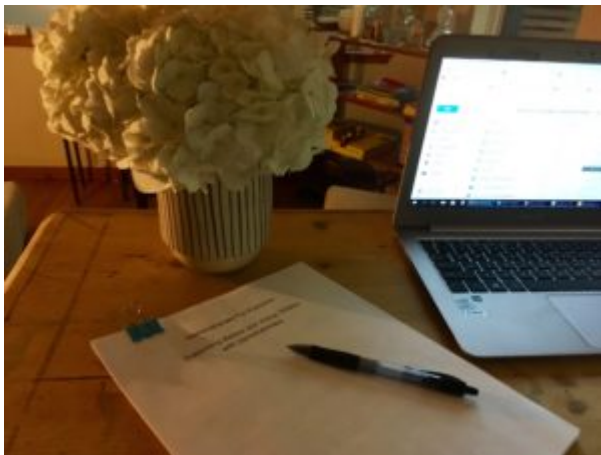
That happened to be the opening day of my Gemmotherapy Practitioner Weekend Retreat so I could not help myself from searching for the meaning of a fox encounter.

Here is one source I found and certainly worth reflection:

Fox medicine involves adaptability, cunning, observation, integration, and swiftness of thought and action. These traits may also include quick decisiveness, and sure-footedness in the physical world. If Fox has chosen to share its medicine with you, it is a sign that you are to become like the wind, which is unseen yet is about to weave into and through any location or situation.

Following the beautiful retreat weekend, I returned home carrying with me the magic and blessings bestowed and dove into working on my next book with a focus on Gemmotherapy for babies. That's when another gray fox began making its appearance. Each dawn as I made my way back to my office for a writing session, it would appear out our front window as if checking to see that I was up and going. At first it seemed by chance but then on the days I would miss it in the morning it would appear as we ate our evening meal, just long enough to look into our dining room window. This continued and my book progressed. I could not help but become fascinated with the sightings. We all speculated on where it made its home, fairly sure the overgrown garden of a nearby empty house was the logical spot.

So now we come to this past weekend and the time I had set aside to work through edits on my final manuscript.



Taking a break late in the afternoon between spring downpours, I carried some boxes out to our recycling bins and came face-to-face with none other than "my" fox.

"Well hello there," I say, because isn't that what one always says when surprised by a wild animal? As I stepped forward toward the bins I realized the fox is there to block my path. Any further movement is withheld by its territorial bark. Wow. "Well, that's curious," I think as this is actually my back garden, but I wasn't inclined to argue so I cautiously backed

away.

Returning to my office with windows open to that same back garden, I see the fox disappear behind the garden shed and wood pile and hear the unmistakable sound of baby kits. The head of a second fox now appears. **It seems that in all my gazing out the front for the singular fox each day, I had missed the fact that there was a whole family residing within 20 feet of my office!**

Thus, receiving my own personal lesson in the obvious skills of the fox.

Happy Hour Hubele Style

If you've been following along these past weeks, you'll know I'm getting into the final weeks of a fast approaching self-imposed book deadline. This phase always feels to me like uphill cycling, the kind I like to avoid. Yes, it's fantastic when you reach the top, but the mental effort of not being able to quite see the top from here can be excruciating.

And, truth be told, it was a challenging writing week both emotionally and physically from early risings to meeting daily deadlines. By Friday morning, it was clear I had hit my wall and any brain power I had left needed to be put into figuring out how to quickly recover. What would recharge me so that I could dive back in and keep at it over the weekend? As I sat contemplating what I needed, I recalled the creek at the back of my parents' property where I would sit to deal with my teenage overwhelm or angst. Hmmm, yes, one of the elements had to be water and the other was simply peace and quiet. With a quick text to my husband and an early plan for dinner, it was agreed that we'd head out for our evening at the less

populated Upper Falls of McKinney Falls State Park, 15 minutes from our house.



The fact that both Joachim and I could clear the space for this on a Friday was one the first miracles. The next was that we had the entire area to ourselves. Seriously! Well, ok, not quite as we did have to share it with this gorgeous egret who entertained us for an hour with his fishing dance.

Now this was the perfect recipe for recharge a *Friday Happy Hour*, courtesy of mother nature!



What could make the evening even better? Oh, yes, remembering we had just enough left over dessert from last night's dinner party to share together!

Raw Berry Slices/ Tarts



Equipment

Freezer

Food processor or blender

Spatula

Muffin pan or custard cups for individual servings or 4" x 8" freezer safe form

Crust

8-10 pitted dates

1 cup raw coconut flakes or shreds

1 cup raw almonds

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raw cacao nibs or 2 Tbl raw cacao

2 Tbl maple syrup

2 Tbl melted coconut oil (more as needed)

1. Blend dates, coconut, almonds, cacao in food processor or high speed blender and empty into a mixing bowl.
2. Add maple syrup and coconut oil, mixing with hands to combine. (If too dry to form a dough, add more coconut oil 1 Tbl at a time.)
3. Press dough into bottom of form or individual muffin cups and set aside.

Filling

3 cups cashews (soaked to soften and drained)

1 can coconut milk

1 tsp vanilla

2 Tbl melted coconut oil
2 Tbl maple syrup (adjust to taste)
2 cups cherry and berry mix (fresh or frozen and thawed)

1. Blend soaked cashews, coconut milk, vanilla, coconut oil and maple syrup on high until smooth and creamy.
2. Adjust sweetness to taste.
3. Place fruit on prepared crust, cover with creamy filling smoothing the top with a spatula.
4. Freeze until firm, approx 2 hours.
5. Remove from freezer 15-20 minutes before serving for easier slicing or removal from individual forms.

Enjoy!

Cowboy: A "Squirrely" Case To Consider

This is far from a typical case in my office but there were multiple positive lessons involved!



Three weeks ago, on a beautiful Saturday morning, I gave an informal talk in the garden of a South Austin treasure, The Herb Bar. Well, as you can imagine, it attracts an eclectic bunch and I always come prepared for all things possible. What I actually wasn't prepared for, however, was to meet Suzanne and her rat poison damaged squirrel, Cowboy.

Suzanne had driven 3 hours across Texas to come hear me speak as she had a sense Gemmotherapy might be the answer she was in search of. Cowboy was the only survivor of his litter after his mom ate rat poison. Unwilling to leave him in the garden unprotected, Suzanne brought him inside expecting him to pass quietly in the night. That was 18 months ago.

Other than looking like a squirrel, he lacked most squirrel-like abilities and behaviors due to neurological damage from the poison and he suffered 6-8 seizures a day. I watched him twitch and jerk myself throughout my talk at the Herb Bar. When it came time for Q & A, Suzanne asked what I thought might help Cowboy. It didn't take much thought as he clearly needed the kidney support of Silver Birch Sap to do any detoxing and the neurological support of Silver Lime to resolve the twitching. My belief was that after a few months, we could move to other extracts for seizures and cleaning the blood. Because my practice is just a few blocks away, Suzanne came by for a small bottled blend of Silver Birch Sap and Silver Lime and off she and Cowboy drove, happily back to East Texas.



Although the impression of Cowboy and his condition stuck with me, I honestly didn't expect to hear a response as that's the way it is sometimes in the work we do. So, when an email came in from Suzanne a week later, I was pleasantly surprised and even more so when I read what she had to say. With only 1 week of her rubbing 1 drop of the Gemmo combination into Cowboy's ear twice a day he, according to Suzanne, was exhibiting more squirrel-like behaviors such as showing an interest in climbing and feeding himself, was no longer twitching, and had only had one seizure. Even with my tremendous belief in the power of Gemmotherapy, this seemed pretty incredible!

What a pair they make and what advocates they will be for the healing potential of Gemmotherapy!

Bike Riding, Bread Baking & A Book To Complete

If you haven't heard already, I am full swing into my next book on Gemmotherapy support for babies and young children.

It's been percolating for well over a year and I've finally found the space to commit to some consecutive weeks of writing. While I am so excited about this book, I realize what excites me is the prospect of it being finished and sitting on a bookshelf, not necessarily the process I am in right now.

What I've come to learn is that I absolutely LOVE the idea of being an author yet, at the same time, I absolutely agonize over the discipline it requires. There is no doubt that I can be disciplined, but I know the discipline comes with an expiration date. That free spirit in me just doesn't stand for the same routine weeks on end and, because of that, I tend to set ridiculously tight deadlines. This one means waking daily before the sun to write as much as I can before my 'normal day' begins and then also dedicating as much of my weekends as I can stand.

This all sounds great in theory and then the weekend comes around and that free spirit starts getting a little louder. I shared last week how the win from that struggle was a delicious Indian inspired meal. This past weekend turned out slightly different... And my horoscope didn't help.

While getting down to work may be easy at first, you might find that your concentration could wane throughout the day. Giving yourself short breaks to recharge and let your mind rest could go a long way toward making you work much more efficiently today. Getting up and taking a short walk, for example, can do wonders toward reenergizing and refreshing you enough to get back down to work, and you may notice that these breaks are more valuable to your work than you ever could have imagined.

I may have pushed the idea of short breaks. But, along with revising seven chapters, I felt the need to bake this lovely loaf.

Nut & Seed Bread



Combine In Large Mixing Bowl:

300g gluten free organic oats

270g mixed raw, unsalted sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds (all organic)

180g ground organic flax

130g ground nuts (hazel, walnuts, or almonds)

4 Tbl chia seeds

8 Tbl psyllium husks

3 Tbl sea salt

Mix With Dry Ingredients:

2 Tbl maple syrup or honey

6 Tbl melted coconut oil

700 ml filtered water

Instructions:

1. Blend with hands until all dry ingredients are moist.
2. Press into a 10 x 5 inch bread pan, cover with a cloth, and let stand on counter for minimum of 6 hours or overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Bake for 45 mins.
4. Gently remove from pan onto baking stone or cookie sheet. (Consider leaving loaf on it's side to prevent it from breaking.)
5. Continue to bake for another 45 mins.

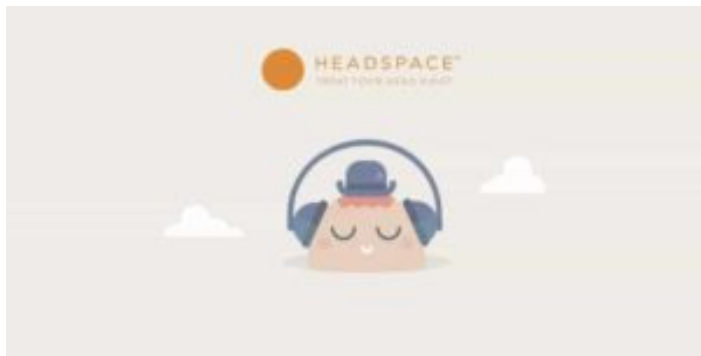
This loaf must cool completely to slice! I find it helpful to turn off the oven and let it cool inside by itself. It can store in the fridge for one week or be frozen into single slices. It is even more excellent when toasted.

Ah, and then we had that beautiful cold front blow in Saturday night which made a Sunday morning bike ride after some predawn writing sound like a perfect reward. While Austin has its bike enthusiasts, I am not one of them. It's not that I don't like biking, I just don't like to share the road with Texas drivers. So I was delighted to hear about the new stretch of Walnut Creek Trail opening and couldn't wait to give it a try. It was gorgeous! The 15 mile loop was just what my tired brain needed to recharge and certainly added great value to the next chapter I took on.



Check back next week when I may officially be celebrating the halfway point!

Making Headspace



Whether you are still trying to meet that 2017 intention to begin a committed meditation practice or are an on-and-off-again practitioner needing some support, you may find your answer with Headspace.

Claiming to make meditation simple, Headspace founder Andy Puddicombe has brought to life an amazing app that does exactly what he professes. Watch Andy in this 9 minute TED Talk as he discussed the need he intends to fill with Headspace.

I recently had the pleasure of hearing about my colleague Gail Hurt's experience with Headspace and thought you would enjoy what she had to say.

What is Headspace?

An application to teach/ support mindfulness through meditation.

What attracted you to Headspace in the first place?

The structure. The fact that I got it as a gift from my daughter as she had used it during the stressful time of studying for a certification exam. The fact that I know that meditation works for stress, chronic pain, etc. and I wanted to do a regular practice that wasn't too woo-woo. ? Also, it let me begin in 10 minute increments.

What meditation tools/ instruction have you tried previously?

I did Transcendental meditation during the 70's (still remember my mantra), have tried various times over the years and numerous techniques in an attempt to be consistent with a practice.

Why did Headspace work for you?

I made a commitment to do it for at least three months in preparation for a women's mindfulness retreat and I noticed the benefits.

Who would you recommend it for?

I would recommend it for someone who wants to develop a mindfulness meditation practice and who needs structure and information from a neutral (non religious) source. I like the structure, the sense of making progress, the brief "talks" that explain and help me to understand what's going on (or not). I like that after the first few weeks, you can choose the length of the meditation. (10 – 20 minutes).

What did it help you overcome?

The reluctance to "sit" daily. I decided to begin each day with the practice. Also, I now am OK with doing a weekly meditation group.

What have you noticed in yourself since using Headspace?

I'm noticing when I'm NOT present. The meditation time is going by quickly now (most days). I'm enjoying the increasing understanding of words like "acceptance." I'm less critical of my thoughts and I'm using the prompts as an opportunity to be more in the present moment.

So what do you think? Might Headspace be for you? Here's their free offer for ten, 10 minute sessions. Sounds like a deal with nothing to lose and a considerable potential of gain!