

Making Time for Illness

Dealing with my own personal version of an upper respiratory inflammation this weekend, I put myself to bed, which gave me plenty of time to reflect on a lot of random things. I'm sharing some for your amusement, but others are more significant, so I hope you will take them to heart.

My bed-ridden random thoughts/concerns...

1. You know you are really sick when shopping online totally loses its appeal.
2. When I get better I absolutely need to buy new bed pillows.
3. Can we possibly have enough fruit to see me through this?

I came to appreciate a few things such as...

1. That both the men I share the house with can cook...well, sort of.
2. My husband, who apparently felt I was missing a brilliant opportunity for spiritual growth, made available all of Deepak's latest talks (link?).
3. My three children who each shower me with love in three unique ways; one delivered a juice at arms distance while she backed out of the bedroom, one called from Malibu beach to share how wonderful I would feel if only I was at the sea, and, alas, one who was delighted by the fact he finally had me as a captive audience to all of his undeniably amazing ideas.

What I really thought about was how getting sick used to scare me and how grateful I am that is no longer true.

As a child and into adulthood the fear of the unknown as to what was happening in my body left me both frightened and vulnerable. Rather than understanding the natural rhythm of the healing process, I felt betrayed by a body that would not respond to my pushing it to perform. As it often is in life, some lessons are harder than others and I had to get really,

really sick enough times to learn about the body's natural process from the inside out.



I know many of you have experienced a time or two that your body has “betrayed” you—whether it’s struggling with an acute illness or long term chronic conditions. It is easy to begin to feel at the mercy of symptoms where you are forced to ride the waves of weakness, discomfort or severe pain without knowing the source or what (if anything) you might be able to do to help yourself feel better. This sense of helplessness only exacerbates that low-level fear we all have about being unwell.

In this state of fear we lose sight of our own vital force and what our body needs to do to heal itself. Better understanding these needs, providing support and watching the response to this care can be quite empowering. Here is the roadmap I use when I start to feel my body slowing down:

So when I could feel the exhaustion, sore throat and headache suddenly appear...

I stopped in my tracks and shifted gears—just like I would tell each and every one of you. And here is what I did next:

- Went straight to bed and stayed there for 24 hours (and a bit more, truth be told)
- Cancelled all appointments the next day

- Started an acute gemmo protocol for flu-like symptoms
- Began pushing fluids such as ginger tea, Texas Medicinals Tonika tea, coconut water, and fresh juices
- Stopped eating solid foods for 24 hours
- Used a hot water bottle as needed for aches and chills
- Slept when I needed to
- Read on and off
- Made the first appointment available with our family acupuncturist to help my body drain off what it was trying to rid in the first place.

This time, like I have for some years now, I watched with wonder as my amazing body did exactly what it needed to do to get well. It stopped me in my tracks physically, my cognitive skills slowed, focus diminished and my energies were turned inward. I knew this was all supposed to happen so that all my energy could be directed at the healing process. I ached from head to toe as the acids released and my body produced a fever. Because I stayed put, supported my elimination systems with gemmos, increased consumption of fluids, and did not divert energy needed from healing by digesting food I did not need, I got well quite quickly.

Forty-eight hours into my healing process I felt my brain fill with creative ideas and my sense of humor return—both being sure signs my physical energy would surely follow. When it does I will use it wisely, saving the lap swimming until I can make it through the essentials of each day with some energy in reserve.

When we come to a stop, and give in to the physical desire to take to your bed and rest you give that energy over for the more important tasks at hand. While it is tempting and endorsed across our culture to push through, the whole healing process is dramatically slowed and symptoms will carry on for weeks. While we all like to think that we can just “tough it out,” the best thing you can do to feel better faster is to stop and let your body rest. Listening to your body when it quietly asks for care is much quicker and healthier than putting it off until it demands attention.