

VOLUME SIX

Heal from Within ~ Mia Anderson

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READING SUGGESTION

Philip Simmons' *Learning to Fall: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life* is a truly lovely little book. He was just 35, a husband and father, a college English professor, when he was diagnosed (1995) with Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) and told he had, at most, five years to live. He set about a spiritual journey and produced these twelve beautifully written essays/chapters containing his reflections. Simmons passed over in July of 2002.

In each essay, Simmons writes using experiences or persons or places or animals as his starting point and then discovers meaning in them, so what he learns about life is grounded in the everyday, making his "lessons" for us very accessible. One chapter focuses on a trip with his young son to the town dump; another, on bugs and how irritating they can sometimes be; another, on how people's home are always in a state of unfinishedness; another, on the *wild* in nature and the wildness in *us*; another, about mud; another, about winter; and so on.

I love also that he draws on a multitude of traditions. He writes, "I'm grateful for insight wherever I find it, whether in modern poetry or physics or the Koran or the Old Testament or the sayings of the Christian Desert Fathers." His musings also contain a good deal of humor, which he writes that he learned from the Dalai Lama of Tibet, who, speaking at

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LIGHTENING OUR SPIRIT

In his March 2008 online newsletter (access his newsletters at www.alancohen.com), Alan Cohen, one of my favorite inspirational authors, encourages us to make inner peace our top priority *at all times*. He writes of seeing a t-shirt that announced, "Baseball is life. All else is details." If we use preserving inner peace as our criteria for choosing what we think, say, and do, *everything else will take care of itself*.

You have to make a commitment, but it *will* lighten your spirit! Cohen writes that author Hugh Prather "likens the process of maintaining inner peace to holding an infant throughout a day. If you had an infant or were entrusted with one, you would give that child your first priority as you moved through your day. If you went into the city and you heard a loud horn honk, you would not drop the child. If someone insulted you, you would not put the baby aside to punch that person. If you saw a fantastically attractive man or woman, you would not abandon the infant to pursue the hottie. The child would come first, and everything else second. When happiness is more important to you than all the other stuff that comes to you and at you, happiness is the prize you shall own."

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS CORNER

"You keep telling me that you're picking up on some *anger* in me. What if I don't think so?"

My first answer is this: if what I say doesn't resonate with you – there's no level on which your gut or heart or mind relates to it – well, then just dismiss it! If it *does* resonate, all I'm saying is that you are being presented with an opportunity. Here's a situation where your body is telling you something – even if it was I who first picked up on it – and if you can look at the anger and honor it by letting yourself feel it, you can be on your way to releasing it and its potentially harmful effects on your body.

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HELPING OURSELVES AND OTHERS WITH ACUPRESSURE

This issue: four things we can do for ourselves each and every day to improve our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

Isabell Gatto, master practitioner/teacher of IGM[®] (Isabell Gatto Method of) Therapeutic Acupressure, my modality, recommends that we "sweep" our fingers – just like I sweep your fingers during your session. The key elements are these: start with the pinkie finger and, using the opposite hand's thumb and index finger, sweep down the length of the finger from the very top to off the bottom. Do the sides of each finger first, followed by the tops and bottoms. When you finish with the first hand, pinkie finger through thumb, start with the pinkie finger on the other hand.

Isabell also recommends that we "give ourselves a hug" by crossing our arms over our chest and holding (using the pads of the three middle fingers of each hand) IGM[®] point #50 on each side for about two minutes while breathing slowly and deeply. The #50s are on the sides of the chest wall, somewhere between the armpit and the line even with the nipples. "Walk" your fingers up and down the area until you find the tender spots – those are the spots!

Now, one Chinese acupressure practitioner I read about said rather vehemently that if there's only one point that you work on each day, that point should be Spleen 6 (on the Chinese chart). On the inside of each leg, four fingers above the ankle bone and *just* to the calf-muscle side of the leg bone is Spleen 6, and you'll probably find that it's tender! Using the pads of the three middle fingers of your hand, massage each point in turn for about two minutes. *If you're pregnant, you must skip this acupressure point.*

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS CORNER

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To go further, women are socially conditioned *not* to express their anger, so mostly we learn to suppress it, sending it deep into our bodies. Especially if they grew up with particularly dominant fathers or mothers, many men also learn to suppress their anger because they are afraid of what they might do if they really let themselves feel their anger and of the punishment – verbal or physical – that they might then receive (if not from their actual parents, then from the “internalized parents” inside their head). So it should come as no surprise that many of us have anger in us that we haven’t yet dealt with.

Finally, the body doesn’t lie! If either of your middle-finger knuckles pops when swept, if your energy is “seething,” if there’s dark red in your energy, there’s anger there somewhere, and it’s not healthy on any level!

SYMPTOMS OF INNER PEACE, by Dr. Jeff Rockwell

1. Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experiences.
2. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
3. Loss of interest in judging self.
4. Loss of interest in judging other people.
5. Loss of interest in conflict.
6. Loss of interest in interpreting actions of others.
7. Loss of ability to worry (this is a very serious symptom).
8. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
9. Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
10. Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes of the heart.
11. Increasing susceptibility to love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.
12. Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than to make them happen.

MORE SPIRIT LIGHTENING

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, *Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?* Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

~ From Maryanne Williamson’s *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*, a book that I highly recommend (I found myself underlining virtually every sentence!)

HELPING OURSELVES WITH ACUPRESSURE

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Finally, Donna Eden, author of *Energy Medicine*, urges us to do her “Three Thumps” daily to “activate a sequence of responses that will restore you when you are tired, increase your vitality, and keep your immune system strong amid stress.” Using the knuckles of both hands, firmly thump the K-27s (Kidney 27 on the Chinese chart) for about 30 seconds. Find the v in the top of the sternum at the base of the throat. Trace up and out to the sides about an inch until you reach the “corners.” Then go diagonally down and out (about 1-2 inches) until you have *just* cleared the bony area.

Next, thump the thymus gland area in the middle of your chest about halfway between the v in the top of the sternum at the base of the throat and the line connecting the nipples.

Lastly, thump the spleen area directly under both breasts. Men, it’s approximately two inches below your nipples.

As always, the only difficult thing about getting these amazing benefits from acupressure is remembering to do them! (If you have questions about the locations, ask me!)

READING SUGGESTION – continued

Simmons’ college, “laughed often and easily, usually at himself. Despite all he had been through – the forced occupation of his country by the Chinese, his own life in exile – he was plainly in love with the world and at peace with himself.”

I’ve chosen this excerpt to give you the flavor of the book and to indicate its central theme:

“This book is for everyone who has lived long enough to discover that life is both more and less than we hoped for. We’ve known Earth’s pleasures: sunlight on a freshly mown lawn, leaves trembling with rain, a child’s laugh, the sight of a lover stepping from the bath. We’ve also seen marriages sour and careers crash, we’ve seen children lost to illness and accident. But beyond the dualities of feast and famine we’ve glimpsed something else: the blessings shaken out of an imperfect life like fruit from a blighted tree. We’ve known the dark woods, but also the moon. This book is for those ready to embrace this third way, the way through loss to a wholeness, richness, and depth we had never before envisioned.”

What Simmons comes to understand is that to be human is to suffer – losing a job, losing a loved one, and, ultimately, losing our good health and facing death. So our challenge as humans is to learn to fall gracefully and to remain open to accepting all of the blessings that result from releasing the *fear* of falling and from letting go of the *victim* mentality. Surrendering to Higher Power “moves us toward a wholeness and connectedness in which *all* things, good and evil, are divine, all part of the sacred dance of creation.”

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