

**Loss, Grief, and Grace
the Path to Healing**

*My mother's communication illuminated to me life's delicate balance
and the necessity to draw close to the "soil,"
to focus on what is vital and important.
That life is a successive pattern of seasons and changes
and in order to truly relish its magic
one must keep in mind that there is a time and a place for all things.
— Justin Matott*

Meredith L. Young-Sowers



When we become aware of a need for closure, healing, and reconnection — whether with a friend, our partner, our work, our body, or God — we enter a learning time. I like to think of this time, which can be a moment or years, as filled with teachable moments. A teachable moment is one in which we discover something we've not known before. A teachable moment comes when we become available to new influences, information, greater inspiration, or direct healing from Divine Love.

As we enter into a discussion on our reproductive system — the energetic flows and wisdom that support our ovaries, uterus, vagina, and breasts — we need to think in terms of subtle energy. Subtle energy refers to the energy movement within us that we cannot see with our physical eyes but that we appreciate because we experience the results. We see and sense health and the lack of health, for example. We know when our head or heart aches and when we feel clear and aligned with our true Self. Subtle energy is the essential architecture that supports our physical organs and systems.

In order to sense what is happening at a subtle energy level, we need to stop physical activity, get quiet emotionally and mentally, relax our need to find an immediate solution or outcome, and just sit with ourselves. In this way our intuition deepens to intuitive perception, or the ability to perceive what lives at the subtle energy level rather than only at the physically manifested level. For example, we might feel deeply tired, and after getting quiet for a little, we recognize our need for an hour without interruption. And so we clear our schedule for that hour.

When we sit quietly and without our normal agitation, even if we still have lots of disruptive thoughts going on, the immense power of our intuition and its next, more refined level — intuitive perception — can guide us toward the rebalancing agents we need. These are teachable moments, when we're open to a different way of approaching our illness or difficulties. This all happens at the subtle energy level.

Having plenty of physical energy is not to be confused with the movement of subtle energy. We can easily override our awareness of subtle energy imbalances with bursts of energy or adrenaline, which keep us moving in our single-minded focus on our

goals and the outcomes of our efforts. When we are physically busy, we have our eye on what we want to happen tomorrow and how we will get there, rather than on the process we're in right now and how we feel about what is going on in the moment.

The Three Levels of Healing

To understand the flows of energy that support our health, we need to be aware of the three levels of healing: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Physical healing comes from our lifelong commitment to well-being and our awareness of all the body's processes and our lifestyle and activities. We heal emotionally by changing the ways we react to others and our self: when we change our perspectives, we shift our attitudes and beliefs, which in turn affects our behaviors. In other words, our actions align with our refreshed way of perceiving the world around us. We heal spiritually by finding our place within the Great Mystery — or God — within us. This can be as simple as a prayer, a smile, or an alignment with what is good and lasting — that is, Love.

Every organ and system in our body interacts in a complex and mysterious way. True healing must take place on all levels — on the level of the physical function of the organs and on the levels of the energetic functions of mind and spirit. When we interrupt one natural flow of energy, another is often able to compensate, keeping us from realizing the degree of imbalance that may actually be present. Eventually, as we age, the natural flows have more to contend with, and so more care is required.

These three sets of subtle energies are distinct to the degree that we can sense them individually, but they are not separate when it comes to our health. Imagine walking into a grocery store and picking up a head of broccoli, a gallon of milk, a box of dried noodles, and a package of shrimp. These are separate items, but once we combine them to make a casserole, their energies merge into a single dish. You can still distinguish the broccoli from the shrimp, but they have come together. Further, the freshness and health of each item is essential to the quality of the casserole. When the individual energy flows of our body are likewise compromised, the total state of our health is jeopardized.

When we have a diagnosis of any of the reproductive cancers (breast, ovarian, uterine, or vaginal), or any other major imbalance, we benefit from taking a much closer look at the flows of energy that directly affect our reproductive system and what we can do to restore balance and health. Our entire reproductive system is most generally concerned with helping us build on our past. It holds the energy of the teacher, the builder, the creator, the pioneer, and the healer. In this chapter, we will look at the individual energy flows that are aligned with each organ in the reproductive system, but overall, issues with our reproductive system ask us to rethink and reframe our past in order to generate a powerful future and to be in touch with and live from that passion right now.

What Our Female Organs Do Physically and Energetically

Let's consider the energy flows that feed our female reproductive system in order to better care for ourselves. Realize that just because we've had a mastectomy or a hysterectomy, or for that matter any surgery, the body energetically still perceives all the

original organs in place in a healthy way. This means that our body holds a perfect representation of our most perfect and whole self. It is this most perfect representation that helps us return to health as we eliminate all the emotional confusion and negative thoughts that block this message of health from reaching our actual physical tissues.

We can better understand the needs of various organs if we reflect first on their physical function. What an organ does tells us energetically what its wisdom message is for us. For example, our ovaries hold and release ova, which when fertilized develop into the fetus held in our uterus. So, from an energetic point of view, our ovaries hold our dreams and the hopes and desires of what we can eventually give life to.

As we read the descriptions below, consider the emotional needs our body is expressing when it is in balance and out of balance.

A Woman's Cycle

The female reproductive organs lie protected within the pelvic cavity, which can expand to accommodate a growing fetus. At birth, the ovaries harbor their lifetime complement of some six hundred thousand immature eggs. By puberty, many of these have disappeared; before menopause, about four hundred will develop into mature ova. Typically, one or two mature during a menstrual cycle.

Each month during a woman's reproductive years, an ovary is stimulated to mature a follicle, which then discharges a mature egg. The egg enters the fallopian tube, where, if circumstances are right, fertilization takes place. Within twenty-four to thirty hours, the merged cell divides, and over the next four days, it continues to divide as it travels to the uterus. In six to seven days, the embryo implants itself in the uterus lining, the endometrium, and continues to divide and grow.

The Ovaries

Each ovary is one of a pair of female gonads found on each side of the lower abdomen, beside the uterus. At ovulation, an egg is extruded from a follicle on the surface of the ovary under the stimulation of certain hormones.

Subtle Energy Wisdom of the Ovaries

Ovaries act as the holder of our dreams, aspirations, and passions for our life and those we love.

The Uterus

The uterus, or womb, is a pear-size female reproductive organ that nourishes the fetus until birth. The uterus is a hollow, thick-walled organ about the size of a fist. It is composed of the uterine body and the cervix. The muscular wall of the uterus is called the myometrium, and the inner lining is the endometrium. The fallopian tubes serve to deliver the ova to the uterus.

Subtle Energy Wisdom of the Uterus

Just as the uterus holds a growing baby, it holds the space or helps hold us in an appropriately supportive environment so that our dreams can develop and our passion can be nourished.

The Vagina

The vagina is located directly below the urethral opening and is often referred to as the birth canal. It is an elastic muscular tube connecting the cervix of the uterus with the outside world. It serves as the receptacle for the penis during sexual intercourse.

Subtle Energy Wisdom of the Vagina

The vagina reflects our emotional stability and the self-belief in our dreams that allows us to successfully deliver them into the world.

The Breasts

A woman has two breasts that are configured to produce milk to feed a child. For the most part, a woman's breasts consist of fat and connective tissue. There are also other less conspicuous parts, such as lobes, bulbs, arteries, and lymph nodes.

Subtle Energy Wisdom of the Breasts

The breasts provide the continued feeding and support of our dreams and passions. They allow us to follow our dreams and our passion to find the ways to make our unique contributions count.

Our Subtle Energy Wisdom

These subtle energy wisdom statements help us understand how our body thinks, which in turn allows us to stay healthy and to better facilitate our healing. It is important to restate here that no one consciously tries to get sick. Yet things happen and we do get sick, as well as just sick and tired and in need of rejuvenating and rebalancing.

If we're healing from a disease, it isn't enough for us to stay current on the latest scientific information on medications. We have to pay equal attention to the significant but less obvious impact of our emotions and our spirit. Our subtle energy flows are altered over the course of everyday living. As we pay attention to our thoughts, beliefs, actions, and lifestyle, we gradually bring about different and more harmonious flows of energy in our body.

Body, mind, and spirit healing involves working with the body's natural wisdom to facilitate positive change. We need to support this natural wisdom rather than interfere with it or unknowingly block it. We are partners with our body. Our body brings its own predispositions for how well it functions, and we bring our mental and emotional abilities to positively support our body's efforts. Both sides need to be strong. And our lifestyle needs to support what our mind tells us is important for our health.

Let's explore how our physical system actually embodies these subtle energy wisdom statements, and let's begin by appreciating what our dreams and passions really are.

Our Passion and Our Dreams

Our destiny in some very real sense originates and is recognized through the energy flow that moves from ovary to uterus to vagina and then to and through our breasts. Our dreams are really our passion for doing what we love most. We often have an inner picture or sense of what we want to become when we grow up. This passion begins as a dream, not a business plan. A young girl, for example, may tell her mom that she wants to be a famous dancer and to dance all over the world to make people happy. She may not, in fact, decide to become a dancer as an adult, but the young girl describes her dream in the vocabulary and life experiences that she has available to her, and it holds the seeds of her real passion. As she grows, the shape and expression of her dreams may change, but they will continue to hold and grow the same abiding passion, which she and others need to take seriously.

Strangely enough, all of the various ways we express our passion turn out to be similar, to have something in common. We know what we love — we just get talked out of it or convinced that we are unable to bring it about. But we usually keep checking inside to see if “now” is the time we can do something with this great idea that keeps showing up.

Returning to an awareness of and belief in our passion is the most significant thing we can do to get our reproductive system on track. What this means will vary for each of us. We don't need to leave our family and go backpacking across the Andes, although that might be a goal for some of us. Small steps begin the process and produce success.

It is so interesting that we all want to know what our purpose is in life, but we get that confused with what job or career we want. We should really be asking ourselves, What is my passion, and how am I prepared to advance it? Our passion, then, is the essence of this new life energy that keeps popping up each month, just as an ovum keeps popping out each month. Our passion may well take shape as our career, or maybe not. Our passion is not about paying the bills but about helping us feel happy and fulfilled. Even if we begin small, we have begun living our passion. The power is in the beginning, and then keeping that energy alive and allowing it to grow.

Our passions aren't something we can replace or defer, like deciding to take a vacation next year instead of this year. Our passions lead us and inspire us to contribute to the quality of our life and our family's lives; they allow us to grow personally and to deepen spiritually. The question is whether our particular dreams, as an expression of our passion, are essential to our life — and no one else can tell us this. Only we can know from the feeling we have in our heart as we put our dreams off or have changing circumstances eliminate them as possibilities.

Our dream may be to teach physics or pottery, and the first step may be to enroll in college or graduate school to develop the right training. If this isn't possible, we can consult our passion for a new plan: Should we train as a teacher more slowly or in a

different field, or find another avenue into the field that excites us? Our dream may be to open a healing center to help men and women in their healing journeys; this may be beyond our current expertise or financial resources, but we can take small first steps by consulting with friends or volunteering at an existing center. Our dream may be to study ancient cultures; small steps of reading and learning can lead to taking a leave of absence from work to study in Greece.

Our dreams make us better, happier, and fill our life with greater meaning. Our dreams validate our reason for living. Only we know what dreams we need to pursue, no matter what, and which can be shifted to accommodate our circumstances. Whatever their final shape, our dreams are the outward manifestation of our need to express our passion for life, our spontaneity, and to build on what we've learned and believe in.

Because of a diagnosis, a disheartening experience, or just waking up to ourself in a new way, we can feel in our heart and our gut that the time has come to reconnect with our passion and resurrect our dreams — to see how they've changed and in what ways we can envision pursuing them in our life today.

Alissa, Subtle Energy, and Passion

To gain an understanding of how our passions and our subtle energies interact, particularly regarding our reproductive system, I'd like to tell the story of Alissa, who came to see me because of a cyst in her right breast. The cyst was benign, but Alissa wanted to understand why she had gotten it in the first place and what she could do to keep from getting others. A forty-three-year-old woman with two teenage children and a good partnership, Alissa worked at a well-paying job in real estate and was generally a positive and happy person. I did an energy evaluation on her, and here are the results that relate to her breast cyst.

Ovarian Energy

Alissa had already had one ovary removed because of a large cyst that had become painful and difficult. Energetically, there seemed to be some hesitation in the flow here, as if she was okay as long as she stayed within certain familiar parameters, but there was no permission to consider other possibilities.

Alissa confirmed that she was very tied to her family, but she had been thinking of pursuing something more interesting and exciting with her life than real estate, which she had worked in for ten years. The job provided security, but it wasn't nourishing her anymore. She felt that she would be rocking the boat, however, to suggest to her partner that she wanted to consider pursuing her true desire, music.

Uterine Energy

Alissa's uterus seemed stretched — not from having children, but emotionally, as if she felt stretched to accomplish more than she was interested in doing. Also, in this stretched environment, there was only conditional approval of her dreams. Her wishes had to conform to the needs of others in order to be supported. She wanted to pull back from her work and take some time to consider her music and what she might do with it,

but she confirmed that she felt guilty thinking about her own needs instead of what the family needed.

Vaginal Energy

Alissa's energy felt used up, as if the mucosal lining of the vagina was tired of producing positive outer feelings when inside she wanted more for herself. She mentioned that she had lost interest in sex with her partner and that life seemed pretty much the same, day in and day out.

Breast Energy

Alissa's breasts seemed dry and worn out. She was doing all the things that she thought were the right thing to do for others, but she was turning a deaf ear to the voice of her enthusiastic passion, which wanted to be nourished. The energetic flow that nourishes the breasts is actually at the end of the line, so to speak, in the sequence of energy that arises in the ovaries, moves through the uterus and vagina, and finally arrives as a flow in the breasts. Alissa also felt herself at the end of the line, needing to recognize her own passion and discover what might be waiting for her if she could nourish her own dreams.

The Solution for Alissa

The way to restore health to the flow of breast energy for Alissa was to allow her passion for her music to surface without feeling guilty about it. Growths and tumors, whether benign or cancerous, are the result of passions that are seeking a voice but instead are denied or sublimated. When what we need to explore emotionally in our life is closed down and pushed under, it ends up growing where we don't want it in our body.

I encouraged Alissa to talk about her music and to explore what small steps she might take to enjoy it while still managing her family. She didn't need to think in black-and-white terms: family versus music. She could work on both at the same time. Alissa was afraid her partner would be mad if she suggested a change, and I suggested that this was an important conversation to have because she needed to find the courage within herself to share what was truly important to her.

Breast health is based on long-term approval and nourishment of our passions and dreams, whether or not they conform to another's expectations or needs, and whether or not they seem logical, reasonable, or make money. We don't need to cut and run from our responsibilities, but neither should we cut and run from our passion. Our passion isn't showing up to make our life difficult. Rather, our passion seeks to bring us back to our inner knowing and the contributions we intended to make.

I was glad that Alissa had sought feedback about her breast cyst, especially since she had a history of an ovarian cyst. Repeated cysts tell us that we have an interruption of the flow among our organs of reproduction, and we need to do something to restore it. By taking positive action to try to prevent cysts, hopefully, one can avoid a malignant one. So it is important to take note of problems and realize we're being called to listen more attentively to our passions.

Activity

Follow the Bread Crumbs to Your Success

How do you take your passion and develop the small steps necessary for you to realize your dreams? You wonder, for example, where to get the money you need, how to create the opportunity or the time, or who will help you.

No matter what your question or dream is, you can realize it by taking one small step at a time. Listen to your inner knowing and write down your first step. This is bread crumb #1. Now assuming the success of this first step — in other words, you've accomplished it and don't need to repeat it — what is the next step for realizing your passion? Write this step down as bread crumb #2. And assuming the success of this step, write down your third action, and this becomes bread crumb #3.

Work in increments of three bread crumbs. Once these are finished, create the next logical question and do three more bread crumbs. This practice has amazing results, because as soon as you imagine yourself to be successful with the first bread crumb, you draw to yourself the next level of success that propels you toward your goal.

The key is to visualize success before writing the next bread crumb. By contrast, what we usually do when making a list of action steps is to make a circular movement around our goal. We never actually move forward. We move sideways or simply spin on the doorstep waiting for something to happen. Rather, if we allow the energy of our passion to generate success, even just in our mind, we create steps that build, improve, and progress on each other.

Here's an example from one of my students. She was a painter with a lot of older paintings she wanted to sell; she needed the money and wanted to clear the energy of the old work to make more room for her new pieces. She wrote: "How can I sell my old paintings?"

Here was her preliminary list of steps:

bread crumb #1: Create a flyer and post it in places where people might be interested.

bread crumb #2: Post the information on a friend's website.

bread crumb #3: Tell her friends and ask them to pass along the information.

All three bread crumbs dealt with various ways to approach the problem; each was a possible place to start. She was still walking around the question with nothing accomplished.

I asked her to build on the success of her first bread crumb and imagine how she would feel having accomplished the first task of creating the flyer. She thought a moment and said, "I've never thought about how I'd feel having actually done that successfully. I'd feel really good and know that I had alerted lots of people to my artwork." She continued, "I'd feel much more confident." I asked her to reframe the final two breadcrumbs, assuming success at each level.

bread crumb #2: Go back to those original locations and post a notice showing pictures of my work and mentioning those that had already been sold.

bread crumb #3: Hold an auction of my paintings, since I've sold some and people are now aware of my work and I'm getting mentioned in local newspapers and magazines.

She could feel the energy of her excitement and her delight in success and felt that already she was more positioned for success. By envisioning her success before it actually arrived, by feeling it and acknowledging it, she was ready to bring it to her.

Create Your Own Bread Crumbs

Begin by writing your most pressing question of how to grow your passion or present dream. Then write three bread crumbs, which represent the steps you're taking in pursuit of your dream.

bread crumb #1: Write your first small step to realizing your dream.

bread crumb #2: Assuming the success of this first step, experience how that feels and plan what you'll do next.

bread crumb #3: Assuming the success of this second step, experience how that feels and plan what you'll do next.

This simple but powerful practice will move you directly into your passion with joy and excitement.

Attitude Shifts

1. I have a subtle energy system that I can perceive by using my intuitive perception.
2. Teachable moments on my healing journey come when I am open to my intuitive perception to sense the learning from my subtle energy, which allows me to see a new and different way to proceed.
3. Each of my female organs interacts with the others in the subtle flow of energy, and understanding their energetic messages helps me make better life healing choices.
4. I need to support rather than interfere with my body's natural wisdom.
5. My destiny and my dreams originate in the energy flow of my female organs.
6. I can take small and important steps every day to keep my passion alive, and as long as I do that my dreams will live.
7. Anytime I don't live my dreams, I am creating a potential sense of loss, and that hinders my healing.

Love and the ability to feed and nourish what we love are the essential components for a healthy life. When loss, acute or chronic, curtails our ability to nourish what we love, we inadvertently erode our passion and the dreams they generate. Losing what we love can push us further and further out of balance, which leads eventually to

disruptions that can show up as various kinds of problems, most specifically women's reproductive issues.

Loss interrupts the essential energy of love that flows from our heart to our female organs that germinate the dreams that sustain us. Loss reverberates through our body's entire energy system, especially our circulatory and reproductive systems. In other words, our heart and our womanhood are especially hard hit with the loss of love. Statistically, heart disease is an even larger threat than breast cancer. Breast cancer takes approximately forty-three thousand women each year, while heart disease claims an estimated five hundred thousand and is on the rise. In fact, heart and female energy go hand-in-hand because our heart generates the love that feeds our passion, which in turn gives us the desire to nourish and cherish our truest yearnings.

The more chronic or acute the state of loss, the more we struggle to believe that we can still live as a complete woman, with something of our own design to feed, nourish, and cherish. No matter what our sense of loss, we benefit when we take a long hard look at what we want, who we are, and how we desire to spend our time, energy, and money.

Think of a flower bulb, which has such tremendous energy to open to spring, the new season of life. It can push through concrete, around boulders, and even break clay pots in its passion for opening to life. We can afford to be no less passionate about our own opening to new life. Aren't we ready to begin again with the renewed energy of spring — of spirit?

As we allow new dreams and new energy to nourish us, we move through loss and find ourselves in the grieving stage of our healing journey. Grieving is positive in this case because it allows us to use the energy of old losses to germinate new beginnings and new conversations with ourselves.

As we talk and write about our losses, we actually grieve them and heal them through our tender attention to what has hurt us. By listening to ourselves with greater self-honesty, we realize that while we have inner and outer work to do, so does every human being.

The challenge of imbalance isn't ours alone, it is humanity's struggle. Being out of balance is our perennial condition, and many today actively seek their return route to inner peace, spiritual knowing, and health. Certainly no one plans for an illness to be a vehicle of regaining a clearer perspective of life direction, yet it can serve us in this way, becoming our return route to a healthy and quality life.

The Old Nurtures the New Through Grace

The loss of cherished love and hope is similar to a giant redwood tree falling in the forest. The tree represents dreams that got away as well as love that we always wanted or once had and lost. But the fallen tree, once on the ground, nourishes new growth, which springs from under its bark. What has come before is meant to be fodder

for the new. There is no need to throw away our old experiences — good and bad — because they provide the nutrients for today's opportunities. The fallen tree, our old dreams, now nourish our new dreams, as we turn our attention to moving through the grieving stage. We can think of this grieving stage as the stage of germination of the new, as we use the nourishment from our fallen dreams to welcome Grace.

Grace is the experience of loving oneself no matter how love was shown to us, whether faulty, judgmental, and abusive or kind, forgiving, and supporting. Grace doesn't come to us in those moments of gentle awareness and comfort, as if we've done something to have God love us more than others. Grace comes to us when we open our heart and ask for it because we need it. God is forgiveness, creative support, and opening to love from within.

Grace is the energy of love that flows continually from God, Divine Intelligence, Spirit. Our willingness and ability to receive it is what makes the difference. As we sit with ourselves, whether in good times or bad, we can put our hands over our heart and feel a quiet, strong reassurance that no matter what comes to us in the future, in this moment we are loved. More than being loved just today, we are part of the Love that flows in and around the entire Universe — we were born from Love.

Grace is actually the healing energy of Spirit that helps our body listen to a steady, reassuring inner message, one that helps us settle our fears and struggles and turn them into food for our spiritual journey. When we put our hands over our heart center and realize that we are sending ourselves love and recognize the impact it has inside us — that's Grace. The healing response in our body is Grace in action, Divine Love in action, helping us on our journey of spiritual empowerment and healing.

Ask Yourself

What are my dreams, aspirations, and hopes for my life?

Do I give myself, or feel around me, a supportive environment in which to develop my dreams?

Am I confident that emotionally I'm prepared to birth my dreams into the world in a safe and appropriate way?

In what ways am I now feeding, nourishing, and cherishing the dreams I've given birth to?

Susan's Story

Here's an example of a woman who, although she didn't develop breast cancer, was headed down that path emotionally.

Susan was a middle-age woman who had taught primary school for ten years. She was divorced and lived across the street from her mother. Her mother had had a mastectomy for breast cancer when she was the age Susan was when she came to see me.

Susan had a difficult relationship with her mother. Her mother was extremely emotionally dependent on her, and yet this dependence translated itself into criticism of

Susan. It seemed that nothing Susan could do either proved her love to her mother's satisfaction or allowed her to break free and feel supported in developing her own interests and her own life.

In the energy evaluation that I did for Susan, I intuitively saw an important image that was clearly evident in her pelvic energy center — the second chakra, which deals with reproductive energy and holds our power as a woman. The breasts are also part of this reproductive energy.

In this image Susan was standing behind her mother, fearfully peeking out, unwilling to risk stepping out in front. Interestingly, at first, Susan proclaimed that she had a perfect relationship with her mother. But seeing the image helped me guide Susan to understand the full range of feelings she had about her relationship with her mother. As we continued to talk, she shared all the ways she felt her life and her dreams had been eclipsed and she hadn't been able to feed her dreams or sense of self-confidence.

In addition, Susan had become just as dependent on receiving her mother's criticism as her mother had become on giving it. Because of her mother's criticism, Susan could blame her mother for never having given her the chance to develop her own life and views, and she had a perfect reason not to risk trying anything new. It certainly wasn't healthy — but it surely was safe.

We may tell our self that we're nothing like our mother, and yet we may exhibit similar patterns in the ways we face problems, deal with people, and understand and nurture our self, which we picked up from her. Our parent may have been critical and unapproachable, and while we may be different on the outside, we may be the same way with our self on the inside. We may keep from giving to our self what we most yearn to experience: an intimate relationship with a partner, a successful career, permission to have our own life free of guilt or shame, and a deepening experience of our spirituality — the meaning of our life.

Neediness in our mother or father tends to show up as neediness in us — it just looks different. Initially, we may not recognize the similarity of our emotional reactions because they may occur in a different context. We may have an entirely different lifestyle from our parents, for example, yet unconsciously we carry the same emotional patterns we lived with growing up. In this light, our efforts to wake up are essential; otherwise we are driven by what is invalidating. We are framed by self-criticism, lack of trust in our vision, and fear of living out our passion.

If we worry that because of heredity we are headed for cancer, heart disease, or some other major imbalance, we are wise to pay attention to what we may, consciously and unconsciously, have carried over from our parents and accepted as our own. In Susan's case, she recognized that her fear of stepping out was how her mother had always reacted to life, and that Susan had bought the same picture for her own life.

Whether our relationships with our mother and father have been loving and positive or completely miserable, within them may be the keys for why we may struggle to believe in our self and from which we must set our self free.

Ask Yourself

Which of my parents has had the greatest impact on my life, either by being present or absent?

How am I obviously like that parent or subtly like that parent?

What reactions might I now pay greater attention to so I can change any underlying destructive emotional patterns?

Dorian's Story

Here is another story that makes the point of how important it is to listen to our inner knowing.

After I had given a talk at a major cancer facility, I received an email from a woman named Dorian who said she'd been part of the program at the facility. Dorian had stage IV ovarian cancer and was just completing her chemotherapy and radiation protocol. She wrote several pages of accusations that I was shocked and saddened to read.

Among other things, she was furious with me and anyone who dared to suggest that feelings and attitudes were in any way connected to her cancer. She thought this spirit stuff was all bunk. After sitting with her email, I decided to write back. I asked her why she was so furious, and I explained again what I had said in my talk. We went back and forth all afternoon in what became a strange dialogue that slowly moved to a place of healing and insight for both of us.

What she eventually explained was that she had first felt something was wrong several years before being diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The medical doctor she went to thought it was a digestive upset and did various tests. Nothing showed up. She felt something was wrong, but there seemed nothing to do — she didn't seek any other opinions.

Then Dorian read a women's healing book by a best-selling author. She decided to take it seriously and began in earnest to explore her emotions and her spirituality. She thought, Well, these symptoms must all be in my head, and so if I concentrate on being a better and more loving person, nothing bad will happen to me. Again she went to her doctor and had tests, and again nothing showed up.

Eventually, when doctors diagnosed her with stage IV cancer, she was furious. Hadn't she gotten checked out and done the right things — and most of all, how come this wonderful book on healing hadn't included the vague and mysterious symptoms that can be associated with ovarian cancer? She wrote to tell the author her story and ask that the early warning signals for ovarian cancer be included in the author's work. She received a form letter in return — which told her to refer to the original book. At this

point she lost it. She had looked to two different authorities and neither one had come through for her — and now she felt it was too late. No wonder she was devastated.

Dorian's story represents one of our worst nightmares — yet many women report similar stories of breast lumps that weren't detected in their early stages or other conditions that were diagnosed incorrectly. To honor Dorian, and to share her gift to other women — which is a clearer understanding of the symptoms of ovarian cancer — I will provide those symptoms here. By themselves, they do not necessarily indicate ovarian cancer, but they may; if they touch us with an inner knowing, we should check them out further until their true meaning is clear. The symptoms of ovarian cancer may include abdominal swelling or bloating; abdominal or pelvic pain or pressure, such as feeling full; gastrointestinal symptoms, such as gas, indigestion, nausea, or changes in bowel movements; vaginal bleeding or discharge; urinary problems; fatigue and/or fever; pain during intercourse; back pain; and difficulty breathing.

Sometimes we don't find out what is wrong with us until we have major healing to do. But it is never over until it's over. I've seen stage IV cancer healed; as long as we have life, there is always good healing that can happen. Dorian has not corresponded with me since that day, but I hope that she turned the corner in her healing. She and I had a most unlikely meeting of the mind and heart. It was a gift neither one of us will forget.

We Can Regain What Is Lost

We all have times when we feel out of control and despondent. Ultimately we can find opportunities to shift from loss and grief into opening to an even better and more confident life. When we're in balance, we feel self-assured and able to manage what comes to us. The way we regain what is lost is to return to our deep heart and its passion for living. When we dip back into the well of our greatest strength, we may find a readiness to once again write beautiful fresh lines on the page, creating a new chapter in our life journey.

We need to handle our feelings not by suppressing them but by directing them away from dire predictions and toward healing through Grace. What we grieve allows us to shed tears of worry, trouble, and struggle — and sometimes of emotions that may have built up over many years. Crying and laughing and the wild ride of emotions in between are good for our body and good for our soul. We are resilient in a way that is beyond normal logic. We must never forget all the love that we have going for us — and of course, it is most readily available to us through Spirit as Grace.

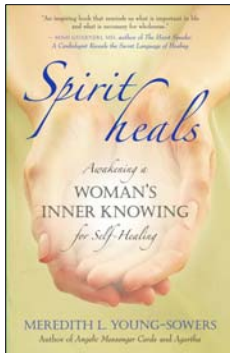
It is important to identify what is happening to us as an imbalance in our energy. Recognizing this fact lets us breathe a little easier no matter what has come down on us. We sense we can return to balance — that our energy can be shifted. Energy is enhanced by allowing ourselves to move through and past the losses that have hurt us.

So we dry our tears, straighten the vest of our business suit or our chic evening gown, and get on with living a good life.

Attitude Shifts

1. Loss creates imbalance in my energy flow, and imbalances can eventually show up as disease. Identifying my losses is the first step on my healing journey.
2. The second step on my healing journey is to fully grieve my losses. Visualizing this process allows me to go forward and build new dreams.
3. The third step is Grace. Grace comes when I allow the new to grow from the experiences of my past with an open heart. Grace is the direct healing energy of love.
4. The healing response of my body is actually Grace in action.

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Meredith L. Young-Sowers is an expert in the field of integrative— or holistic healing. Her specialty is the role that our emotions and spiritual energy play in the healing process. Her focus on the body demonstrates how the disturbances in our physical health shed light on the same disturbances in our relationships. She helps people use the power of spiritual energy to refocus their healing around their own inner vitality and passion.

Meredith has spent her life developing an understanding of the movement of emotional and spiritual energy in the mind and the body. She has developed The Stillpoint Model of Life Healing that teaches people how healing happens through assisting the body by aligning thoughts, feelings and ways of living with their genuine nature and true inner goodness.

*A well-respected and loved spiritual healer and teacher, Meredith creates amazing openings for healing in those with whom she works. She is the co-founder, along with her husband Errol, of the **Stillpoint Foundation**. She founded the Stillpoint School of Integrative Life Healing as a way to share her in-depth understanding of healing with students from around the world who want to heal their own lives and discover more about ways to use their gifts and talents to assist others in their own healing and awakening.*

The Stillpoint Foundation's focus as a 501C3 public charity is to offer the ways and means for people to open to their own direct connection with Spirit in order to find the confidence and compassion for themselves and others to facilitate nothing less than a genuine and lasting global consciousness shift.

Meredith is a Doctor of Divinity who has used her own spiritual awakening as the basis to learn how healing can best be approached and accomplished in today's world. People from all walks of life are helped in lasting ways and opened to their own bright inner light of inner knowing. The experiential practices that she takes participants through are both creative and truly transformative. You may reach her through her website at www.stillpoint.org