

Healing Times Past, By Kathleen Hendrickson

There is this deeply held longing to feel loved in a way that neither my parents when they were alive, nor anyone since, can satisfy. This desire flows like an underground current, driving my journey through life; remaining out of my awareness most times. From time to time, it seems to wake me up, testing me to see if I am ready to address it.

I am fascinated with the wisdom of our body and the body's ability to make our needs known via pain, illness or the sudden expression of hidden emotions. Three years ago, intense and frequent migraines stopped me in my tracks for four out of seven days a week. I have had them for more than half my life, but never at this frequency and intensity. Called into action, I began a committed and intense healing journey with the hope of alleviating them. My body was screaming for attention!

What was this deep dis-ease trying to tell me? Meditation became a daily way of life. Network chiropractic, color therapies, emotional freedom technique, thought field therapy, the practice of yoga, long walks, and psychotherapy began to open my awareness to new insight. Openness to the metaphysical, including guides and angels, are important in this healing process.

Well into the multiple treatments and increasing success with the migraines, it was winter and a second year with lengthy infected sinuses. I asked, as a prayer, "Why now, in the winter? Why infected sinuses that cause coughing spasms and a resulting sore throat making it difficult to speak." Looking under the rock, so to speak, I found myself exploring the events around my conception and birth.

"Under the rock" is an important metaphor for my character that warrants an aside in this story. I have the tendency to believe no one, to listen to no one, before I think about and sense what I am hearing. I am not easily convinced – until I have an inner sense, a whole body feeling that allows action on my part.

My request to understand the sinus flair up carried me back in time to what would be an infancy-held cellular memory. In the cold of winter I was quickly born and then abruptly separated from my mother's touch. My mother, whom I was experiencing in utero for 9 months, was missing. Placed in an isolette, I am screaming on a cellular level for the comfort of those nine months.

My mother was quite ill in the four weeks prior to my birth. After three weeks, she was placed in isolation out of concern that she might have typhus. When I arrived, I too was isolated. Missing were the sensory feel of warmth, the rhythm of my mother's breath, the sway of her movement, the muffled vibration of her vocal chords.

In the stillness of my meditation, I sensed that this missed bond created a nearly silent and deep sense of turmoil carried into my adult life. I am reminded of a paper I recently read about the scream of an infant who was not cared for when in distress. This scream can cause a

loss of breath – a fearful and physical death-like experience becomes encoded on a cellular and psychic level.

As I fast-forward 70 years, I open my heart to experience and integrate the sense, the cellular/neuronal communicated feeling of my failure to bond with my mother following my birth. I bring awareness to a deep tension that always seems to be within me. I reflect on the blessing to have been united with my mother after two weeks, even though there was always a felt sense of isolation, of non-attachment.

Going deeper into meditation, I suddenly move beyond my narcissistic thinking about my loss. I chuckle at myself. I laugh a hardy laugh. This was not a solo experience. *It is not just about me!*

The time is winter, 1945. There is hope of World War II ending, but the assaults continue. My parents were making wedding preparations in 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed. They would have lived with tension and stress for their entire marriage by the time I arrived. Perhaps my scream at separation from in-utero peace was also a scream for the suffering and loss of the era. My father was about to enter the front lines at Luzon, being wounded one week after my birth.

I relate to the fear of my father and mother. It was likely that this fear had caused the physical symptoms in my mother that presented as typhus. It was not typhus in the end, but a massive sinus infection. “Hmmm, aaah-so.” I see and I feel the sinus connection to my mom, and then to my dad, to my toddler brother and later, my baby boomer brother. I reflect on the sense of fear and dis-ease for the many fighting in the war, on both sides, and those affected by the war, their families, and their victims.

Continuing, I visualize myself being born with a new sensory experience. Knowing that our most basic human need is trust, I envision both my parents together as I am placed at my mother’s breast in the minutes after I emerge. I feel the warmth of her body cradling me. My father places his arms around my mother. My heart opens more fully as I allow my body to hold these amended feelings, creating a new path of memory, or perhaps retrieving a memory encoded in my DNA and ancestral history.

My guidance brings me to understand that as I find compassion for myself, for my family, and for all the peoples of countries involved in war, I live with deeper compassion for all human plights – for our humanity and inhumanity. We are never moving, thinking, acting alone.

My voice gains clarity, my clogged sinuses washed in the newly shed tears of understanding and gratitude. I become aware that the attachment and belonging I longed for all these years is within my trusting heart. Regardless of what may come, I have chosen to trust with compassion and an open heart.

Recipient of Honorable Mention in Inspirational Writing (Spiritual/Religious) category 85 Annual Writer’s Digest Writing Competition, 2016.