A Woman Named Heal

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About five years ago I had a dream. It was a simple one but one I’ve never forgotten. In the dream, a woman had come into my home, unasked, to help organize my things. She had built floor-to-ceiling shelves and was, at that point, folding sheets and towels. The woman was tall and black and young. I asked her name and she replied, “My name is Heal.” My immediate thought was “what a beautiful name.”

In trying to understand the dream, I asked Micki Esselstein what the Gestalt explanation would be. She said since the dream originated in my head, to put myself in the place of each character. That made sense to me. *I* really needed my house organized. And *I* am also a healer. This does not mean I have special powers or I’m going into the business. It’s simply a springboard to launch into a subject I’ve been fascinated by for years.

To me, health is wealth. My study has included many sources: nutrition; transcendental meditation; anthroposophy (which comes from the writings of the European genius, Rudolph Steiner, from whom comes Waldorf education and Biodynamic Farming); Christian Science; listening to holistic healing cassettes by people in the business—the surgeon, Dr. Bernie Seigel, and the writer and lecturer, Norman Cousins, among others; *Emmanuel’s Book*, by Pat Rodegast and Judith Stanton, which is wisdom, if you will, from beyond our physical world; research which Professor Markides of the University of Maine at Orono did on a healer in Greece, and the Bible. It may sound like many divergent paths I’ve been taking over the past twenty years. Not so. There is a consistent theme and conclusion I draw from each of the sources of my study. *It is* that healing comes from God.

Each time I’ve embarked on the topic of healing—a new book, another path —it’s not long before I smile knowingly, nod my head and see the universal connection, the completion of the circle, the same message—God, the Light, the Source, the Power, whatever word and image you prefer to use—is the Goodness and Love that heals. And we can receive this love directly. We can channel this love to someone else.

But what happens when someone is suffering or dies? We don’t, in our culture, deal very well with death, I feel. When I was in my twenties, married with two young children, the mere mention of life insurance sent me flying from the room in tears! I couldn’t bear the thought of *anyone* dying. Now, in the ‘80s, I’ve experienced the death of two dear friends, one in her thirties and one in her nineties. And, as a friend suggested to me, “sometimes the healing in in the death.” I realize this to be true. In the case of my 96-year-old grandmother, one would think I would have accepted her death. But she was the person in this world that I felt I was the most like, my closest relative, other than my children. As I made my plane reservations and all the elements seemed to be in my favor, so that I knew I’d made the right decision to be with Grandma before she died, I had a sudden rush of fear and sadness. My mother had said on the phone from New Mexico that my grandmother should have been dead by now, was in a coma but was fighting letting go. Grandma had been raised a Catholic, but believed she committed a sin by marrying a Protestant! I said, “Tell Grandma I’m coming.” When I arrived, she was in a deep sleep, from which she awoke from time to time during my four-day visit. And although she never focused her eyes or spoke a word, Grandma listened to everything I said, and held my hand.

To my surprise, I realized when I arrived that I wanted my grandmother to die while I was there, and I wanted to help her. I was so centered with this thought that the sadness was gone and I was so grateful for the opportunity to be with her. I thanked Grandma for waiting for me; I told her what a good person she was; I arranged a healing Episcopal service with a young (my age!) minister (she *was* forgiven of her sins and she listened intently); I sat by her side, knitting while she slept; I sang a love chant I’d learned at a birthing circle ceremony; and then I said at the end of three days, “I have to go back to my home now.” Grandma died about five minutes before I checked in on her the following morning. She was healed of her feeling of sinfulness and her struggle to stay alive, and I was healed of my sadness over her death. She will always be very much a part of my life.

We have in our bodies the most wonderful and complex systems—many parts and organs working together like an amazing machine. Scientists have discovered we can, simply by our thought process, produce more than a hundred chemicals to raise or lower our body temperature, to be harmful or helpful to our wellbeing. We’re all pretty familiar with the ads that show the effect of stress on our heads or stomachs or backs. And we continually make decisions which increase the level of stress, which in turn may cause illness or accident. There’s a recent popular reggae song with the words in the chorus, “Don’t worry . . . be happy!” It’s symbolic of our times. We need our sanctuaries of God, our meditation centers, our movements toward a closeness with nature, growing healthy food, soaking in the beauty around us and giving love to ourselves and others. We also need to know that, *within ourselves*, is the capacity to “tune in” to find our center, to know the needs of our heads and our hearts. This is inherent in the natural creation of our bodies. This is our endowment.

On the radio the other day, I heard a fourteen-year-old say, “ . . . through the mind of a child, world peace can be achieved.” I work a lot with children. Children are free spirits and full of faith. Yes, they have basic needs to be fed and changed and disciplined and guided and loved. But they are very “tuned in” to themselves, to others, and when they’re old enough to talk, they say some wonderful and amazing things. And when it’s their time to die, they have been known to communicate that to an adult. I have, on several occasions, watched a young child who was injured and fearful and in pain be told they are loved by God and would heal. They immediately relaxed, fell into a sound sleep and awoke free of fear and pain and on the men d. I used to think I was too busy to take whatever time it took to *work* on my own at healing. But on several occasions, I have stopped all my activity, sat down, and concentrated on the goodness and beauty all around me, on the warmth of God’s love *in me*, and I have been healed of the pain and swelling of an infected finger, a cut from a pulp hook in my forehead, a deep cut in the palm of my hand. In the case of the hand injury, I was preparing my daughter’s graduation dinner party. About twenty-five guests were expected. The house was clean. But the elaborate Chinese dinner still required preparation. As I sat alone in the house, holding my hand to stop the bleeding, I began to reschedule the carefully made plans and just take care of myself. From that point on and for the rest of the day, I literally didn’t lift a hand to prepare food. I directed my guests to do all the work while I calmly walked around. Several people commented on what a different person I was, as they pitched in and prepared a fine meal. And there was a real feeling of unity in the gathering that day.

*There is an attitude* that I connect with a spiritually centered and healthy person. The attitude is one of surrender. I’ve seen this demonstrated in two people; both had cancer and put themselves in God’s hands and then proceed with their lives, making some necessary changes in life style, stress level and diet. The person, a man named Wingate, for whose uncle and Wingate Hall at the University of Maine at Orono was named, extended his life about two years in considerable comfort and mobility. I met Wingate, interestingly enough, when I was in New Mexico with my grandmother. It was a retirement villa. Wingate’s apartment was equipped with a meditation/prayer corner where a candle always burned. I had two meetings with this man I’d never met before. Both meetings lasted an exact length of time: one hour. The conversation between us was so deep, elevated and intense; all formality and incidental stuff was discarded immediately. My daughter, Kathryn, who was a first-year college student, came with me on the second visit and came away saying, “I haven’t had such a meaningful encounter ever!” The second person, a lady named Cisela, lives today in Sweden. Her cancer is in remission. She is a glowing light from inside! She goes wherever her life takes her. She does whatever God has in store for her. Is this childlike? Each day is a gift to this lady. She is free of material attachments. She’s an inspiration to me as Wingate was also. I spent only *hours* with these two people.

I’d like to conclude with a thought I once was inspired to write and read at one of our Wednesday evening services: There is *an order to life* of such power and magnitude that, if we quiet ourselves and open ourselves to receiving, we will know the right direction in which to go; we will have the answers. This quiet and opening can be achieved by meditation, prayer, visualization, communing with nature—a walk on the shore, marveling at the moon and stars and clouds and sun, climbing a mountain, working with the soil, milking a goat or cow at sunrise, sitting in the woods, leaning against a tree, holding a sleeping child. This order to life was created by God. His Spirit and Love for every living thing sustains, supports, and guides us. Amen.