



The Healing Nest

The Official Newsletter of Rising Bird Healing Arts
A healing space for the mind, body, and soul.

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The Healing Nest is the official newsletter of Rising Bird Healing Arts.

This newsletter is for clients and friends of Rising Bird Healing Arts. You may send all correspondence and newsletter contributions to Courtney Putnam at cputnam@rising-bird.com.

Rising Bird Healing Arts

Massage • Reiki • Holistic Healing

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Courtney E. Putnam.

The Emotional Body



"Making Roots," mixed media collage by
Courtney E. Putnam

When I was a student at the Brenneke School of Massage, I had the opportunity to work with Heida Brenneke, the founder and then-president of the school. I took a class from her in Autogenics, which is a relaxation technique using visualizations. Not only was the experience of Autogenics powerful for me personally, but so were Heida's words.

I remember a particular moment in the class when a student was describing neck pain and Heida guided him through some Autogenics techniques. She asked the student to make the pain bigger so that it was as large as it could possibly be. The student breathed and imagined his discomfort as a balloon getting bigger and bigger. As balloons are apt to do, it burst when it hit its limit in size. And so did the student's pain: it burst and the pain lessened.

Then she asked the student to notice any emotion residing in his neck. The student described a feeling of anger lingering in his neck and some frustration, too. As before, Heida then asked the student to imagine this anger and frustration getting bigger and bigger like a balloon. The anger was like a big red balloon, and like the pain, when it expanded to its limit it burst in a therapeutic release.

When Heida asked the student how he felt after these two exercises, he noted feeling lighter and centered. His neck pain had reduced so much it was only a tiny sensation of tension, no where near the discomfort it had been before. Heida then said (and I remember these words so clearly):

"I believe there is always an emotional component to physical pain, even if there is just a little bit, only a tiny emotion there. But there is something."

As I move forward in my practice, I am finding myself increasingly drawn to the psychological and emotional influences at work in physical pain or tension—and Heida's words have become even more powerful for me. I have experienced firsthand how an emotional release or even a subtle acknowledgement of emotional influences can allow muscles to loosen their grip.

Next time you are experiencing some physical discomfort, try tapping into what emotions might be stuck in an area of your body. Does your ankle hold inflammation and also sadness? Do your shoulders hold tightness and also worry? See if you can identify a bit of emotion hiding inside your body and attend to those emotions. See what they have to tell you, and care for them just as you would your sore muscles or achy joints.

Music and Film for the Soul

Mike Wall's *Passage* brings inner calm.

I have introduced Mike Wall's CD *Passage* to many of you already, but I cannot praise Mike's work enough.

Last year I had the pleasure of meeting this talented composer, who had just released his first CD called *Passage*. In the most recent issue of the *Massage Therapy Journal*, music reviewer Clare Laplante described Wall's CD as "a skillful mix of acoustic and electronic instruments" combined with "ocean, wind, and bird songs recorded in a state park near Monterey, California." The seamless combination of human-made and nature-made sounds lulls my clients to a deeply relaxed state and allows me to be slow, methodical, and intuitive in my work.

This one-hour musical experience is included in the standard CD rotation of my business. I also listen to this CD on my own when I want to drop to a deep state of calm in my body while at the same time rise to a more mindful, self-aware place in my mind and heart.

To learn more about *Passage* and to listen to samples of the CD, visit <http://cdbaby.com/cd/mikewall>



Crazy Sexy Cancer inspires and empowers.

Crazy Sexy Cancer is Kris Carr's powerful (and life-affirming) documentary about her journey with what she affectionately calls "the little c." A woman just in her twenties, Kris discovers that she has a rare and "incurable" cancer. The documentary takes her viewers with her as she learns more about her type of cancer and cancer in general -- and as she makes the conscious decision to live a full, healthy, juicy life and not allow this "little c" diagnosis to stop her from living.

Kris now has quite a following of Crazy Sexy people who read her blog (www.crazysexycancer.blogspot.com) and her new Crazy Sexy Life online community for cancer support and healthy living (www.crazysexlifeline.com).

For more information about Kris and her documentary, visit www.crazysexycancer.com.

Healthy Spring Eating

Asparagus Soup with Lemon Crème Fraîche

Recipe from the culinarily talented **Olaiya Land**



Here is a delicious, healthy asparagus soup recipe that's perfect for all the beautiful local asparagus coming to market right now. It's super simple and has a wonderful, green, earthy flavor.

1 cup sliced shallots (about 6 large)
2 pounds asparagus, trimmed, cut into 2-inch lengths
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
2 teaspoons ground coriander
4 cups vegetable broth

1/4 cup crème fraîche or sour cream
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

Melt butter in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots; sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add asparagus and coriander; stir 1 minute. Add vegetable broth and simmer until asparagus is tender, about 5 minutes. Cool slightly. Working in batches, puree soup in blender until very smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Keep warm.

Stir crème fraîche, lemon juice, and lemon peel in small bowl. Divide soup among bowls. Top with dollop of lemon crème fraîche and serve. Makes 6 servings.



Olaiya is the owner of **Olaiya Land Catering** here in Seattle. She offers local and organic meals that enliven your taste buds while contributing to your good health. Olaiya Land Catering provides custom catering for

events large and small. She creates fresh, seasonal menus for corporate meetings, dinner parties, birthday parties, bridal and baby showers, anniversary celebrations, cocktail parties, weddings and other special events.

For more information about Olaiya and **Olaiya Land Catering**, visit www.olaiyalandcatering.com



Spring Special: Renewal

The two-hour session begins with an **herbal foot spa** in my jet-powered, temperature controlled foot bath. A mixture of herbal essential oils of your choice may be added to the water. While you pamper your feet, you may relax, sip some **purifying lemon-water**, and nibble on a **healthy snack**.

After this quiet time, you will receive an **herbal body scrub** with the use of **Israeli Dead Sea salt** and a combination of dried herbs (you have your choice of dried **rosemary**, **lavender**, **spearmint**, or **rose petals**). These dry elements mixed with oil create a most lovely scrub for your tired winter skin. The scrub is both invigorating and relaxing, and gives your skin a soft, healthy-looking glow.

Following the scrub, you will receive an **integrative massage** (with the use of herbal essential oils of your choice, of course) to fit your needs.

Cost: \$110. Gift certificates available.

*Above art piece by Courtney E. Putnam
Mixed media collage: "Spring Feeling"*

The Link Between Stress and Health



Many of us already see the connection: the stress in our lives may in fact be affecting our health. But did you know that the majority of doctor's visits in our country are in some way related to stress?

According to the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine, approximately 60 to 90 percent of doctor visits are for conditions related to stress.* With those astounding numbers, it's clear that our physical health is inextricably linked to our mental, emotional, and psychological well being. With more and more doctors realizing this connection between body and mind—and prescribing massage, acupuncture, talk therapy, and other stress-reducing activities—it's no wonder that so many of us are looking for ways to understand our bodies in a more holistic way.

According to the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), "a nationwide government survey released in May 2004 [indicated that] 36 percent of U.S. adults aged 18 years and over use some form of CAM." ** And not only are many of us seeking out complementary care for our physical health, but many of us see the benefit of reducing stress and enriching our lives through engaging in meditation, yoga, art therapy, journaling, and divination decks. No longer is "personal growth" something seen as simply "extra," but has become integral to our overall health and well being.

If you ever find yourself in a mind-funk about your personal growth and wellness activities, perhaps even relegating them to the "extra" category, you may wish to slip on a new paradigm. Those yoga classes, meditation classes, or massages may be sustaining your health in ways you cannot even fathom. Who knows how your heart, lungs, and other vital organs are benefiting from your calm, balanced state. When our hormones don't need to secrete in overdrive in order to help reduce our stress, we're giving an invaluable gift to our organs and glands. And over a period of time, perhaps you'll notice how infrequently you get colds or chronic muscle tension. Maybe you'll even discover that you are happier and feel a greater sense of clarity in your life.

* <http://www.mbmi.org/about/history.asp>

** <http://nccam.nih.gov/news/camstats.htm>

Newsletter Contributions

In my Winter 2008 issue of The Healing Nest Newsletter, I offered some creative exercises aimed at exploring the body and mind. Here are the lovely contributions to the “Inner Critic” art prompt and the “History of a Scar” writing prompt. Thank you, Jenna and Nedra, for your powerful creations!

Writing Prompt: The History of a Scar

Choose one of the scars on your body, whether this mark on your skin is wide and deep or microscopic in size, and write its history. Start with how the scar came to be. Recall the moment when you received this mark on your body. Record not only how you physically felt, but also what emotions or thoughts came with the experience. Remember to write down your sensory experience, too -- sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. Now, document the life of this scar. How has it changed over time? Has it faded? Stayed the same? Are there emotions still hiding in the creases of your skin or in the depths of your heart?

Scar

by Nedra Rivera Huntington

A one-inch worm sits on my upper calf. It is there because my stepmother did not believe in bandages, butterfly or otherwise, only gauze and tape.

The chain link fence did it. And I in my haste, who did not go around it, but up and over.

As a child, an adolescent, you have the ability to get yourself into trouble, but very rarely the power to get yourself out of it. Yet having power does not necessarily mean you exercise it. Or well. The nurse told her it would scar if not bandaged properly, but she paid no heed; my requests were ignored. Of course, as childhood scars go, it's nothing, comparatively speaking. All of mine are. I should be happy for that, but somehow it makes me feel as superficial as the evidence.

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Visit Nedra's **Tidbits and Other Words** blog at <http://tidbitsandotherpoetry.blogspot.com>



“Inner Critic” by Jenna Powers. Visit Jenna's thoughtful blog at <http://ohanapecoshriver.blogspot.com/>

Art Prompt: “Inner Critic”

Create a visual depiction of your inner critic. Using the art method of your choice (painting, collaging, drawing, sculpting, etc.), give your inner critic a form. Does your critic look like a human being? An animal? A pattern of some kind? When I did this exercise in my college days, my inner critic looked like a stern baseball coach. In my crayon drawing, he was blowing a whistle and pointing at me. It was freeing to see this voice of criticism in visual form; in many ways my critic lost much of its power because I “unveiled” him. I wonder what form my critic takes today. What about you?

Submit Your Creations!

Please submit your creations to me! I would love to receive digital copies of any of your creations—writing and/or art—for the next newsletter issue. If you'd like to share your responses to my writing and art prompts, feel free to email me at cputnam@rising-bird.com. I'd be delighted to hear from you!

Check out new prompts on the last page of this newsletter in the **Creativity Corner** section.
The next newsletter is scheduled for **August 2008!**

Upcoming Workshops and Offerings

The Artist Within

An Integrative Art Workshop and Bodywork Series



For **three months** (August 3 – November 2, 2008), immerse yourself in your creative life by exploring your artist within. This hands-on holistic healing package includes a dynamic combination of **group art workshops** and **individual holistic bodywork sessions**.

This package includes...

- ★ Four “Artist Within” group art workshops - all art supplies provided!
- ★ Light snacks and tea provided at each workshop.
- ★ Three 90-minute individual bodywork sessions (one session per month).
- ★ A community creativity blog for between-workshop sharing, support, and inspiration.
- ★ Weekly art exercises I will post to the blog to foster creative momentum.
- ★ A “Creativity Pack” of goodies, including an artist journal and a “Second Chakra Kit” for creativity.

To reserve your spot in *The Artist Within*, please contact

Courtney at cputnam@rising-bird.com or
(206) 228-9124 **by July 1, 2008.**

Space is limited to 8 participants. **Cost: \$495.**

To view the complete flyer, including the complete schedule and workshop descriptions, click [here](#).

A Year of Living in Your Body:

An Experiential Workshop Series



Sunday, July 27, 2008; 1-5pm

Writing from Your Body

Do you feel and hear all that your body has to tell you? In this workshop, we will explore the ways in which paying attention to our bodies can enhance our writing and our writing process. We will write from our guts, our hands, our spleens, and our blood vessels. We will explore how telling the story of our bodies can help us to reclaim our creative, knowledgeable, and truth-telling physical selves.

Sunday, October 19, 2008; 1-5pm

Six Senses Workshop

When we smell, hear, taste, touch, see, and intuit, we take in the world around us. We process information, feel deeply, make decisions, and experience pleasure. We also can feel overwhelmed by sensory stimulation and in turn shut off our sensors. In this workshop, we will engage in all six of our senses and learn how to become “awake” in our bodies and to interpret the wisdom of our sensory experiences.

Sunday, January 11, 2009; 1-5pm

Your Body Speaks: Inner Wisdom

What does it feel like in your body when you resonate with an idea, thought, or feeling? How do you know when your body is giving you important information? In this inner wisdom workshop, we will explore the power of our six chakra, the chakra of intuition and inner knowing. Using writing, guided visualizations, muscle testing, and pendulum work, we will tap into the body's hidden wisdom.

Sunday, April 12, 2008; 1-5pm

You, Yourself, & You: The Self-Portrait

In this hands-on art workshop, we will explore the self in three parts: past self, present self, and future self. Using collage as our medium, we will cut and paste together meaningful images of who we once were, who we are now, and who we wish to be.

\$100 per workshop or \$320 if you sign up for all four.
Space is limited to 8 participants.

For more details about each workshop, click [here](#) to download the flyer.

From the Garden to Your Body:

Herbal Aromatherapy

Since it's springtime, I thought I'd introduce a few herbs that may be helpful in their essential oil form during a massage. I've compiled a list of some of the physical and emotional healing properties of both marjoram and scented geranium.



Marjoram: A bushy herb that produces pink or white flowers. Its smell is sweet and a little woody or peppery.

Physical healing:

- * Soothes arthritis, muscular aches and spasms
- * increases circulation and dilates blood vessels
- * stimulates appetite
- * soothes upset stomach, relieves gas and constipation
- * helps with insomnia and headaches

Emotional Healing:

- * relaxes body and mind and relieves anxiety
- * eases obsessive behavior and negative thoughts
- * supports during times of loneliness, sadness, or grief
- * strengthens confidence



Scented Geranium: The whole plant (leaves, stem, & flowers) is steam-distilled to produce the essential oil.

Physical healing:

- * balances hormones by stimulating the adrenal cortex
- * improves immune system function
- * helps treat gallstones and kidney stones, diarrhea, and UTI's
- * eases sore throats and tonsillitis
- * helps with PMS symptoms
- * decreases fluid retention and edema

Emotional healing:

- * antidepressant effects
- * decreases anxiety and stress
- * increases sensitivity to pleasure and sensuality
- * simultaneously calms and invigorates

Consider asking for one of these essential oils during your next massage!

Take the Body Quiz!

(or "Ten Really Amazing Things about the Human Body")

- 1. What is the strongest skeletal muscle in the body for its size?** a) biceps b) masseter c) hamstrings
- 2. What is the smallest bone in the human body?** a) stirrup bone b) metatarsal bone c) sternum
- 3. Even with 75% tissue loss, what organ can regenerate into a whole organ again?** a) kidney b) liver c) pancreas
- 4. What tiny muscles cause each hair follicle on our body to raise, producing goosebumps?** a) arrector pili muscles b) occipitofrontalis c) nasalis
- 5. What is the largest organ in the human body?** a) kidney b) liver c) skin
- 6. Descartes called what gland the "seat of the soul"?** a) pituitary gland b) lymph gland c) pineal gland
- 7. What is the only part of a human body that has no blood supply because it gets oxygen directly through the air?** a) nose b) cornea c) ear drum
- 8. What organ is a whopping 21 feet long?** a) small intestines b) colon c) fallopian tubes
- 9. What muscle's name is derived from the solefish whose shape it resembles?** a) scalenes b) soleus c) sartorius
- 10. The name of this bone means "strong or sacred bone."** a) sternum b) sacrum c) ilium

ANSWERS

1. Masseter (the major chewing muscle of the jaw); 2. Stirrup bone (it is smaller than a grain of rice); 3. Liver; 4. Arrector Pili muscles; 5. Skin; 6. Pineal gland; 7. Cornea; 8. Small intestines; 9. Soleus muscle (a deep muscle of the calves); 10. Sacrum (often called the "tail bone").

Creativity Corner

Art Prompt: Personal Guides

Some may call them spirit guides, spirit animals, or guardian angels. And others may call them important personal symbols, totems, or muses. Whatever you may call these personal guides in your life, it's time to call them to the paper or canvas in full color. Who or what do you feel guides you and provides insight, protection, or support? If you've never considered this before, you may wish to meditate on what images or symbols have followed you throughout your life. Perhaps you are always encountering crows or maybe you often feel a guiding presence when you are creative. Visually represent these guides in whatever artistic format you are drawn to and allow these behind-the-scenes influences to see the light of day.

Writing Prompt: Spine Metaphor

What is the life of your spine like? On a typical day, do you feel expansive in this area or cramped and compressed? Write about the purpose and function of your spine, as well as how you experience your spine in your body. Now imagine your spine is not your spine at all, but something else. Is it a ladder for your headaches to climb to reach your head? Is it a river flowing from your cranium to your sacrum? Is it a snake? A rain stick? If you get stuck in your writing, I recommend that you connect with your spine by doing some small movements and stretching in your torso. What does it feel like when you bend forward, back, or to the side? How does your spine respond when you engage with it? Perhaps this movement will help you to reveal the metaphor.

Submission Guidelines:

Submit your writing or art to me via email (cputnam@rising-bird.com) by **July 15, 2008** to be considered for the Summer Issue of the newsletter. Subject line of email should read "Summer newsletter submission." Art should be in .jpg format, and writing may be in a Word document or pasted into the body of the email.

The next **Art Show** at
Rising Bird Healing Arts

will take place on

Thursday, August 14, 6-9pm!

*More information, including details about my
guest artist, will be announced this summer
so stay tuned for all the juicy details!*

"What we need is more people who
specialize in the impossible"

-Theodore Roethke

A Wee Bit About Me:



Courtney E. Putnam is a Licensed Massage Practitioner and Certified Reiki Practitioner, who offers a holistic approach to wellness. With a strong belief in the mind-body connection, Courtney holds a safe space for her clients to experience emotional as well as physical healing.

By integrating massage, energy work, creativity, and holistic wellness approaches, she invites you to experience a unique blend of healing modalities to support your body, mind, and spirit. In addition to her bodywork endeavors, Courtney is a poet and visual artist and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

End Notes:

As a writer and visual artist, I find that incorporating artistic expression in the healing process is helpful and revealing. Feel free to visit my [Healing Nest Blog](#) for writing and art exercises, stress reduction strategies, and bodywork you can do for yourself at home. Also, visit my [Sessions and Rates](#) page for detailed descriptions of all of my services, including full-spectrum light therapy, aromatherapy foot baths, and reflective journaling time. • I created all of the artwork in this newsletter. Feel free to visit [Quiet Girl Gallery](#) art blog for more examples of my work.