

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass



The Senate Inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of the nation's koala populations is grinding to a close. Eighty-three written submissions have been received. Two public hearings, in Brisbane and Canberra, involving 40 witnesses have provided verbal evidence.

The transcript of the Brisbane hearing is available on the Senate Environment and Communications Committees' website. It makes interesting reading indeed; almost as good as having been present. I expect the Canberra transcript will be up in a matter of days.

The Committee is scheduled to report on 1st June. I cannot help but feel apprehensive that the status quo will prevail. There are simply too many vested interests to change the industry-weighted decisions that confront koalas and other wildlife.

Together with the evident frustration of the Threatened Species Scientific Committee due to its inability to assess the extent of recent population declines (it advised that decline is marked over three generations), because consistent high quality demographic data across the geographic range of the koala is lacking, it is difficult to see that the Minister's decision will be any different to earlier nominations for federal protection.

The Committee's covering letter clearly indicates that a Vulnerable listing is warranted but because of the uncertainty in the informing data, its hands are tied.

This was sufficient for the Minister to delay announcing a decision back in September, preferring to support Bob Brown's election promise to hold an Inquiry. A gutless bit of buck-passing in my book.

The impacts of habitat loss, disease, climate change and stochastic anthropocentric events such as road strike and predation by dogs have all been eloquently explained and substantiated.

There cannot be much more to be said about koala conservation or information left to dredge up for further scientific review. As Sen. Brown said in Brisbane, "It is not the job of volunteers to protect the koala; it is the job of the Australian government."

We wish it were so.

At the end of the day it will be the progress made on the ground with comprehensive koala plans of management such as those currently underway for parts of Tweed, Lismore and Byron that will be our best bet to save the koala. Providing they get up of course.

This brings me to considering the economic potential of our koalas.

It should be widely acknowledged by now that koalas punch above their weight when it comes to pulling in tourism dollars. Gunnedah promotes itself as The Koala Capital of the World. A lesser known fact is that the presence of koalas actually boosts property prices.

A study commissioned by Redland City Council in Queensland, to examine the impact of koalas on property values looked at the effect of three koala variables on the price of residential homes: distance to green space/



Visit Rosalie (left) and Alika at the Friends of the Koala Care Centre, Rifle Range Road, East Lismore.

koala habitats; koala sightings within a 50m radius; and a property in a koala habitat area. Results confirmed that some buyers are willing to pay a higher price to live closer to well-known koala populations.

Putting a monetary value on wildlife is not a new idea for its conservation but this study, undertaken by Professor Clevo Wilson, an ecological economist in QUT's School of Economics and Finance, is the first to examine the impact of a single animal species on what most of us have an interest in and that is house prices.

Professor Wilson is quoted as saying "The results have several policy implications for urban planning and conservation. Property owners and developers in koala habitats have a direct incentive to support koala conservation and leave swathes of bushland intact in residential areas for koalas and other wildlife."

Sounds like common sense to us, but it is local government that has the unenviable task of trying to balance providing for the needs of people with protecting the natural environment. The present furor in Tweed Shire Council with the Cobaki Estate Subdivision, a complex development with nearly 20 years of history is testament to that. As already mentioned Council is biting the bullet at last, to plan and manage its coastal koala populations displaced by accommodating increasing human populations.

Whether or not koala conservation efforts in areas undergoing intense urbanization will succeed in the long-term is anyone's guess. Now that research has confirmed that some people will pay more to live with koalas, perhaps there will be more support from developers and the real estate industry.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233. For information about koalas, their food trees, and other ways in which you can assist the koala conservation effort on the Northern Rivers, visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone our (24/7) Rescue Hotline: 6622-1233.

Until next time, happy koala spotting.

Stu's view from the loo

by Stuart McConville

As I sit and contemplate the sacred lady mountain from my wooden throne, the cold, distant goddess that fills my vista, I am reminded of the winter that is almost upon us. My list of chores fills up with anticipation of clear skies and (finally, please...) a bit of drier weather. As the plants and animals slow down, we humans play catch up, tidying up around the edges of our wet wilderness to provide us with a semblance of sanity for the darker months to come.

The reed bed greywater system that has provided countless harvests of cherry tomatoes spilling over the lanky lomandras that border and protect it is in need of a trim, a winter Brazilian, bald on top, but wet beneath.

I've opted for a virtually reed free "reed bed" myself. I have noted in other locations how some aggressive reeds can choke up the beds and render them stinky if maintenance regimes are not up to spec, so I just plant shallow rooted reeds like the pretty Frogmouth (*Philydrum lanuginosum*) and let nature do the rest. The mechanics



of the reed bed suggest that the real function of the reeds is perhaps negligible as far as nitrogen reduction goes with most of the de-nitrification occurring in anaerobic micro sites amongst the substrate and root materials. They do grow quickly and facilitate evapotranspiration, but so do other things.

I am a fan of trees in reed beds, like Melaleuca quinquenervia, which can build up a root mass that will embrace all of the substrate. When the time comes to re-substrate the reed beds (this should be done every 5-7 years) simply pull the tree out with the substrate mostly attached and start again.

How do you know if it's time to re-substrate your reed beds? Have a good look at the water quality coming out. If it is difficult to see the bottom of the container, try a plug flow test. Pour a cup full of bright red dye (food colouring) in the top end of the reed bed and see how long it takes to come out the other end. It should take 5-7 days. If it is much quicker than this then you have preferential flow pathways and the effluent is not being treated as it should be.

Poorly treated effluent can reduce the lifespan of your evapotranspiration areas, or trenches in old speak, not to mention your reed beds may get a bit smelly if not looked after.

Adding worms to your reed bed may help too, the worms will assist in the breakdown of the dead plant material on the surface and this will prevent detritus from clogging the reed bed. The best worms to use are Red Tigers, as they can tolerate high levels of moisture (80-90%).

Stuart runs Pooh Solutions Compost Toilets and Consultancy Services. For more info: www.poohsolutions.com

PLANT OF THE MONTH



Foam bark is an attractive, medium size tree that occurs in most types of rainforest. It has an umbrella-shaped crown with ferny foliage and large bunches of attractive pink-brown round fruit.

Large trees are often found in remnant and regrowth Big Scrub, for example around Rosebank and in the Alstonville plateau area. It is also very common around Nimbin, so keep a look out for it on our local roadsides.

The pseudorhus refers to its being a pseudo rhus tree probably in looks but also due to the reaction that one can get when you touch the attractive round fruits, which are covered in irritating minute hairs.

An excellent tree for planting in paddocks and edges of forest and it readily regenerates in bushland areas. It is easy to propagate

Foam Bark (*Jagera pseudorhus*)

from the seeds, which can be removed from the fruit with tweezers. At my house in Nimbin, it readily regenerates and is the most prolific regenerating species out of all the native species present.

The tree attracts caterpillars and butterflies and both King Parrot and Green Catbird relish the egg shaped seed.

This tree has well documented cultural uses by Aboriginal people. The bark was used to stupefy fish, bringing them up to the surface so that they are easily able to be collected.

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NEC members amongst the hundreds of people who took to the streets in Lismore to protest against the solar feed-in tariff cuts.

by Rob Carroll, President

A sincere thank you from The NEC to all the organisations and people who recently donated to assist in our trip to Tara for the CSG Rally. It is greatly appreciated.

Coal Seam Gas

NRG and Caldera Environment Centre protest rally in Murwillumbah was a fantastic representation from people showing their genuine concerns on the CSG issue. With well over 2500 people in attendance, the message will be spread far and wide. There is a great YouTube doco called "Stop Coal Seam Gas Now" Please watch and send throughout your network of friends.

A 60-day freeze on new exploration licences for coal, coal seam gas and petroleum has been announced by the NSW government, in a push to resolve the escalating conflict between farmers, miners and conservationists over land use. But this does not mean we can ease off on our actions – we should remain vigilant with our actions and keep the No CSG message alive.

The 9th Annual CSG Summit (www.cs summit.com.au) is taking place at The Sofitel Hotel in Brisbane from the 30th May – 1st June 2011, we can clearly see how well advanced they are with their Summit as this is the ninth one held. This is even more reason to keep the pressure up on Corporations and Governments.

We now have the renowned yellow "Lock the Gate" signs available for purchase at the shop for \$5 or donation. We need the Northern Rivers Region to send a visual message to tourists and unwanted corporations in our area. So please get the signs up!

Birth defects and chemical cocktails

Recent articles in the *Northern Star* addressing the issues of birth defects and Parkinson's disease found both have suggestive links to agriculture chemicals.

Glyphosate is an active ingredient in Roundup and other herbicides. As mentioned previously, glyphosate is illegal to spray in or near any waterway. A laboratory study on rats given 1000mg/kg of glyphosate resulted in a

50% mortality rate and skeletal alterations were observed in over 57% of fetuses.

This information is readily available and it alarms me when I read about Envite's "revolutionary plans" for the next three years to rehabilitate our region's forests. They claim to have a new system of spraying which is 9-1 mixture of water to glyphosate.

So be careful if you invite Envite onto your property. I have given the Roundup information to Envite and they have told me that they have passed it on to their supervisors for comment. If you have Roundup in your shed, I suggest you take it back to where you bought it from and demand a refund as you have been lied to.

We need urgent action in our area as it is clearly evident that we are already getting sick and with the plans for the next three years of glyphosate spraying by Councils, Envite, and landowners we will surely be contaminating our own backyard.

Water and food give life, toxic chemicals bring sickness and death. Think of your future and your children's future.

But it's so pretty! Or is it an invasive weed?

by Triny Roe

Many weeds that infest our gardens and backyards, our roadsides and creek banks were imported into Australia as ornamentals. These plants found our delightful sub-tropical climate very much to their liking and, perhaps lacking their natural population inhibitors, spread rapidly. Some of these weeds are well known, such as the infamous Camphor Laurel and Lantana. But there are now a number of new kids on the block.

These include the Golden Rain Tree, *Koelreuteria paniculata*, a native of S.E. Asia. This fast growing tree looks great in autumn with its long lasting striking display of rosy pink seed capsules which follow the yellow flowers. However, once established The Golden Rain Tree spreads rapidly. If you have one in your garden you will find seedlings come



Wheel of Fire Tree *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (photo by Triny Roe)

up everywhere, even in less hospitable areas as it tolerates a range of soils and conditions. Soon you may have a grove of them, particularly if you like a wild garden style and don't spend a lot of time weeding and mowing. And your neighbours will have them too. And they will come up along the roadsides, spreading further and further afield.

If you have this tree, don't be

tempted to pot up seedlings and give to your friends and relatives, or sell at fetes and market stalls. This species is listed as an environmental weed in Northern Rivers due to its high potential to out compete native plants and spread rapidly. You can see plenty of them getting merrily about the Nimbin area.

Local native species such as the Wheel of Fire Tree, *Stenocarpus sinuatus* or the Flame Tree, *Brachychiton acerifolius*, IMHO, have even more spectacular floral displays and would nicely replace the Golden Rain Trees if people choose. With any weed issue, it's best to strike sooner than later and nip potential major weed pests in the bud!

Footnote: *Koelreuteria elegans*, subsp. *Formosana*, also known as Golden Rain Tree, is a similar species and declared an environmental pest in parts of SE Qld. Be wary of both.

Open Day at Djanbung Gardens

'Simple Steps to a Better Tomorrow' nicely sums up the Open Day on June 11 at The Permaculture College Australia, and it's going to be a whopper! Not only will the Cert 3, 4 and Diploma students get a chance to show off their knowledge by hosting workshops, tours, talks, sustainability displays and lots more, but also there will be a book launch to follow!

'Pioneers of Permaculture' is a compilation story featuring those ground breaking Permies who got the movement happening, with a lovely section on Robyn Francis (Owner, Educator and Permie Extraordinaire of Djanbung Gardens).

There will be some extra special guest speakers during the day, including some well known Permies from the USA, spreading the word through an innovative project entitled 'Surfers Without Boarders', and the musical wonders of Kindling, a funky slow soul duo, spin off from the popular smooth reggae band Kooii.

The theme is 'Simple Steps to a Better Tomorrow', and they are inviting you to come and learn some easy, take-home ideas that you can begin now, to start creating a better world for yourself and for those you love. Some



of the workshops include, Grow Your Own Natural Crafts, Make a Worm Farm, Wild Food Gathering and Recipes, Growing Healthy Communities, Bamboo Construction, Making Compost Teas, and heaps more, oh, and tons of kids activities! You'll be entertained, educated, networked and solution-ised! Everything is fun and

everything is free (except some delicious snacks at the café, books, take-home goodies, and if you feel the urge to support their fundraising, of course!).

Join the Djanbung gang on 11th June from 9.30am to 3pm, with the Book Launch to follow from 4pm, 78 Cecil Street, Nimbin. For more details, www.permaculture.com.au or call on 6689-1755.

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Join us in June at Birth and Beyond

by Kirrah Holborn

I have been kept busy in May with some well-rounded women turning up each week to delve deep into birth preparation. It has been a pleasure seeing the smiles widen and their eyes light up with new realizations as their confidence grows.



Adriana and Sam

We have been exploring and practicing different variations of breath awareness. This is such a divine way of preparing for birth and for coping with unexpected surprises or frustrating times. Bringing our awareness back to our breath helps relax the mind and body and lessen the 'suffering story' we sometimes tell ourselves.

Birth art is another beautiful way of exploring our values and inner beliefs. Often new ideas come forward and we may be inspired to take some different action to understand our journey on a deeper level.

Birth & Beyond continues to meet weekly on Friday mornings. With winter upon us, we have decided to start a little later (10am-11.30am).

I am sending out a call for midwives, doulas, practitioners, parents and anyone interested in birth to come forward. Please consider holding a session at Birth & Beyond to share a bit

about what you do and help us spin a web of knowledge and support for the pregnant women and parents of this area.

If you are pregnant, where are you hiding? Come along to a Birth & Beyond session. It is a very friendly environment and we would love to meet you. We have books and magazines that you can borrow and a growing bag of baby clothes to choose some cute outfits! Come along and feel the support of other pregnant women and find out who is due at a similar time to you- you might make some life-long friends.

For more information or to hold a session at Birth & Beyond, please phone Kirrah on 0429-308 851 or email kirrah@wholistic.com.au We also have a Facebook page, search for 'Nimbin Birth & Beyond' for the weekly updates.

(W)HOLISTIC PRACTICE

by Leandrah

So far I have had three articles published in *The Nimbin GoodTimes* on Allergy Desensitisation, Acid and Alkaline Balance in the Body, and How are your GUTS? In contrast, this article indicates my (w)holistic approach utilising energetic medicines.

A main Naturopathic principle is to be (w)holistic in the treatment of clients. A whole person includes not only a physical body with its building blocks and complex physiology, but a mind with thoughts, and feelings with emotions, and a spirit that drives it all. Therefore, to treat the whole person, physical signs and symptoms are to be addressed along with thoughts, feelings, emotions and matters of the spirit.

Energetic medicines are able, on most part, to affect all the bodies of an individual. Energetic medicines are necessary in any (w)holistic practice and include those medicines which cannot be detected in a physical measure, but can still affect the body, mind, emotions and spirit of individuals.

Each practitioner has their own mixture of energetic medicines they utilise. Each modality is developed and nurtured by the individual practitioner's talents, affinities, experiences and training.

Leandrah's energetic medicines

Body work: massage, reflexology etc... are working on the physical body, but the energetics of all the other bodies can be affected strongly. For example; touch often releases pent up emotions. Also the hands are conducting an energy that works through all the bodies not just the physical. The therapist is able to be a vessel and conductor of other more powerful and divine beings for healing purposes. The touch connection relays information on a more psychic level to the practitioner and information not discussed is more easily accessed from the client.

Auric Healing: The hands of the practitioner directly manipulate the subtle energy system, that is the invisible energy that is part of someone that flows through and around them called the aura. Holes are healed, protection is consolidated, entities and dark energies are cleansed, knots in the energy are straightened and the subtle body is charged with appropriately coloured light. The dark energies are trapped in salty water after being chased in by candle flame. The salty water is transmuted into positive energy by being given back to mother earth.

Vibrations: This is another system of manipulation of the Subtle body. Vibrations is a technique from the meditative Sahaja Yoga. The Kundalini is timely enlivened by the cleansing of the left and right nadis in order to centre the person. Candles, burning camphor, foot soaks in salty water, temperatures,



affirmations, songs, prayers and eclectic gods, goddesses and prophets, numbers and hand movements are used to this end.

Homoeopathics: Are energetic medicines. Technically any remedy homoeopathically diluted 12 or more times is not a physical medicine anymore. Therefore, 6c is still physical but 15c is non physical and a pure energetic medicine. The ingestion of these remedies either with sugar of milk pilules or liquid, can potentially affect all bodies of a person.

Flower Essences: A flower essence remedy contains the divine life energy of the flower trapped in the vibration of water. The flower is the crowning glory of the plant and carries different nature energies that affect the emotional/body in order to affect the physical/mental/spiritual bodies and their function. These are ingested in drops form and water usually.

Herbs and foods: As close to nature as possible. Herbs and foods you and your community grow and share. Live foods carry the life-force which we can take on by ingesting them.

Sound: It is possible to penetrate matter with sound vibrations. Sound knows no boundaries. Bells, chimes, rattles, drums, bowls, music and the voice can all be used to harmonise blockages in the person's energy.

Colour: Light and colour penetrate our cells and are absorbed directly into the tissues as well as directly affecting the brain physiology when perceived by the eyes. Each colour has its own

effects. In my Wiangaree clinic I have a massage room that is all white, I wear white and the client decides which coloured curtain they would like to place on window to receive sunlight through. The person can additionally breath in the colour as a visualisation as well the practitioner may channel the chosen colour into the client's energy through their hands.

Visualisation: Can be devised to remove a blockage to meditation and healing. Colour visualisation using the breath to reprogram negative conditioning is one. However, feelings and angels can also be evoked to help those who need internal restructuring.

Meditation: Including prayer. Visualisation, ritualisation, chanting and spiritual songs may also be in this category.

Reprogramming with the breath: The client is guided to go to the centre of the tension or discomfort they are feeling in their physical body. They are to observe the feelings and sensations felt in this space. They allow themselves to access the feelings and experience them in order to release them on the out breath. The visualisation of letting go on the out breath is continued until the feeling has passed.

The space left by the release is then immediately refilled with a positive program of either a colour or feeling as they breathe in.

Presence: may include any personal connection to each individual.. The practitioner and client ask for help from their angels, and most readily Archangel Michael and other helpful beings attached to the client. Time is important to allow all aspects of a client's case to be expressed, each initial appointment is given a 1.5hr time slot for this purpose.

Pendulum: Science has not researched everything and proven its effectiveness. There are still many unknowns that are pieces of an (w)holistic picture. All well considered recommendations are finely tuned, double and triple checked with a the movement of the pendulum to match medicines and treatment energetically to the client specific to time. The pendulum offers a direct connection with the higher self and its more complete knowledge, free from conditionings and interferences.

Leandrah (pictured) is available for appointment through the Nimbin Apothecary, Cullen Street, on Tuesdays. She is a Naturopath and has been practising from the Birth & Beyond rooms in Nimbin for 8 years. Leandrah also has a country practice in Wiangaree at The Turquoise House. Wiangaree is only 10 minutes drive north of Kyogle. There is a medicine garden, colour healing studio, and well stocked dispensary of homoeopathics, herbs, flower essences and supplements.

Phone for appointments on 6636-2356 or book in with Nimbin Apothecary for Tuesdays on 66891-1529.

Nimbin Hospital Info

• Nimbin Immunisation Clinic

At Nimbin Hospital, 2nd Tuesday of the month. Birth to 5 years. By appointment only, through Lismore Community Health, Ph: 66207687. Next Clinic Tuesday 14th June. Early Childhood Nurse is at Nimbin Hospital every Tuesday.

• Nimbin Womens Health Nursing Service

Every 3rd Tuesday of the month. Free and confidential. Next clinic 9th June. Ph: 66881401.

• Physio at Nimbin Hospital on Monday and Thursday.

For appointments Ph: 6688-1401.

• Interagency Health & Welfare Association Next meeting is in August – watch this space.



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What's in a Name?

by Krishna Bear

Many people have asked me about my name change recently. It feels fantastic to re-invent myself and to have a unique name. In terms of paperwork the process was very simple. However, in terms of energetic changes to my life, that process was huge and is still ongoing. For me it was more than just paper work. The name change was an invitation to implant on myself a new vibration of my own choosing.

A name is more than just a collection of syllables and sounds. From a spiritual perspective, a name is a vibration of energy.

For example, the word Love has a beautiful vibration or feeling to it. Meditating on this word can change the way you feel. It also may trigger many stories in our mind about what love is. The word Hate has the opposite vibration and can deplete your energy. So from this perspective, words and names are more than just a collection of sounds, but rather a vibration of energy which can effect how you feel.

If we dive into that crazy world of Quantum Physics for a moment, there is an even more amazing understanding of names. When we give a name to a physical object or person, the energy of the name can affect the object on a quantum level. So when our mind gives something a name, whether it is an apple, rock or a person named John Smith, we are saying to that object "you are that" and as we are all powerful enough to create reality, the object we are focusing on has its own reality affected

and is brought into resonance with our mind's statement of "you are that".

Have I lost you yet? Many are familiar with the concept that our thoughts can effect and create the universe around us. In other words, the battery pack or engine which powers the creation of our universe is our own consciousness and just like the director of a movie, our minds then direct the raw energy from our consciousness to our surrounding universe which manifests as matter. That's a massive responsibility for our humble little minds and ego. What a gift that is.

An example of this idea of how thoughts and names can affect an object or person was during my Kahuna Massage Training. We as a group had a person stand in front of us all with their arm raised at a 90 degree angle. The purpose was to test the changes in strength of the arm via a simple kinesiology test. We were first asked to think something positive about

the person, such as "he has a nice shirt", or "nice hair". The person's arm was then tested for strength and appeared very strong.

Next, we were asked to think of something we don't like, such as "he has hairy toes" or "he's too tall". With that new negative thought, the kinesiology test was performed again but this time the arm lost all its strength. The thoughts of the people in the room directly affected the energy and vibration of the person out the front.

So, what's in a name? A great deal, it seems. Putting all the name rhetoric aside, I think this article is a great reminder of just how incredibly powerful we all are as creators and "namers" of reality. "Beautiful... you are that"

Krishna Bear is available for Massage and Healing appointments at Barkers Vale, phone 6689-7055, and Nimbin Apothecary on Thursdays and Fridays, phone 6689-1529.

Intimacy, not fusion

by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

M. Counselling, PhD

Phone 0429-199-021

I often hear people talk about their partners, husbands, wives, as "their better half" and words to the effect that "the other person completes them" and find myself drawing back in horror.

Even more repugnant to me are the requests some men make regarding the women they supposedly love to subordinate themselves to them, and for women to believe it is right that they give up their hopes and dreams in order to be there for their men 24 hours a day. Here is a lack of understanding of what intimacy and love is.

The wonderful writer Rilke in his Letters to a Young Poet, 1954, writes thus:

"Love is at first not anything that means merging, giving over, and uniting with another (for what would a union be of something unclarified and unfinished, still subordinate); it is a high inducement to the individual to ripen...it is a great exacting claim."

Our work is not to dissolve into another person, but be clear and clean in our authentic contact with the one and ones we love. Rilke's idea of love as a ground for ripening of self speaks of an interaction between persons that is rich, full and not needy or clingy. Partners who cling to each other and attempt to exclude a multi-faceted world shrink from life itself.

Society has shaped our expectations about intimacy in the following ways. Many women are brought up to consider normal "losing themselves in a relationship" while many men think of intimacy as unmanly or just another word for sex, but intimacy is a subject much more

complete than this.

Intimacy is a substantive relationship between two or more individuals of equal status. It is a deep reciprocal closeness and it is, as someone described it to me, like a bridge over the silence of the universe joining people on either side.

I believe that most people yearn for intimacy, though some neurotically crave fusion (an undifferentiated disappearing into another person). Intimacy has a number of distinct characteristics that distinguish it from fusion.

To be intimate with another (man and woman, woman and woman, or man and man) is to engage in closeness, time together, nurturance, physical intimacy, communication and consistency. Intimacy is shaped by an ability to face conflict and not shirk away from psychological, emotional or physical rupture. Intimacy distinguishes itself from fusion through a lack of intrusiveness: no separation anxiety, respect of another's need for privacy, lack of possessiveness and jealousy, lack of over-reactivity to the other person's life problems; a distinction of minds (little mind-reading), lack of thinking we know what the other person wants or needs better than he/she does, lack of aggressive criticism, blaming, hurtful attacks, or a desire to diminish the other, and a lack of attempt to dominate the other in disagreements.

To be fused is to see the physical absence of the other as a threat to our very existence. It is to think as normal to walk into the bathroom while the other person is on the toilet (as the husband of a client of mine did on a daily basis). It is to want to sit inappropriately in on an exam with one's partner or attend an interview between a wife's boss and one's wife. A fused relationship may be one



in which arguments never take place, or when they do, both parties are convinced that the relationship is crumbling. Fusion in a relationship may express itself when the man "knows" exactly what his partner wants for her birthday, without actually ever asking her (or vice versa). Fusion is found when one member of a relationship dominates, belittles, and undermines the other on a regular basis and thinks it is his/her right.

When individuals leave these fused relationships they often go into crisis because they no longer know who or what they are, for they have identified themselves totally as an appendage of the other person. When people leave healthy intimate relationships (and they are free to do so, for healthy intimacy is permeable and not an end itself) they ripen further as the individuals they are made to be.

Intimacy is a choice and not a neediness; it may be a yearning but it is not a craving. It is a natural desire for closeness in an environment where one can express oneself clearly and authentically with another person; it is not a place where one dissolves oneself in the greater powerfulness of the other like a sugar cube in a glass of water. To be intimate is to know and be known by the other as a separate and beloved self. Two (or more) people in relationship.

Inner Harmony and Self-Nurturing

by Yasmin Lang

About three years ago, I was diagnosed with a breast tumour... what, me? As a health practitioner, nurse, supermum, health and fitness freak? How could that be?



I was always caring for others and believing that I was caring for myself – and yet deep down, there was the need for love, recognition and acceptance from outside of myself. I had learned to override feedback from a body driven by adrenal energy, so blinded by my ideals and beliefs that I could not see how driven I had become. My mind was always ahead of myself, busy, never really present.

I let go of Healing Holidays Homestay (which began in Nimbin) and moved on to Byron with my teenagers in 1999, offering respite, time-out and healing for those suffering from emotional and health crises, burnout and cancer.

Suddenly I was struck by the exhaustion, and became aware how I had been living. I needed the healing holiday. Feeling the fragility of my condition, I slowly began to feel the tenderness within myself. Tumours and cancers don't just appear out of nowhere, they are the result of a life-long journey of not listening to the body, and the disregard for self. I had placed others before myself. The question then arose, what is it to be and feel like a woman? Why can't I feel still or be still? Have we lost what comes naturally as women, the ability to know what it is, let alone to actually be still? Somewhere I was beginning to remember something that I had lost.

And why are relationships and roles becoming confused? Is it possible that our men are losing their way because women have? We are all equal in Love – yet why is there no true inner harmony? We have all learnt to seek recognition for what we do – but who are we in all that we do?

I was under the illusion that if I

were able to meet all physical challenges and meet the male mind as an equal and become good at mental struggles or arguments, I would then get the recognition and acceptance – but I would continually override the feeling of how exhausting

and draining this was in my body, and the harm I was causing by not staying with the truth of what I know, to be myself and claim that.

How many of us have sold out and gone against what we know to be true?

My first visit to my GP began with her saying that she had just undergone surgery herself for breast cancer.

She spoke of how devoted she was to taking care of sick people, and acknowledged that she had never taken any time to care for herself. I could feel the truth of what she was saying, and my own tenderness. From that moment I began truly to look within, and so the journey towards inner harmony began. By honouring myself and by honouring what I was truly feeling, and by taking time to heal and recover, I managed to get through without the need for the surgeon's knife.

Knowing that there are many ways to uncover the wisdom that has always been within, this journey of self-nurturing, self-love and gentleness and the return to our true self can begin with taking time for ourselves to find the support, nurturing and understanding a gentle healing massage can bring.

Yasmin works as a nurse and massage therapist in palliative and aged care. She offers Inner Harmony Massage, esoteric healing, gentle body massage, reflexology and Energetic Facial Release (which releases the stuck energy held in the face) at Nimbin Apothecary on Mondays, and in Lismore on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To book your appointment or for further information, call Yasmin on 0437-866-424 or email her at yasmin@universal-heart.com

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