

Blue Knob – more than just a farmers market...

by Michelle Agioritis

Christmas Craft Market

Saturday 10th December, 8.30am – midday

The Blue Knob Farmers, Fibre & Fermenters Market are holding the annual craft market again this year, and it is shaping up to be better than ever, with stalls for embroidery, pottery, felt and ceramics already booked.

Browse the stalls for a locally-made Christmas gift, or a special treat for yourself.

It wouldn't be a Market event without entertainment: Fraser Pumpnickel will take over the old stage with guitar and accordion. His songs will evoke memories of folk tunes sung across time and from around the world. Fraser will be playing from approx. 9am.

If you would like to book a stall or just have a query, please contact Michelle on 0424-474-133.



Summer Solstice – Blue Knob Style

Saturday 24th December, 8.30am – noon

December 24 is set to be a relaxing summer solstice. The stalls will be dressed in their solstice finery and the café menu will include coffee and pancakes. It will be a day for

the Blue Knob community to enjoy conversation, laughter and of course those famous Blue Knob hugs.

Barkers Vale farmer and performer Dave Davies is set to complete the scene with a rendition of his favourite tunes. Come dressed to shine and let the heavens take care of the rest.

Christmas trading hours

The Market will be open every Saturday this festive season, from 8.30am at the Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Blue Knob Road.

Whether you're planning an intimate dinner for two or hosting a party to rival Woodstock, the farmer's market has your fresh food needs covered for Christmas and New Year's Eve.

The Blue Knob Café will also be open, so why not linger over a coffee while you plan your festive menu.

Fermentation Festival

Watch this space!

We are planning another humdinger of a Fermentation Festival, and the date is set: Saturday 4th March. Mark your calendar. The last few years have been standing room only.

More information will be released in the coming months. Find us on Facebook.



The flavour that is Cuba



The Imbibers Ark
by Thom Culpeper

The Cubans' National Dish

Simply spread boiled rice on a plate, top with a fried egg and a banana, both having been fried in olive oil, and serve with tomato sauce.

For a more complex food approach, pork is the order. Cuba inherited its pork 'affair' from their Spanish ancestors, being in the main from southern Spain and in particular Andalusia.

The general dish of partiality is the roast pork *Mojo* (moh hoh). This un-boned shoulder roast is marinated in mojo sauce, roasted for several hours and served with Cuban lime and cumin rice or black beans prepared with a *Sofrito* (onions, green poblano peppers, garlic, red wine vinegar, oregano, cumin and bay leaves). The pork is prepared as follows:

Ingredients

Pork shoulder 2-3 ks (bone-in)
8-10 cloves garlic
2 large yellow onions
2 tbsps salt (cooking)
1 tspn oregano
1 tspn cumin
½ tspn black pepper
1 bay leaf
500mls seville orange juice
1 lime

Method

With a pointed sharp knife pierce the the pork all over. Rub the salt into the shoulder, place in roasting dish. Add the herbs to blender and pulse to chop the garlic. Switch the blender to run mode, add the citrus juice and blend fully. Using one cup of the marinade, rub it into the incisions, cover with foil and refrigerate over night.

Allow the pork to reach room temperature before roasting.

Preheat the oven to 220°C, place the joint skin side up and roast for 18-20 min. per 500grams at 200°C + 18min. Baste with half the saved marinade. Meat temperature should have reached 160°C. (use a meat thermometer). Remove from the oven and put it on a plate, cover.

Slice the onions into rings, sauté them in saved pork fat, add the remainder of the marinade and gently cook for 10 minutes. Dress the sliced pork with the sautéed onions and the *Mojo*.

Serve with black beans Cuban or make up the Cuban grilled sandwich the '*Cubano*' with pork, sliced cheese, sliced dill pickle and mustard or mayonnaise on crusty long Cuban bread.

Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Andrew Barton

The Nimbin Garden Club had its final fling for the year with a good old fashioned Christmas party. There was bubbly to kick things off, then an amazing array of food to feed the 30 or so members that came along. Thank you to all the members for such a feast.

The Christmas party marked the end of a great year of garden visits... From Lillian Rock to Goolmangar, Jiggi to Tuntable... we saw it all. Properties with lovely flowering gardens, permaculture market gardens, ones with magnificent views and others with amazing regeneration results. A huge thank you to all the property owners who opened their gardens for us to enjoy.

Before indulging in an amazing spread of desserts, we drew the prizes for our annual Christmas raffle. This is our major fundraiser of the year, and it makes it possible to make donations to local organisations. Thank you to all in the community who dug deep to buy tickets from our members.

The prizes were fantastic, and we would like to specifically thank the Lismore Garden Centre and seedling house, Book Warehouse and Bunnings for their donations. They were greatly appreciated, and we ask those reading this to support them, as they so kindly supported us.

Did I mention dessert? There was blueberry cheese cake, festive pavlova wreaths, trifles like Mum used to make, and much much more. One of the best parts of the day for me though, was the friendship and company that we all enjoyed yet again. We are a small but very sociable group and it is always a fun day out with such a diverse group of welcoming people.

If you feel like joining us for a garden visit, all are most welcome. We meet from February to October, on the third Saturday of the month, from 2 – 4pm, and guests are always welcome to "try us out". And if you have a property that you would like to share with us, we would love it!

New gardens, new members... everything 'new' in the New Year. Watch out for the article in the NGT in February for where we are gathering next, or you can contact us via email: nimbingardens@gmail.com

Until next year, happy and safe gardening and may the Festive Season be filled with love, happiness, and health.

Ever heard of agrohomeopathy?

by Robin Stein
Homeopath

Agrohomeopathy is the use of homeopathic remedies on plants.

It has been very popular in many countries of the world for decades and many have written books about it. Plant nurseries in Germany, for instance, keep an entire range of agrotherapy remedies in all their stores, alongside their fertilisers and other products.

A google search will give you 28,000 results, as more and more people move away from chemicals and their inherent dangers, toward natural therapies for themselves, their pets, and their gardens. For too long now, we have seen the so-called 'experts' fiddling with our food to the point where much of it, like genetically modified food, is cancer forming.

Many people are waking up to the fact that they are doing their families a great favour, simply by growing a few 'organic' veggies. They taste better and the kids will eat directly from the plant as soon as they can, even when they refuse to eat the vegetables on their plate at dinner.

So let's take a closer look at agrotherapy, which is a chemical free, non-toxic method of growing food and any other crops, because agrotherapy makes your



plants resistant to disease and pests by strengthening them from the inside out. Homeopathic treatment for your plants is a win-win situation.

Agrotherapy helps to strengthen the plant structure and inner workings to achieve optimum health. The plants are then strong enough to resist pests and disease.

And agrotherapy deals with all the critters and moulds that attack food, and all plants. There are remedies to remove snails, slugs, caterpillars, aphids and an entire range of other plant problems.

When I'm asked to treat a farm, I like to begin from the ground up. I've assisted farmers to bring lifeless land back to life. And water-resistant soil to become more absorbent, using only one

homeopathically potentiated remedy. And that remedy is silica.

Potentiated silica works miracles for soil. When you see what it can do, I'm sure all gardeners and producers of food will be very interested.

It assists seed germination; reduces transplant shock; strengthens weak and spindly plants; increases vigour and resistance to pests, mould and mildew; aids water retention in plants growing in arid soils; stimulates flower growth, both number and size; assists seed germination and development; improves fruit setting when applied after flowering, and it changes the consistency of soil particles as well as ionisation, so that water repellent soil readily absorbs moisture.

Silica has also been shown

to stimulate premature flowering and then prevents seed formation when applied on overdose to weeds.

Along with silica, another 23 remedies have been used with enormous success for many years to treat an entire range of different rusts, moulds, aphids, caterpillars, slugs, spiders and mites, as well as mechanical damage.

I believe that agrohhomeopathy is a step forward for organic and biodynamic gardens and crops, as well as the soil in which those gardens grow. And I'm more than happy to put a specialised kit together for anybody who would like one.

Strong, happy plants assist both humans and animals to grow strong and healthy. Agrohhomeopathy is a win-win situation for everybody.

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Reasons to try Bowen therapy

It is sixty-odd years since Tom Bowen, the boy from Geelong in Victoria created Bowen Therapy, but the potentially excellent results gained from receiving a Bowen treatment are still shrouded in mystery.

Pain and discomfort can be an extremely complicated affair, like a brick wall that appears to be un-climbable and impassable, no matter which way we approach it.

So why should such simple moves on the body create such a powerful relief from pain? And why does one's body all of a sudden begin to function in a more comfortable fashion?

How does Bowen Therapy have the ability to remove the correct brick from the wall, causing it at worst to crumble to a manageable height and width, or at best, to disappear all together?

Scientific research has proven that at the very least, Bowen Therapy lifts connective tissue which has adhered to the flesh during injury or illness. This lifting of the connective tissue allows the trapped poisonous wastes and acids that create inflammation to be eliminated, and water and nutrition to nurture the damaged area back to good health.

For those of you whose passions do not usually extend to a knowledge of anatomy and physiology, basically connective tissue holds our body together. It surrounds every muscle, bone, organ and nerve, and if we did not have connective tissue our flesh would hang off our skeleton like an empty sack.

It is also one of our main sources



by Tonia Haynes

of protection against disease due to its ability to communicate with the immune and other systems, which assist us to live. Therefore, any dysfunction or injury of muscles, bones or tissue that interferes with the associated connective tissue can also cause other parts of our body to work less efficiently.

An example of this might be digestive issues, a cough, or headaches that seemed to start after an accident, or some time during prolonged lower, or upper back pain.

Is Bowen therapy different to massage? Yes. First of all, for the shy of heart, Bowen Therapy can be executed through clothing.

It is less invasive than massage and gentler than a chiropractic or osteopathic treatment. Nevertheless the results can be as pleasing, if not more so, than the abovementioned modalities.

If you have back, neck, jaw, shoulder,

limb or digestive issues, you will be pleasantly surprised by the magic of a Bowen treatment. The pain or symptoms do not always disappear immediately after a treatment but similar to other therapies which keep working long after the event, within two or three days you will be feeling more together and ready to take on the world once again.

In the meantime, if you want to strengthen the connective tissue in your body, and remember, it is everywhere, take a good vitamin C supplement to kill inflammation. A good colloidal mineral supplement to replace the minerals and trace elements we do not get in our food and also, make sure you are getting adequate protein, because protein creates the building blocks that make our bodies strong.

Last but not least, drink plenty of plain, pure water. Water is the innocent babe of unconditional love that keeps us living. To prove this try watering your house plants with coffee, tea or beer for a couple of weeks. You will be unpleasantly surprised at the results.

As well as Bowen Therapy, of which I have diplomas in three different modalities of Bowen, I use remedial massage, spinal realignment techniques, pranic healing and emotional freedom techniques to achieve the best results for you that I can possibly manage.

My belief is that every individual is different and needs individual care.

I am in clinic in Nimbin on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Make an appointment now and improve your wellbeing. Mobile: 0439-794-420.

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What is a weed anyway?

Weed Words

with Triny Roe

Is it the red cedar seedling or sandpaper fig that pops up in the rose bed? These native trees are not welcome amid the fragrant rose bushes but this is their homeland. These species were here long before the roses came. But they are easy enough to dig out when small and transplant in a more appropriate area further from the house.

Giant devil fig is a notorious weed. The hills of Nimbin have long been filled with this thorny invader and it continues to spread. Neglect it at your peril. Get them when they are young to reduce your workload. Once again, simple to dig out at the seedling stage.

This robust species, hailing from Mexico, can grow to the size of a small tree with its roots spreading a couple of metres in diameter. Able to regrow from stem and root fragments, it readily entrenches. With seed carried to new locations by bats and birds, GDF can pop up anywhere. Believed to have been introduced to the local area as a fungus resistant root stock for grafting eggplant, when the farmer left, the host remained. And flourished.

The population built slowly until exploding in the last decade. It was only recently declared noxious, unfortunately long after it was already well established and spread hundreds of kilometres from its introduction point.

Weeds can come in all forms and there are plenty of plants with potential to be a problem if not managed carefully.

A Nimbinite remarked the other day. "Forget Giant Devil's Fig – I'm worried about cathedral bells".

Also known as cup and saucer vine due to its shapely bell-like purple or white flower which sits in a saucer-like bract, *Cobaea scandens* is another import from tropical America. Like many other exotic species it's readily



Trees engulfed in Cathedral Bells
Photo: Ren Waterfall

available from nurseries in Australia and online. A horticultural favourite, it has been awarded the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit.

Noted as a hardy performer with twining stems reaching several metres, cathedral bells flowers prolifically and spectacularly for several months of the year. In frosted regions it dies back over winter but in warmer zones it is a woody perennial.

Descriptions of this plant hint at its possibility to become a pest. 'Can cover a trellis in one season'. 'One of the fastest-growing and most trouble-free vines you will ever grow'. John Patrick on the ABC Gardening show describes it as a "bully boy", while praising its virtues as a quick screen from the neighbours.

This vigorous creeper is not currently considered a weed in Australia though it features on New Zealand's hit lists. Introduced as an ornamental there it jumped the garden fence and ran amok. It was first recorded in the wild in 1946.

Like cats claw, maderia vine and other exotic creepers, cathedral bells can climb over shrubs, trees and smother native vegetation. Winged seeds aid its spread. Stem fragments can root.

Another robust vine, banana passionfruit, also considered a serious environmental weed in New Zealand, was seen recently being promoted by a well-known Northern Rivers nursery.

Choose new plants carefully and consider where they are planted. Many species with potential as environmental weeds can be bought in nurseries, market or roadside stalls. Avoid growing these species on bush margins or near creeks where they can easily spread downstream. Ensure garden waste is carefully composted and not chucked down the gully or dumped in bushland.

Humans have been farmers, gardeners and collectors of plants for millennia. People have planted, harvested and weeded forever and a day. And so it continues.

Happy weeding.

Overcoming habituated behaviours

by Geoff Dawe

With movement away from technologies there can be rediscovery of the innate hardiness of the human body. Everyone is aware that feet naturally toughen if not in shoes. Not everyone is aware of how the body is made for squatting when sitting rather than sitting.

The French kings did not wish to bring themselves to the level of the peasantry by squatting, so they demanded to be enthroned while sitting. The people, ever-wishing to have what the kings had, duly followed course so today few of the civilised can squat. Lack of the squat produced chairs, lounges and accompanying greenhouse gases, as well as contributed to bowel diseases.

Very few people are also aware of how tough the body can be in terms of not requiring a soft surface on which to sleep.

Humans have the ability to sleep comfortably directly on timber and concrete floors. In Malaysia in 1984, I was with a family not long ago descended from the tribal/pre-literate. They had built a little room with a tongue and grooved floor. The couple's son of about 12 months was on the father's lap. The conversation that ensued sent his son to sleep. The father

laid his son down on the boarded floor without the son awakening or showing any sign of discomfort at being laid on the bare floor.

Similarly, a friend reported that he had seen in India many Indians sound asleep on the concrete floor of a railway station. To him they appeared not to be suffering from lack of bed, mattress or even a makeshift pillow. My friend was an exceptional civilised person. Rather than concerning himself with how the Indians could be supplied with beds and mattresses he went home and slept on his carpeted floor. He was far ahead of his time in volunteering to give up his bed. He said there were only a few days of adaptation before he could sleep without discomfort on the floor.

Comfortably sleeping without any form of mattress is amazing enough from the point of view of the civilised. However, it does not compare with what Governor Lachlan Macquarie observed. John Meredith, in his book *The Last Kooradgie* reports that Lachlan noted the hardiness of members of the Gundungurra people of the Camden – Goulburn area. "They slept by their campfires," John writes, "in the open, through a violent rainstorm and with the thermometer standing at 39 degrees F."

For civilised humans, the means of

coping with these bits of information is to assume the humans experiencing them must be suffering despite the evidence otherwise. Or, there is simply refusal to discuss or enquire into it further. Civilised human value systems must remain intact despite the evidence! Kurt Vonnegut commented in *Sirens of Titan* that Western "culture isn't a rational invention..."

Humans have unique capacities to notice the long-term and causes. This enables exceptional ability with reason, technologies, morality and the understanding of the need to suspend gratification. Humans are also privy to a highly adaptable body. Combined, this is the human dispensation.

Nevertheless, the civilised neglect the adaptive process by calling forth the environment to stand in place of the comforts humans can produce within the body. Instead of "working" these abilities, industrialised humans opt for the dreary life, for most people, of being involved in mindless work to gather up artificial replacements for that which the body, innately, can supply.

From the human ability to moralise: in common with all nature it is necessary that humans adapt; that they notice habituated behaviours that no longer serve humanity or the whole.

Big win for Big Scrub

Big Scrub Landcare has received first place in the highly regarded Society of Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) awards for Excellence in Ecological Restoration Practice.

The award acknowledges Big Scrub Landcare's significant and enduring contribution to the practice of ecological restoration over its 24-year long Big Scrub Rainforest Restoration Program – aimed to save our region's critically endangered lowland subtropical rainforest and its magnificent biodiversity. The recognition has a strong science and environmental outcomes based focus.

President of Big Scrub Landcare Dr Tony Parkes was delighted to receive this award.

"Through the Big Scrub Rainforest Restoration Program we have facilitated the planting of about 1.3 million trees and have successfully developed, funded and managed over 35 projects worth more than \$5 million on both private and public land including 10 of the 11 Big Scrub remnants on National Parks land. These projects have contributed to the ecological restoration of more than 90 lowland rainforest remnants with a total area of more than 600ha," Dr Parkes said.

Big Scrub Landcare started in 1992 by a small group of people who were passionate about the local rainforest and today boasts a membership of over 400. "We encourage and welcome new members to join us in our efforts to protect and restore our unique, internationally significant and extremely valuable lowland rainforest in Big Scrub and nearby areas," Dr Parkes said.

"Being a part of the Big Scrub Landcare and seeing the real benefits that have occurred over the last 24 years has been extremely rewarding. It somehow goes some way to



EnvITE environment manager and Big Scrub Landcare member Mike Delaney receives the SERA award for Restoration Excellence Practice from Chair of Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia, Kingsley Dixon.

setting right the tragic clearing of the Big Scrub," EnvITE environment manager Mike Delaney said.

"To be acknowledged for ecological restoration excellence by this award reinvigorates us as a Landcare group. We know we are on the right track with our long-term on-ground restoration of critically endangered lowland subtropical rainforest, ongoing management of remnants and revegetation of cleared rainforest land."

Visit: www.bigscrubrainforest.org.au

Plant of the month

Coastal Tuckeroo

Cupaniosis anacardioides



by Richard Burer, Bush regeneration specialist

Summertime is here kiddies, and it's time to take a trip to the beach.

If you find yourself on the edge of a hind dune, on the edge of littoral rainforest, coastal scrub or in a cosy beachfront park, you'll probably have a chance of seeking shelter under this great small tree.

Coastal Tuckeroo is endemic on the NSW mid-north coast up into Queensland, and like last month it is not endemic to the

forests of the Nimbin area, but can be found far inland, close to the edge of the Casino and around the Coraki area also.

At home I've found this tree grows modestly, and it can make a nice landscape plant.

Happy summertime, and find time to relax under these lovely coastal tree as you enjoy the coast this summertime.

To contact Richard, email: richard.burer@gmail.com or phone 0402-746-146.

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

I've been travelling – three blissful weeks in south-east Asia, away from koalas, emails and Facebook. The opportunity came about by chance – a group of friends looking for a sixth. Amazingly my diary was reasonably clear; nothing that couldn't be delegated, so off I went.

It's been a long time between real holidays and I have to say that re-engagement, even after a relatively short break is proving to be quite challenging. The unopened emails (some 900 of them), are truly daunting; much easier to deal with the phone message bank.

One of the calls was from a staffer in Mark Pearson's office. Mark of course represents the Animal Justice Party in the NSW Legislative Council and is the first Australian to have been elected on an animal protection platform. Preparing for the debate on the Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016 and the Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016, the staffer was after a graphic description of the repercussions for a koala should a bulldozer tear through its habitat. While my absence prevented me from obliging, listening to the message reminded me that both Bills had probably passed through Parliament while I was away.

If you had anything to say about the new biodiversity legislation, your submission would have been one of the 7,000-plus received through the consultation period. Not that they counted for much more than the odd tweak here and there in the Act that was assented on 23rd November 2016.

Mainstream concerns understandably focus on scrapping land-clearing controls, which will make it easier for landowners, developers and agribusiness to clear native vegetation in urban, coastal and rural areas of NSW.

Not a lot of notice is being taken of Part 2: Protection of animals and plants which sets out the framework for managing human interactions with native animals including the regulation of wildlife rehabilitation providers, that is, groups such as Friends of the Koala, Australian Seabird Rescue, Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers and WIRES.

The risk-based approach now entrenched in Government business will also be used to regulate native animal activities. Under this approach, it is anticipated that some low risk activities may be exempt from licences, codes of practice may be developed for medium risk activities and high risk activities will continue to be licensed or prohibited. Risk-based regulation we are told will be more efficient and more effective. Many existing licences will no longer be required. Government (or what's left of it) will focus its efforts where they are most needed.

The Independent Biodiversity Review Panel's Report which informed the new legislation didn't have much to say about the wildlife rehabilitation sector; indeed I wonder if panel members had much idea of how it has functioned for the past 30 years or so. The Panel's recommendation proposes that Government takes a more strategic approach to regulating wildlife rehabilitators and that this could extend to establishing an accreditation scheme to replace the existing licences. No detail is contained in the Act. The new rules are to be worked out over the next 18 months to two years in consultation with key stakeholders.

While this may sound a bit "brave new world", opportunities exist. Government is to develop strategic partnerships with providers. The National Parks & Wildlife Service Nature Conservation Section must make a concerted



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effort, the first ever, to gather evidence on the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation sector's operation.

In mid-May the Section announced it would be undertaking an assessment of wildlife rehabilitation services provided by licensed groups and licensed individuals in order to build an understanding of the sector's compliance with standards and to identify if there are areas where future improvement may be required. It announced inspection of 50 facilities across the state and interviews with each of the licensed group's executive about service provision. Three online surveys for targeted audiences were to be designed with a report due at the end of the year.

Friends of the Koala's Care Centre was inspected by a contracted auditor in June. The Centre's Co-ordinator, Lola Whitney and the Care Co-ordinator, Susannah Keogh were on-hand to answer a wide range of questions which had been circulated beforehand.

In August the Friends of the Koala's executive interview covered a broad range of topics related to governance, finance, service delivery and our thoughts about the sector's future.

We understand that what the Sydney-based investigating team has seen and heard has been something of an eye-opener. No bad thing as the sector could do with a few champions.

To date surveys targeting current and



Shazza and her 15-month old back-young Reecy, two of 18 koalas presently in care at the Koala Care Centre in East Lismore.

former representatives to the NSW Wildlife Council which is the sector's peak body on the Council's role and effectiveness, and all wildlife carers in NSW on what they think about their involvement in voluntary native fauna rehabilitation have been administered. A third, directed at participating veterinarians is in preparation.

We are being assured that there will be no surprises and I am inclined to believe that because the services we provide voluntarily are needed by Government. Put bluntly, no Government can afford to pay for rescuing and rehabilitating native wildlife; even the iconic koala.

Having said that, I also believe that rehabbers and our supporters will need to be watchful, keeping ourselves well informed about the implementation process and ready for participation to make sure that the new arrangements enable us to keep delivering our mission effectively.

Until next time, season's greetings and happy koala spotting.

The ultimate permaculture practitioners

Up on a bend in the road above my childhood home, there once stood a magnificent tree fern. Some afternoons, we would take a walk along the thin gravel road in the wake of the logging trucks' whipped-up dust, to talk to the big *Dicksonia*, checking to see if it had escaped the council sprayer, the logging rigs' giant wheels, and the blade of the grader which scraped closer and closer every year.



Permaculture Principles

by Anastasia Guise

Those walks became a kind of journey of us against the world: we were the Defenders of the Tree Fern, holding at bay any series of threats which might end its life at any moment, sharing its near-misses and triumphs, buoyed by its tenacity against all odds. One year, that beautiful sentinel turned brown and wilted, and all but its newest leaves died. It clung on for a few more years, but there was nothing we could ultimately do for it, apart from offer it our company and commiseration.

To us, the tree fern was not just alive but unique and full of character, the same way each rock, tree and mountain was alive with personality, power

and purpose. Not passive, but full of life, and not inert, but animated. When the tree fern was dying, we visited it as if visiting a dying relative, and when it was gone, we grieved it.

When I left my childhood home, and came upon the cities, towns and highways of the wider world, it was as if I had stumbled upon a scene of desecration. The prevailing culture seemed blind to both the vibrant personalities of individual components of ecosystems, as well as to the complex connectivity within the natural world. They were deaf to the stream's voice, insensitive to the cool

benevolence of the towering forests, and dumb when it came to reading weather and landscape. They knew nobody, and nothing. They lived as if without relatives, history, or foresight. It was as if they had been given a car and never taught to drive.

It was an experience which lead me ultimately to an affinity with Indigenous land management perspectives and with permaculture. In the overlap between these two models there is great richness. It is not my place here to say whether pre-invasion land management was the ultimate example of environmental affinity (the romantic model), or whether Indigenous land management practices, although modifying the landscape to suit human needs (the future eaters model), were technologically limited and therefore somewhat curtailed (the benign savage model).

But in many respects Indigenous land managers were the ultimate permaculture practitioners. Where possible, and increasingly, such practices continue today. The modification of landscapes to



'Ferntrees' by Eugene Von Guerard

increase edges and elongate interstitial boundaries, and creation of mosaics ("guilds") are key permaculture concepts. Edges and mosaics increase both species diversity and species interactions. For example, in the edges between aquatic and terrestrial environments, one is likely to find species which prefer one or the other, but also species which prefer the edge itself. Permaculturalists might design a waterway with a convoluted, winding edge, the same way Indigenous land managers channelled water from permanent or seasonal

"Land care is the main purpose of life" – Bill Gammage

creeks into irregular shallow water bodies.

As Bill Gammage writes, in the now-seminal work *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, a prudent and purposeful application of landscape design templates by Indigenous people resulted in incredibly deep and rich topsoil, increased carrying capacity (production per acre) and food which was "plentiful, convenient and predictable." This is exactly

what permaculture is: the purposeful application of design principles over space and time to meet human needs and in line with natural systems.

Incrementally, agriculturalists and environmental managers are recognising the value in Indigenous land management perspectives and in permaculture principles. May we all be the richer for it. Perhaps then, the story of the lone *Dicksonia*, my childhood friend and teacher, might actually mean something to all of us.

Awakening

If you wish to escape the consequences of your addiction/ habit, it can be very helpful to first accept and acknowledge that that habit is the cause of those consequences. Then you simply need to replace it with an alternative that doesn't have the same drawbacks, an alternative that actually works, that builds instead of depletes, that does what you need it to do, rather than the opposite.

Addictive medicating substances, from sugar to heroin and everything in between, can be quite confusing. First we take them for their effect, but fairly soon we find ourselves taking them to compensate for the consequences of that effect. Now we need another dose to deal with the comedown from the previous dose; the substance has



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by David Ward

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become an entity with an identity and needs of its own.

Which reality do we belong in, the substance's or our own? Coming and going between realities can be a powerful and disturbing experience, hence our tendency to stay where we are, even when those consequences are costing us so much. It's quite natural for us as humans to have

feelings, and sometimes those feelings are less than pleasant. However unpleasant those feelings may be, if we give ourselves the opportunity to fully feel them, we will find that they are always passing in nature.

Only when we take that heavy handed approach of exchanging realities altogether do we find ourselves locked into negative states that can't be processed, seemingly unable to escape and compelled to perpetually dose with our chosen medication, whatever the consequences.

We've all seen it, some of us have been there, others of us are there right now.

The truth is that none of us need stay there any longer than we want to. Yoga, meditation, nutrition and community support are there for us in this challenging time, when we know we must take the return journey back to our primary reality, for others' sakes as much as our own. The

degeneration that comes with relentless intoxication provides the evidence that regeneration must equally be possible.

It seems as if the consequences of addiction just happen all by themselves, but it actually takes some real perseverance and we can find ourselves working quite hard at it, pushing against that strongest of intuitions, our survival instinct. By simply turning around, facing the other direction and actively using the tools provided, we can recover and rebuild in a surprisingly short space of time.

Addiction and depression will revert to being harmless words that are powerless over us and isolation will become a richly rewarding time spent in the company of ourselves. And if that transition back to our original reality was painful, we can choose whether we want to go through it on a daily basis, or whether we want to keep moving forwards as we naturally regenerate.

Every body sensation is a source of connection

The degree to which we feel connected varies from person to person, and from moment to moment. We're more likely to feel separate and lonely these days, even more so with that silly season coming up. Therefore I want to write about the vibrant connectedness within each one of us, right here and now.

To explore connectedness on this level, we need to slow down for a moment and listen to the potent aliveness expressed within the physical structure that is the body. Our bodies are buzzing with life and wisdom, and yes, connection.

Connectedness is a feeling generated by direct experience, not by dreams, ideas or concepts. It happens right here, within the body. Our sensory world, picked up and guided by a tender nervous

system, determines how we perceive ourselves, others and the world around us.

"The deeper we live the life of our bodies, the deeper is the upwelling of love." – Stanley Keleman

Have you ever had a distinct gut feeling about something? That's the kind of information we receive through our somatic (biological) wisdom.

Each one of us inhabits a body, but how much attention do we pay to its messages, its stirrings and expressions?

We are so accustomed to being out of touch with our body that most of us live entirely in a mental world. As a result, our reality is made up of the thoughts and dramas we see on our mental screens. Enormous amounts of data plus suppressed traumatic charges can trigger our projectors to blow up. It's not surprising our people's mental



by Betti Wille

health is endangered.

The body we live in is our source of connection. To be in touch with it means to be aware of body sensations. We live within a rich landscape of physical sensations produced by micro movements of tissues and fluids. Body sensations are non-personal phenomena. We're all sharing a universal experience (with individual flavour).

Here's an example: Each

one of us experiences the unpleasant charge of anxiety from time to time. The outcome depends entirely on our state of mind. It will pick up the sensation, recognize, evaluate and react. This is the level where separation happens. It's the moment when the unpleasant charge of anxiety gets translated into threat and possibly linked with core beliefs, like, "I'm not good enough".

Being trapped in a vicious circle of anxiety and unpleasant sensations seems to be a common issue. It needs some practice or a very innocent mind to observe the charge of anxiety as what it is: a visitor with an unpleasant energy.

Even though we may have good reasons to avoid body sensations, it doesn't necessarily mean that we're doing ourselves a favour.

Genuine happiness can only be experienced when the body is fully inhabited.

There are safe ways to explore the terrain.

- Pay attention. It can be as easy as paying full attention to very ordinary things like brushing teeth or doing the dishes. How am I standing? What sensations are present? If thoughts arise, what are they?
- Practise Yoga or other gentle body exercises.
- Observe feelings. What are the sensations that come with it? Sometimes it's possible to extend the space around a feeling and just observe it. Instead of feeling like a wired train we can choose to watch it passing through the station. There are powerful meditation techniques that focus on body experience. While writing this, a group of determined

volunteers is trying to raise funds for a local Vipassana Centre in Carool, near Tweed Heads. Check it out thoroughly to see whether this is for you: www.dhamma.org

Therapies like Somatic Experiencing or Biodynamic Craniosacral Practice focus on listening to the body while concentrating on positive resources to allow for self-regulation and healthy pacing.

Ask your body when not sure whether to eat another piece of Christmas pudding or whether to trust a person or situation. All it needs is a moment of presence and the willingness to listen.

Best wishes, stay connected.
Betti Wille is a craniosacral practitioner and teaches pelvic floor health classes for women at Nimbin Open Learning Centre. Contact: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com or phone 0490-292-138.

Learned helplessness

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

The theory of learned helplessness was originally devised by Martin Seligman in 1967.

It is a psychological condition where individuals learn they have no control over painful or aversive conditions, that their actions are futile and that they are helpless to change the situation.

When events are uncontrollable the individual learns that its behaviour and outcomes are independent. In humans this may result in clinical depression and related mental illness. The state may also result in an unwillingness to avoid subsequent encounters with the aversive stimuli, even if escapable; as individuals learn they can't control the situation and give up.

Uncontrollable events can significantly debilitate individuals, producing passivity in the face of trauma, the inability to learn and emotional stress. When training and management procedures are repeatedly unpleasant for the horse and there is no clear association between behaviour and outcome, learning and performance are likely to be interfered with, in addition to compromising welfare.

Horses learn they are unable to help themselves when the responses they use to relieve pain or discomfort are unsuccessful. When a horse has no consistent way to find a reward, it learns it has no control over its environment and may give up trying to do anything. Such horses may become

unresponsive to stimuli such as the aids and be reluctant to work. They are often then described as 'stale', 'sour', 'lazy', 'stupid', 'stubborn' or 'sluggish'.

Learned helplessness may occur in the ridden horse which is constantly being jabbed in the mouth by the bit. If the horse doesn't habituate to random tugs on its sensitive mouth, it may give up trying to respond to any amount of bit pressure. Humans call this a 'hard-mouth' and blame the problem on the horse. The normal solution is to get a harsher, more painful bit. People may fail to examine their own role in the problem or to realise that it is in fact 'learned helplessness' not a hard mouth. No horse has a hard mouth. The mouth is a soft, wet, sensitive area of the body with many nerve endings that remains sensitive regardless of what humans do with bits.

The same thing will happen if you are leading your horse and apply pressure with the lead rope, then don't release when the horse moves forward. After a while the horse will just stand there and not move when asked forward. Another example is when a rider ends up kicking a horse to make it move. This situation begins way earlier when the rider didn't release the soft leg pressure as the horse moved forward. Over time the horse learns that moving forward doesn't stop the irritation of the humans' legs so it just stands there and doesn't move. The rider gets stronger and stronger with their legs and the horse learns to tune out



the rider more and more. As you can imagine the examples are endless as this principle applies to much of our horse handling.

It is in our own best interests to be aware of and avoid learned helplessness in our horses. It may seriously affect their ability to learn in training and reduce their ability to perform. It is definitely in the interests of the horse to avoid it with a host of welfare issues associated with it. Learned helplessness in horses may cause an inability to learn, emotional stress, passivity, depression, mental illness and social anxiety. Unfortunately, in some situations such horses are actually admired for their passivity and acceptance of whatever humans do to them and the true nature of what is occurring is not understood.

Horse carers everywhere have a responsibility to the individuals in their care and a moral requirement to ensure that no horses suffer from this debilitating syndrome.

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How to prevent heat stress in horses

by Les Rees,
Equine naturopath

Hot weather can have some devastating effects on our horses and can cause life threatening consequences, particularly during hot and humid conditions.

For equines, sweating accounts for two thirds of heat dissipation and therefore plays an important role in thermoregulation. However, high temperatures and humid conditions can have devastating effects on sweat evaporation.

The high moisture content of a humid environment slows down the evaporation process as increased sweat forms an insulating layer on the body, reducing heat dissipation.

As a consequence, sweat glands release more water to speed up the process which ultimately causes dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and failure to reduce core body heat.

Symptoms of heat stress include debility and fatigue, a rise in body temperature, increased pulse rate and respiration, laboured breathing, muscle spasms and tremors, stumbling, dark urine and general debility in overall function and behaviour.

This can result in death if left undiagnosed.

Prevention strategies

- ♦ Provide adequate shade.

When temperatures rose to



over 30 degrees I noticed a number of horses were out in the sun without access to adequate shade. Having one tree in a paddock doesn't necessarily mean that it'll provide adequate shade throughout the day. It depends on the sun's position in the sky and when only small areas of shade are available, it's the dominant horses that get the best spots whilst the others hang around the margins either getting partial shade or none.

- ♦ **Horses kept in stables during the day** should be provided with a place where there is adequate movement of air flow and water supply.
- ♦ **Provision of fresh clean drinking water.** Ensure that troughs are cleaned regularly and there is a continual supply.
- ♦ **Provision of salt licks.** Himalayan salt licks and/or mineral licks should

be supplied in an easily accessible place.

- ♦ **Add electrolytes to diet.** Sodium, potassium, calcium and chlorine are lost in urine and sweat; if they're not replaced it will cause metabolic problems, and subsequent lack of interest in eating and drinking. It's not uncommon to find salty layers over their backs, a clear demonstration of the amount of electrolyte loss.
- ♦ **Wash horses in the evenings** to remove the salt and reduce the risk of attracting flies. Use a sweat scraper to remove the excess salty water.
- ♦ **Never over-work horses above their level of fitness conditioning.** Have a conditioning program and adhere to it. On hot days it's better to ride early in the morning or later in the evening when the heat has dissipated.

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The resonant voice

Some years ago over in Perth, I attended a four day voice workshop where we explored many of the possibilities of voice: we sang in groups, in duos, alone, in large enclosed and open spaces, stainless steel cupboards, narrow hallways, against wooden fences and brick walls, all the while experimenting with depth, pitch, resonance, and tone. It changed my life. It also brought a consciousness that I don't think I had previously regarding the relationship between health and voice.

Since then I listen more to the quality of a person's voice, including my own. I notice, for instance, that when I am being insincere, my voice pitch is higher and more hollow sounding.

When I am concerned, my voice drops sometimes to a barely audible whisper, and down a couple of tones. There is nothing unique about this observation except that most of the time this kind of awareness is mostly unconscious. What I'm noticing more and more is that I'm noticing it more and more. I am interested in it and am

starting to make a study of it, in order to enhance my psychotherapeutic practice and possibly contribute further to the literature. I remember a fellow attendee at the workshop whose voice was distinctly flat and one-dimensional. It sounded as though she was deaf, in a way. She wasn't actually physiologically deaf, as she told us, but, effectively functionally deaf.

She was clinically depressed. Her whole demeanour was heavy, insular, passive, and lacking in reciprocity. In essence we didn't get a sense of give and take with her, nor she with us. She and I partnered a few times, and it seemed she couldn't hear me sing, nor could she tune her voice to my voice. What was more strange, she couldn't, somehow, hear herself. The quality of her voice was flat and colourless, and lacked resonance. It was like a dead thing; a clunk, not a ring.

Over the course of the four days, it was apparent that her ears were opening. She was starting to sing in tune and as this was happening, her whole posture changed



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell
M.Couns. PhD

as well as a liveliness coming to her step. Her face started lightening and becoming mobile. It seemed also that her skin was clearing. Before she had a sort of bluish-grey dull complexion; but now, breath and blood was clearing it away.

There was a profound change in the way she sang with us. Her voice increasingly became responsive to us, and stronger. From being flat as well as lifeless, her voice was entraining itself to be in tune with us. The transformation was extraordinary and a revelation to me.

This woman became a model for me of the possibilities of voice training,

or just regular singing for the fun of it, as a therapeutic tool. I'll sometimes recommend particular clients join a choir, have singing lessons, or just make a regular practice of singing around the home, or even on the way to work to music on the radio. Those that have are becoming less distant from their engagement with other people and themselves; a revelation that they notice very quickly, and which becomes very obvious to me by the quality and resonance of their voice.

In singing, it is as though our ears are opened up and a playfulness of encounter begins to happen. Importantly also, with the reciprocity of encounter comes a fearlessness and assertiveness and an ability to choose which behaviours of others should be agreed to, and which rejected. To use the voice consciously is the beginning of hearing oneself, and thus, hearing others. It is the beginning of actively being in the world as a participator, and not just an observer.

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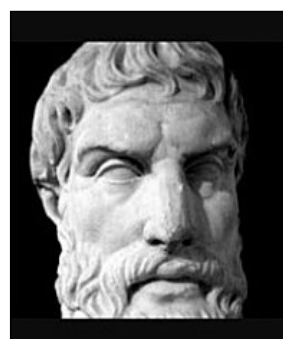
The Buddhist-yogic art of dying

by Cameron Storey

Before I began the practice of yoga and Buddhist studies my relationship with death and dying was at best distant and unknown and at worst fearful and regrettable. The transformational process of understanding death and dying took place over a couple of decades of dharma practice and continues to deepen.

But let me go back to the beginning. Savasana (corpse pose) was the introduction to letting go of: the physical body, controlling the breath, body tensions, fidgeting, withdrawing the five senses, emotional reactions, and constant unnecessary thinking. Feeling the body become heavy into the floor with a deep sense of resting. Even the idea of laying down in a vulnerable state was totally foreign to my constant state of hyper-alertness and tension. Where does hyper-alertness and tension even come from? The short answer is living and stress. I've watched nearly 150,000 students perform savasana now and see how everyone has differing levels of alertness, stress and ability to let go but they can improve with practice. A small percentage fight the process, eyes open, constant movement maybe even coming out early. The internal emotional and psychological baggage is too overwhelming to bear in stillness and silence.

For most people though the letting go leads to the bliss (ananda) of abandoning everything temporarily and recuperating in a similar way to the way we rejuvenate during deep sleep and sometimes even producing similar snoring sounds. When I was in first year of my Tibetan Buddhist studies subjects were: this precious human



The art of living well and the art of dying well are one.

~ Epicurus

life, the drawbacks of forgetting death, the benefits of remembering death and actual meditating on death: ways to gain conviction that death is certain and is impending, ways to gain conviction that the time of death is uncertain, at the time of death our practice of dharma is of benefit to us and meditating on death imagining that the time of death has come. While some people might find these subjects morbid I find the raw honesty a relief that inspires me to make best use of my remaining time, energy and resources.

The sequence of the dying process whether in savasana or meditation is begun by experiencing the dissolution of the winds associated with the four main elements: 1) the solidness of the body (earth) dropping away and eyes become still, 2) the stilling of the fluids of the body (water) and the ear sense doors closing down, 3) the cooling of the body and mind (fire) and sense of smell diminishes, and 4) the stilling of the breath (air) and the sense of taste diminishes. The ten primary winds move to the heart. This is the elemental sequence toward the fifth element, ether. The fifth dissolution is the head energy moving down. The sixth dissolution is the digestive fire moving up. The seventh

dissolution is the merging of these energies at the heart centre. The eighth dissolution is the clear light of death or extremely subtle mind. We may abide here for some time or we may have only experienced the dissolution of the earth element if we are a beginner. How deep we descend depends upon the depth of our practice and level of detachment. I end this article with a quote from Alan Watts.

"If you are afraid of death, be afraid. The point is to get with it, to let it take over – fear, ghosts, pains, transience, dissolution, and all. And then comes the hitherto unbelievable surprise; you don't die because you were never born. You had just forgotten."

The Dharma Centre on Lillifield Community has a range of both classes and teachers. Call 02 66897 120 or check out our Facebook page "Dharma Centre – Lillifield" for more details and directions.

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Liver pathology

With the election of the 45th US president, many emotional buttons have been pushed. The anger, blame, lack of insight and chaotic thinking obvious in this person are all those associated with liver pathology.

It is easy for people with this pathology to cause the same sort of reactions in others, explaining the mass appeal and emotional response in his followers, leaving the rest of the world aghast at what is happening. It seems a good time to think about liver pathology individually and in wider society, and how to harness useful healthy liver energy.

In individuals, liver pathology is very common, being that it is affected by emotions and in turn affects emotions. The role of the liver is to move and spread qi evenly around the body, therefore all organs and meridians are affected when the qi is not flowing. Spleen, stomach, gallbladder, intestines and uterus are especially affected.

There are specific liver pathology patterns commonly seen.

One pattern is liver yang rising. In this pattern there is usually a deficiency of liver or kidney yin. Yin is grounding, moistening and cooling. A deficiency allows yang to rise. This is a common cause of headaches often throbbing and severe, dizziness, deafness or eye problems. Emotionally, outbursts of anger are often seen.

Liver qi constraint is a common pattern. Symptoms include depression, moodiness, cold hands and feet, feelings of abdominal distension or bloating, feeling of a lump in the throat, insomnia, tight neck and shoulders, irregular periods or PMS.



by Brigid Beckett

Anything that is worsened by stress and emotional upset is likely to involve the liver. Out of control emotions, mood swings, anger, resentment, lack of insight and blaming as previously mentioned are pointers of liver pathology. Repressed anger is likely to cause liver qi constraint, while vented anger causes liver yang to rise.

The hun is the mental/spiritual aspect of the liver. It is responsible for dreams, vision, wisdom, creativity and ideas. If it is not strong, depression can result. However, if it is out of balance with the shen,

the mind/heart energy, there will be chaotic thinking or manic behaviour.

To counter a world where there is plenty of obvious liver dysfunction, it is useful to look at the positive qualities of a healthy liver.

In classic Chinese medicine the liver association is the Universal Mother, this is the energy seen in Quan Yin, Mother Mary and other compassionate deities. Compassion comes from the heart, which is needed

to direct the hun's vision. The energy is essentially female.

As well as compassion, another quality from a strong and functioning liver is finding strength in adversity, including the strength needed when there appears to be no end in sight or no light at the end of the tunnel. Images associated with the liver in Chinese Cosmology include the Ox, a symbol of strength and patience.

These attributes arise from a healthy liver. They are possible with a calm mind. Practices of meditation and qi moving exercise such as yoga, tai chi and qigong are all helpful. Setting aside times to be quietly in nature will also contribute. If symptoms of liver pathology persist, acupuncture is perfectly suited to moving stuck qi.

The strength of the liver organ and meridian is the antidote to the manifestations of liver dysfunction either in individuals or society, enabling us to be in tune with the cosmos.

On that note, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Brigid Beckett is a fully qualified and registered acupuncturist working at Lismore Community Acupuncture. Phone 0431-702-560.

Natural law



by Helene Collard

As the Gregorian year draws to a close, take a moment to reflect on how the great cycles of change and transformation have touched you during the year.

It's been a rough road for many, with some bumps and unexpected turns.

Simultaneously, there's been positive progress and abundance.

Having this pronounced duality of experience has been difficult to manage at times, due to the rollercoaster feeling of ups and downs.

As our external environment seems to accelerate at ever-increasing speed, it creates the need for regular moments of inner-stillness and self-awareness to remain 'awake' and sovereign. Our mainstream world is like a vortex that quickly swallows you up, if you spend most of your time 'asleep'. How do you stay in touch with yourself?

We have all the tools within to navigate through our increasingly toxic environment, however, we must be on our game. Identify what helps you stay in the present moment and do it often. Just 5 minutes of a breath meditation will work wonders if you do it regularly. But what if we could return to our breath at any time during the day, and make it a way of life? That is the way forward during these times of chaos.

*We are all self-governing.
Let us call upon our Ancestors
and teachers
- past and present -
To guide us in the way of the
Heart.
You are all my relations.
All is One*

Remember, collapse and disintegration leads to a new beginning. It provides opportunity to build new foundations that truly reflect the holistic needs of the whole. Make it your priority to be present in your regular experience and allow your wisdom to guide you.

If you feel called to be nurtured with a clearing and centering Reiki Treatment, or an empowering Reiki Course, I'd love to hear from you.

Yours in Wellbeing, Helene

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Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing, is a Reiki Master and the Founder of the Yemaya Centre and Evolve Events in Lismore. Helene's approach to wellbeing is focused in personal growth. Helene offers regular Courses and Circles, and enjoys making a range of wellbeing topics accessible to the community through Evolve Events. Helene has been writing Natural Law and delivering wellbeing workshops since 2008. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.

Birthing definitions

by Kirrah Holborn
Traditional wisdom

Recently I was interviewed for the 7.30 Report on ABC-TV. When the episode was aired, I was disappointed to see one of the reporters got confused about the difference between homebirth and free-birth. It sparked conversations between pregnant women, midwives, doulas and the general population. It was brought to my attention that there are many words used in the birth world that can be confusing. I'd like to help define some of the words to help bring clarity.

Homebirth versus freebirth

Homebirth is when a woman chooses to birth her baby at home usually assisted by a midwife. Freebirth or unassisted childbirth refers to the choice to birth without medical assistance or the help of a midwife. While most freebirths do occur at home, the difference is that planned homebirth includes the presence of a birth professional.

Doula

A person that assists the woman and family during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. Her role is to provide emotional, physical and practical support and to provide information. A doula does not provide any clinical care or have any medical responsibilities.

Midwife

A midwife is a qualified professional trained in caring for women during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. They have a



thorough understanding of normal birth and are able to recognize variations of normal. They view birth as an inherently natural and normal part of life. They give medical care, support and advice to women during her pregnancy and birth. A midwife is able to detect if complications arise and refer accordingly. Midwives generally work in hospitals, birth centres and homes.

Obstetrician

A doctor trained to provide medical care to women in pregnancy, birth and postpartum. They can perform cesarean deliveries and other specialist techniques like forceps and vacuum extractions. They are experts when a pregnancy deviates from normal or become 'high-risk'. They deal with any complications or emergencies during pregnancy and birth.

Dilation

This refers to the thinning out and opening up of the cervix during late pregnancy and during the first stage of labour. Normally the cervix (entrance of the womb) is nearly closed. At the

end of pregnancy, the cervix will begin to dilate and open up to allow the baby to pass through. Contractions in the first stage of labour help open the cervix up to 10cm dilation.

Transition

In labour, this refers to the time between 8-10cm dilation. It is the time between when the cervix is finishing dilating and just before pushing. It's usually the hardest part of labour but thankfully is usually the shortest phase too. Contractions are usually quite intense and close together which can feel overwhelming. Do whatever you need to do to move through it. Moan, move your body and ask for what you need. It can be helpful to take it one breath at a time and be reminded that baby is close to being born.

Antenatal versus postnatal

Antenatal refers to the time during pregnancy (before birth) whereas postnatal refers to the time after birth. Some people prefer to use the term prenatal to define the time before birth. During pregnancy, women usually

have antenatal checks and attend prenatal classes. Postnatal (or postpartum) refers to the time after the baby is born. Women have postnatal check-ups and can hire a postnatal doula to help.

Placenta encapsulation

This is the process of turning a placenta into capsules for the new mother to take. The placenta is processed, sliced, dehydrated, ground into a powder and placed into capsules. Many women rave about the benefits. Most agree it gives them more energy, balanced moods and good milk supply. The capsules look like other supplements so all the 'ick' factor is gone by encapsulating.

Kirrah Holborn provides pregnancy, birth and postpartum support in the Northern Rivers. She facilitates Birthing From Within antenatal classes, gives nurturing pregnancy and new-mama massages and provides placenta encapsulation services. For the chance to win a pregnancy massage text your name and email to 0429-308-851 or visit: www.traditionalwisdom.com.au