

All the news around the Blue Knob Market

by Eric Smith

Bread diversity – an experiment

Our regular bread vendors, Gito and Mahto, will no longer be selling at the market. Mahto, as young men do, is travelling the world, and Gito will be focusing on his art. You have no doubt seen the whale in the middle of Nimbin? (See story on Page 1.) He has more in the works.

To fill the Market's bread need, we are trying an experiment – bread from several existing stallholders.

Param will bring some of those lovely Russian-style loaves that he was bringing in earlier, Andy will continue to bring his Turkish flatbread, Genevieve will be bringing baguettes, and Michelle Agioritis will bring some of the loaves that she has been baking for home use for years. But commenting on the rest of her offerings, she suggests to the more decadent, "Let them eat cake."

"Tell me a story" – a note from Marie

Sometimes I simply must kiss the Earth with gratitude and this is one of those times.

Thanks to five storytellers, the age-old



Fraser Ashford

craft of story telling has taken centre stage in the hills of Blue Knob and people are loving it!

Len Martin, Fraser Ashford, Vince Stead, Teresa Biscoe and Ruthie Shinn are the gracious people who have given freely of



Hellena Post

their time.

The talent is astounding and more is to unfold. On Saturday 5th November, the final story will be told by Ruthie Shinn.

The stories are being recorded and will reach cyberspace; hopefully to land on the

Blue Knob Farmers Market facebook page.

On behalf of the Blue Knob Farmers Market and the Blue Knob community I ask Len, Fraser, Vince, Teresa and Ruthie to please accept our gratitude. Thank you for the beauty you have brought to these hills.

The stitching (and enriching) continues

For those few who have not heard, Hellena Post and family will be up in Brisbane for around six months as her son Merlin is treated for leukemia (recovery going well we hear).

For the most up to date information, find her on Facebook for updates, and ways you can help. At the market, Jacqui Williams has offered to host her Stitch and Enrich on the old stage. This is a special invitation for all fibre workers to come and be a part of what Hellena has created.

And remember – any kind of stitching is welcome, from the highest art piece to a bit of mending, or that scarf you have meant to finish since 2003. Just love and appreciate everyone around as you do it- that's what Hellena would do.

See you Saturday morning at Blue Knob.

A flavour of Southwest New Mexico

The Imbibers Ark

by Thom Culpeper

The enchantment of the feral, a neglected gourmands delight of the spiny indelicate. Relishing the Nopals (pads) of *Opuntia Stricta*, the common prickly pear.

Once a scourge of rural Oz, the "pear" is beloved of other cultures. Weeds can be an added beauty to the plate of the adventurous culinist.

The prickly pear is just such a beast. Cooked, it has a flavour of lemony, green beans. Harvest in spring when the young pads are tender, leaving others to produce the beautiful flowers and the consequent "tunas", the brilliantly coloured pears themselves. This fruit de-seeded makes any number of products from fresh jams to highly flavoured lemonades and art dyes.

Treat this plant with great care, it bites, wear stout leather gloves, flame off the "glochids" (sharp spines) or scrape with a knife under running water. Skin with peeler under running water, washing off mucilage and spines and trim edges, brush with olive oil or oil of choice, grill or fry until light brown, serve as salad or in any added veg requirement, They are super with goat or chicken meat.

The "pads" can be stuffed with cheeses as are chilli rellenos, or served with eggs as in 'Nopales con huevos'. Added to soups and casseroles, they are very appetising. Do try them, you will be surprised.

Bon appetito!

"Food from ferals" – the wild harvest.

Kimchi class starting soon at Blue Knob, hands-on 15 places, all materials supplied, bookings required. Notice will be posted on the noticeboard at Blue Knob Hall.



Prickly pear and chorizo salsa toss-up

Ingredients

- 4 uncooked chorizo
- 1 raw cleaned nopal (prickly pear pad)
- 1/2 cup of green poblano pepper
- 1/2 cup of diced red capsicum
- 1/2 cup of sliced shallots
- 1 serrano chilli (finely sliced)
- 2 cloves of garlic (finely chopped)
- 2 tblsp fresh lime juice
- dash of balsamic vinegar
- 1 tblsp of culantro (*eryngium foetidum*) (Mexican coriander)
- 4 cups of shredded cos lettuce
- 2 full leaves per plate of cos
- 8 medium sized tortillas
- Grated hard goat cheese
- Salt to taste

Method

Cut cleaned nopal/pads in 30mm squares, fry in lightly oiled pan over low heat and brown until most of the moisture has evaporated. Remove, cool and julienne. Lightly fry chorizo, cut into 15x15mm pieces, blend ingredients except the lettuce and set aside to flavour.

Warm tortillas, allocate chopped lettuce in full leaves on tortillas, top with chorizo salsa, fold tortillas and serve topped with goat cheese.

thewholeearthveg@gardener.com

Nimbin Garden Club notes



A lovely afternoon attended by over 40 members and guests was held at the home of Valerie Cameron, Mountain Top Road, Nimbin.

The beautiful old homestead is surrounded by several 100 year old hoop pines and a variety of large fig trees that started out as strangler figs and over the many years have almost completely devoured their host trees. These wonderful large shady trees have now been underplanted and boast magnificent gardens of mass plantings including bromeliads, flag lilies and one garden has a spectacular variety of green and deep purple foliage plants. The figs provide food to the many resident native parrots.

The beautifully maintained property has rolling green hills as far as you can see and

a view to the Nimbin Rocks. Fourteen dams feed into each other and overflow into gullies planted out with cabbage tree palms amongst the native plants. Dieties are mass planted on the banks to prevent erosion.

Valerie, a keen horse owner, spent two years clearing and removing all crofton weed from the large horse paddocks.

There are numerous planting throughout the property with specialist trees, shrubs, bamboo and bougainvillea's encircled by nasturtiums, ablaze with colour.

The vast mature orchard features a large freestanding pear that was crafted into a unique espaliered technique fifteen years ago.

This wonderful 227 acre property is an absolute credit to Valerie who bought the then run down property 25 years ago.

This is the last garden visit for 2016 and we would like to thank the many homeowners who opened their gardens for our members and guest to enjoy throughout the year. Our next garden visit will be in February with details to be advised.

A special thank you to Norco and Pauline Ahern, who donated this month's raffle prizes.

How to heal from grief and loss

by Robin Stein

Several people have asked if I would write about grief. It is a subject close to my heart since the tragic loss of my incredible 27-year old son some years ago.

The shock of grief, tragedy and loss impacts the heart like a tsunami, creating what homeopaths call 'layers of emotional pain' from which we must be healed before we can move forward into present time.

If it is not healed, we tend to carry this pain into the future where it continues to influence us adversely. So how is it possible to heal these wounds in our heart?

My own grief put me into bed for more than seven years. My heart stopped twice and I bled from my lungs and stomach. There was no understanding of what had happened, so therefore, there could be no 'acceptance.' Catastrophic loss is impossible for the heart to endure or process.

I looked at the work of Doctor Elizabeth Kubler Ross and her *Five Stages of Grief* in my attempt to gain a greater understanding.

The horror was too huge for my mind to contemplate, or for my heart to feel in any way, so I lived inside a nightmare, believing that at any moment, my son would walk through the door. Of course, the soul 'knows' the truth, but self-preservation does not permit us to view the loss openly for some time.

I felt as though I was enveloped in a cloud of darkness and despair from



which I was unable to extricate myself for the next 6-7 years.

During this time, I related fully to those five stages of grief which are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Each of us moves through those stages in a different way, and at each stage, I walked into my healing room and took the remedies I was 'guided' to take. I know I was 'guided' because I 'chose' the remedies while I was asleep!

Denial creates disbelief while the mind remains unable to process shock. The remedies that assisted me most were arnica, anacardium and petrol.

Each of these remedies has 'key-note' symptoms of a 'marked aggravation' from emotion, with a total inability to focus attention, determine time, or even to recognise hunger or exhaustion.

Anger: During this stage of my grief, I waged war on anybody who had ever hurt my son in his life, and alarmingly, lost all restraint for my words and actions. My rage was so overwhelming that it drove my blood pressure sky high. And the remedies I reached for to promote healing were anacardium and hyosyamus, both of which paint a picture of a profoundly disturbed nervous system.

Bargaining: Usually with a higher force. In my case, I begged the Creator to take my life and not the life of my son. Belladonna has these symptoms, but it was stramonium in high potency that assisted me the most.

Depression: It takes a very strong and concerted effort to lift yourself above this stage of grief, where so much time is spent grieving, crying and processing. I

recognise that I still have bouts of depression. The best remedies are aurum met., ignatia, natrum mur and pulsatilla.

Acceptance seems impossible. But eventually, there is no more energy to fight it. I'm uncertain if I will ever reach this point fully, however, thankfully, I no longer wage an inner war. Mostly now, I can separate myself from the pain in order to continue my healing work.

I would like to add one more stage for grief, which is **Guilt**. It is a human trait to wonder what we could have done better for the person we have lost, but we must also recognise that we do our best at every stage of life. The remedy to resolve these feelings is cyclamen.

Please let me know if you'd like any of these remedies for healing. Email: robinstein@gmail.com

The emotions and Bowen therapy

It appears that many appearing within my orbit are having a confronting and confusing time at the moment, including me.

Those that know maintain it's a time of planetary realignment, which quite frankly doesn't help much, except I wish they would all hurry up and get sorted so that myself and others can have a bit of a rest.

Mind you, I also know some in my orbit who are having a wonderful time right now, so who's to figure. Maybe it will be their turn to dig up their stuff next week.

At the moment I am looking to borrow a steel guitar and a reasonable voice from someone because it appears that writing plantive country and western music should be my new job. I became convinced of this when, amongst all the other shit that was going down, the dog died.

Of course she had to have the heart attack on a Sunday and the miniscule amount of green dream needed to send her small form to the perfect place was grossly overpriced at \$240.

All the same, I am sure there was a tiny gleam of triumph in her button eyes just before she left. Bet she was thinking, "See what happens when you



by Tonia Haynes

won't let me hide my bones behind the cushion on the couch? And anyway, what's the big deal about peeing inside on that nice soft carpet when it's raining? You don't have to go outside to pee. Serves you right for treating me so badly!"

The cream on this very sour cake came a week after the dog died when a friend, who has been riding and building Harley motorbikes almost since he arrived on the planet, took a corner too wide and died under the wheels of a car. 43 years old. A great and generous

being and a fantastic dad, I salute you Jason Andrew Travis. You will be sadly missed by all for a very long time.

So what happens to the physical body in times of emotional turmoil? Unless one is ten foot tall and bulletproof, which some pretend to be, the body is also inclined to feel out of whack, as the adrenal glands overload in their attempt to get us out of danger.

Digestive problems, aches and pains, forgetfulness and tiredness are just some of the symptoms of stress. That is, if one is lucky enough not to trip over the carpet and break a leg.

Being that my life has begun to improve to the point that I am now once again able to see the light at the end of the tunnel and have the energy to give to others, I suggest that a mixture of massage, spinal realignment and Bowen Therapy in the nurturing surrounds of my clinic in Nimbin will assist you to cope with the stresses of life with a calmer, more optimistic frame of mind.

Plus I will be able to empathise with how you're feeling. Emotional stress is no fun but it is usually fixable.

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Managing cats claw creeper

Weed Words

with Triny Roe

Your weed could be my dinner, a cure for an affliction, or resource material for making baskets.

If we effectively used some of the local weeds, they would be less of a problem.

Many of the plants which have earned reputations as weeds can be used as a medicinal treatment, food or fibre for people and or stock. However, when they're left to overgrow everything else, smother existing vegetation, become monocultures and exclude other species, they need serious management and control measures.

Got tineas? In Mexico, decoctions of leaves from the giant devil fig, *Solanum chrysotrichum*, is an efficacious fungicide foot wash. (Don't drink it!) Also don't allow mature specimens to flower and set fruit. The fruit is eaten by bats and birds, which carry seed far and wide. It can and does pop up anywhere, planted in a nutritious packet of poop to give it a good start to life.

Neglect this fast growing thorny shrub at your peril. Left to its own devices, GDF will entrench, forming intractable dense groves in just a few short years. It is classified as Class 3 Noxious and landholders have a responsibility to remove this plant.

Another noxious weed, cats claw creeper, *Macfadyena unguis-cati*, flowers in Spring. It's easy to spot the infestations. This rampant vine loves to climb trees, gripping tightly to its host with claw-like tendrils. It can grow to 30 metres. Older stems develop rootlets which adhere to the bark. If not cut back, cats claw will reach the canopy and smother large trees. In the longer term it can transform whole ecosystems as it spreads from tree to tree and covers the ground. Cats claw is often found on creek banks and in



rainforest remnants.

Once established, cats claw is very difficult to eradicate. Multiple underground tubers can re-shoot even after some of them have been treated with herbicide. Attend to new outbreaks promptly to reduce the work involved. Biological control has been used in Northern NSW with releases of leaf-sucking tingid and a leaf-tying moth, but it is too early to assess its long term effectiveness. A leaf-mining beetle has also been approved for release.

Cats claw does have a use and it's great for weaving. Andre Ohana has been a recent inspiration in the village with his beautiful, sturdy woven baskets, even winning Grand Champion at the Nimbin Show with his work. Who knows where basket weaving can take you? Get weaving folks! Great therapy too, for those who need focus and quietened minds. You can often find Andre in village, hanging out in the blister sharing his skills. Nimbin also hosts the annual

Weave and Mend Festival, and there is a weekly Wednesday weaving session under the trees by the market stage.

Nimbin has plenty of this resource. You can find cats claw in Thorburn Street. Sections of Goolmangar Creek are lined with tree corpses spectacularly festooned with the pretty yellow flowering creeper. There are a number of yet smaller isolated populations in and around the valley as well, as it continues to spread. The papery winged seeds can blow far and wide, or wash down stream in floods. It can also be carried in nursery materials and landscaping supplies or in mud on vehicles.

If you already have it, cut through the stems before the flowers set fruit, and do yourself and your neighbours a favour. Stop it from killing your trees and prevent it from spreading next door or washing downstream in the summer floods. Address new outbreaks promptly to protect existing vegetation and avoid a long-term problem.

Happy weeding and basket making.

Alternative Christianity

by Geoff Dawe

Jesus, according to professor of history David Cannadine in his book *The Undivided Path*, was expressing a militancy when he said, in Mathew's Gospel, "he that is not with me is against me." Another view is that this is not a militancy so much as Jesus was expressing that the spiritual path is the only path to ultimate comfort and the longing for "the good life" of materialism is not in that direction.

Nevertheless, the spiritual path does not seek to block or inhibit the path of people who wish to experience materialism. In fact the essential journey of Jesus, particularly his participation on the cross, can be seen as a message of "leave well enough alone"; tolerate; allow.

The spiritual path is concerned primarily for mere ideas or concepts such as compassion, tolerance, mercy etc, and the practice of these ideas on the Earth plane. These can all be combined under the general concept of love or the idea that there is nothing that does not belong. The spiritual is more concerned for connection to this concept than to direct connection to the physical plane. The physical is secondary consideration, rather than primary. Treating the physical as primary consideration awakens the idea of hell.

The prediction of climate change

in Australia is for drying and accompanying increase in fires. One could see "the fires of hell" not just as metaphor but more literally on the Earth plane as one of the outcomes of global warming and its creation by materialism.

Because of humanity's battle with the elements of nature, humans have tended to see a division between spiritualism and materialism and see the division as a battle between the angels and the devil. Humans always had the option of seeing the angels and the devil as just two ways of coming to terms with the world, just as nature need not have been battled. Pan, the overseer of all nature has suggested, "if you feel like rutting then why not rut?" This is part of the total experience of the physical body. One does not engage in total experience of the physical body and by extension, the world, by repressing the need to rut.

Nevertheless, addiction to rutting, and addiction to any of the physical world, confines oneself to a living that can be seen as hellish in that none of it provides the ultimate comfort humans are seeking.

However, the physical is not to be avoided. Rather, transcendence of the physical plane may require complete immersion in the physical. Immersion is complete relationship with everything. This is not the same as attachment. Attachment occurs through reduced sociability; reduced

relationship. Attachment to the physical in effect is a surrogate for missed sociability.

Sociability is here defined as the tendency to see the other as oneself. In world politics presently it has nascent, verbal existence. President Obama said, in relation to the refugee crisis that it was "a test of our common humanity ... whether we see ourselves in another." (*SMH*, 22/9/16)

David Cannadine mentions that Edward Gibbon, the author of the 18th century history classic *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* wrote that Christianity helped bring down the Roman Empire with otherworldliness. In Edward's words: "...the last remains of military spirit were buried in the cloister": not enough practical attention to the needs of the physical; an attempt to transcend the world by ignoring it.

According to Edward, polytheistic paganism was a reason for Rome's success. The many gods, "considered by the people as equally true" harboured tolerance; the attribute role-modelled by Jesus in his journey on the cross.

Institutionalised Christianity, on the other hand, lost the plot early. David writes that it was "dogmatic, all-consuming, prosletising, exclusive, well-organised and had its own priesthood and hierarchy." These were also largely attributes of the Roman state. Christianity, as formalised religions, grew more as a scion of Rome than as the philosophy of Jesus.



Backyard biodiversity booklet

Lismore City Council has launched a new publication to inspire urban, village and rural residential home owners to invite the natural world into their gardens.

My Local Native Garden was launched by Theresa Adams (pictured), Lismore City Council Environmental Strategies Co-ordinator, at the Big Scrub Day at Rocky Creek Dam in October.

The Environmental Strategies team partnered with Rous County Council to create the 40-page colour booklet and Brunswick Valley Landcare kindly provided the template from their original version for the Byron Shire.

The booklet provides tips on designing and planning

a garden using natives, and recommends species suitable to plant in Lismore's main landscapes, the floodplain, midland hills and escarpments. For example, there are 22 species listed to create a creek-side rainforest garden with groundcovers, vines, shrubs and trees.

"For the Lismore version we added information on landscaping for water quality in our drinking water catchments, and information on how to look after Lismore's important koalas in our own backyards," Theresa said.

"Local native species are easy to grow, are adapted to the extremes of our climate, and can offer a lot of colour and texture to make your

garden beautiful. Most importantly, a native garden will help create connectivity between patches of habitat for the movement of native plants and animals. The Richmond Birdwing butterfly is one example of local wildlife slowly coming back to the urban environment through the planting of the Birdwing Butterfly vine.

The booklets are now available for download on Council's website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au or pick up a copy at Council's Corporate Centre, 43 Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah, the Lismore Library, the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre and the Lismore Environment Centre.

Plant of the month

Palm Lily / Cordyline *Cordyline stricta*



by Richard Burer, Bush regeneration specialist

Cordyline stricta is one of my real favourites. Strictly it's not local to the valleys of Nimbin, but it's common on and closer to the coast, where it can be found growing alongside and underneath paperbarks in the wetlands that remain in that area.

In Nimbin, I've found this hardy multi-trunked Palm Lily to be very rewarding in

the garden, as it is able to take full sun, dry and wet conditions and looks pretty nice against a wall, or in a subtropical garden setting and along bushland and garden paths.

Purple flowers in spring are followed by black berries in late summer, which make for easy propagation.

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

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Partners and stakeholders are vital to Friends of the Koala's conservation mission. We are a relatively small, entirely voluntary regional group with limited experience and resources. Influential partners can help our cause enormously as has been demonstrated by the International Fund for Animal Welfare's (IFAW) involvement in the Save Ballina's Koalas campaign.

Quite frankly the campaign would not have achieved anything like the outcomes it has without IFAW's campaigning experience, infrastructure and supporter base. The campaign may not have succeeded in persuading government to change the route but the conditions which Roads and Maritime Services must meet in regard to protecting the koala population are far greater than would have been the case.

Native wildlife campaigning is a relatively new development in IFAW's Oceania office and we were fortunate that the koala was quickly identified by the then regional manager to spearhead the campaigning effort. IFAW joined the Save Ballina's Koalas campaign in early 2014, bringing with them internationally successful campaigners in Josey Sharrad and Matt Collis as well as a network of hundreds of thousands of supporters across the globe (over 22,000 in NSW alone). IFAW has a demonstrated capacity for sophisticated online actions, be they petitions or letter-writing to members of parliament. The international interest was not limited to the public but included distinguished scientists as well.

Obviously there are many community-based organisations doing excellent work to protect wild koalas and to assist their recovery in NSW and beyond. Undoubtedly the oldest

is the Australian Wildlife Society (the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Ltd), which played an important role in bringing an end to the importation of koala and wombat skins into the United States of America and in Australia's eventual prohibition, in 1933, of the export of koalas and koala products.

More contemporaneous is the work of the North East Forest Alliance, the North Coast Environment Council, the National Parks Association of NSW, the South East Region Conservation Alliance, the Western Woodlands Alliance and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, all of whom have developed a koala focus to some degree over recent years. The work of the Koala Preservation Society Australia and other koala rehabilitation groups is also important.

Networking with such organisations is given a high priority within Friends of the Koala. Being something of a conference tragic, events like the Nature Conservation Council's Annual Conference are a great way to establish and maintain contact with a broad range of like-minded folk. Held over a weekend, Saturday is an interesting mix of panels and workshops, finished off by presentation of the NSW Environment Awards, all of which is open to the public. Sunday is devoted to the NCC business of reports, executive and member motions and annual election.

This year's conference was combined with the 2016 National Environment Meeting, an Australia-wide environmental forum in which key issues facing the movement are discussed. The theme was 'hope in the dark', taken from the title of Rebecca Solnit's "feel-good" tome



Conrad was the victim of a dog attack at Whian Whian. A hind leg was badly torn and he spent seven long months in care before being released back to the wild in May

for exhausted campaigners and activists of a decade or so ago, *Hope in the Dark: The Never-Surrender Guide to Changing the World*.

The two events merged on the Saturday but to be honest I couldn't find a lot of hope in the keynote panel session. Oh, it was engaging enough, with Christine Milne, John Hewson and Bob Carr plus chair, Jonathan Holmes, it couldn't be anything else, but what they had to say only confirmed what we all know: the Prime Minister's lack of agenda, much less passion for renewables (Hewson); the corruption of politicians and some environmentalists by the emergence of plutocracy (Milne); and the devastation wrought by our conservative governments' aping of their American counterparts' reactionary agenda on protecting nature (Carr).

A second panel session tackling the thorny topic of getting environmental issues out there in a changed media landscape did nothing to dispel the despondency. Still, the panel Peter

Lewis, Lenore Taylor, Peter Hannam and Eric Beecher gave me some food for thought. Even for small groups like ours there must be the odd opportunity in today's very challenged and challenging media environment.

Getting away from the thrust and parry of local issues for a couple of days for the higher planes of national and state-wide environmental concerns is definitely energising. The breadth of issues covered by motions put to Conference is always interesting and even the struggle of an organisation with the resources of the NCC to change the way it does business in our ever-changing world has relevance.

Increasing effectiveness in the face of environmental crisis is as much of a challenge to Friends of the Koala as it is for everyone else in the environmental movement. Openness to exploring opportunities and risks in our operational environment has stood us in good stead in the past but I suspect for us to maximise our koala conservation mission, we will need to be a bit more daring in our approach to some matters and perhaps even to future partnerships we forge. Time will tell.

One immediate challenge will be managing the construction and then the operation of a new education and administration building at the Koala Care Centre in East Lismore. Our existing premises are 20 years old. We out-grew it years ago but raising funds for a new building has taken time. During October we learned that our application for a matched grant under the National Stronger Regions Fund program was successful. For better or worse we will have, at last, what we have wished for, so we will need to ensure that the transition presented by the new building is managed well.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233. For information about koalas, their food trees and how you can assist koala conservation, visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone 6622-1233. You can also follow us on Facebook.

No environmental justice without social justice

Just last week the film *The Bentley Effect* premiered, celebrating the victory against coal seam gas in the Northern Rivers. Across the Pacific, another gathering not unlike it has been swelling in the plains of North Dakota, near the Missouri River.

The protest against the 1,172-mile long proposed Dakota Access Pipeline, which began on April 1 this year, had by August grown into thousands of “protectors”, and by September 7 had become the largest gathering of Native Americans in more than one hundred years.

The confluence of people to the camp they have called Sacred Stone is about more than fossil fuels and climate change: it’s the culmination of hundreds of years of marginalised voices, gathering together in order to take the power back over land, protect water, and change the story. It’s the chapter the people are writing. It’s about the fact that there can be no environmental justice without social justice.

Social justice refers to justice in terms of the fair distribution of wealth, opportunities and power within a society, and environmental justice refers to the fair access for all peoples to intact, life-supporting environments, as well as the freedom from hazardous or toxic environments.



Permaculture Principles

by Anastasia Guise

Strangely, severe poverty is often held to blame for ecological destruction. The common example is of poor villagers cutting down surrounding trees for firewood because they simply do not have alternative resources to allow for the protection of forests. But how well does this really check out? Often these peoples are impoverished following colonising processes, which have likely removed original forests, and broken traditional cultural frameworks which once ensured sustainable resource use.

The environmental impact of the poor is limited by the fact that they are often without fossil-fuel powered transport, or complex machinery or technology. They are limited to the tangible environments in which they live, how far they can

“It’s like they don’t care about our health and safety. It’s like they think our lives are more expendable than others.”

– Anna, Standing Rock Sioux

“We went ahead and set up camp in the snow.”

– Joye Braun, Indigenous Environmental Network

walk, and what they can carry away with them.

The environmental impact of the world’s rich should invoke much greater concern. The wealthiest 15% of the world’s population consume 85% of its resources. Oil fields, gas pipelines, mega-dams, super-trawlers, feedlots, acres of grazing and agricultural monocropping, and urban development are all extremely environmentally-destructive examples of economic prosperity, not poverty.

When we talk about social justice in relation to environmental justice, it is crucial to address *inequality*, not just poverty. Inequality means that the negative impacts of environmental destruction are unjustly and disproportionately borne by those of lower socio-economic classes. Resources are



Photo courtesy Billings Gazette

siphoned towards those with power, and waste and pollution are dumped on those without it (or those without power are marginalized into toxic environments).

The proposed siting of a nuclear waste dump on Aboriginal land in South Australia is a case in point, and the continuing legacies of nuclear testing in the Pacific and in Australian deserts another. Coal seam gas developments in certain areas of Queensland, as well as in the United States, followed a pattern which overwhelmingly impacted low-socio-economic demographics. Globally, the distribution of wealth and waste follow a similar pattern: the world’s poor toil in the squalor of the wastes

of the rich, and the rich enjoy safe, clean, and often visually beautiful environments at their expense.

Permaculture addresses the needs of people and needs of the planet in explicit recognition that social justice and environmental justice are inextricably linked. Accordingly, its two central tenets are “care for Earth” and “care for people”.

For those at Standing Rock, there is no division between social and environmental justice. What the rich and powerful have recognized, in the violent panic with which they have attempted to break the blockade, is the inherent power of an idea whose time has well and truly come.

Fear of feelings a hurdle to freedom

When releasing the habitual use of a substance such as tobacco, there can be a sense of hesitation, an uncertainty of what lies on the other side. Actual breaks in the pattern of regular use can often be short lived, marked by an intensity of feelings and emotion, resulting in a fear of this unfamiliar state and a quick return to perceived safer ground.

All that turmoil, including any sense of failure or guilt about not doing the best for our bodies is nicely subdued once again. Seeing this fear for what it is becomes an opportunity to reconnect and reintegrate, to really get to know our reality and the people we share it with. Once the initial intensity is consolidated and the unknown becomes the known it is possible to return to completeness and health, relaxing in the certainty of having

made the right choice.

Cultivating consciousness and reclaiming our brains, along with enjoying the many other rewards of freedom, provides a guarantee against relapse, a sense of relief in knowing that that stage is finally over. Failing to fully accept what happened in the past prepares the perfect ground for addictions to flourish, as in turn our addictions perpetuate that inability to accept reality. Wishing that the past could have been different is dealing with the impossible, staying in this depressed state will deprive us of having a future. Mind-numbing substances become our only hope, as our bodies fall victim.

Everything that happened in the past is what allowed us to be where we are today, and as such could be seen to have unfolded just as it was meant to. Any other view just

opens the door and invites in compensation from substances and behaviours, potentially steering our destiny further down that path to early retirement from this life.

Our natural state seems to have become one of being overwhelmed, not knowing where to start when it comes to a return to self reliance. We are so easily convinced that self-medication or something that the doctor can provide is the only viable answer, readily accepting the side effects that come with it. It’s a bit like working for someone else as opposed to running our own business, whether we take our medication or go out on a limb and experiment with the natural alternatives.

In this sense, we all have the option to work for ourselves, and there’s no competition here, only co-operation and mutual benefit.



Vital Choices

by David Ward

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Meaningful connections and the power of listening – part 2

Relationships thrive according to the extent we’re able to listen. When considering our listening skills carefully, we might find that we display several (partly unconscious) barriers to successful communication.

In communication, a message is sent by one person and received by another. This sounds easy but often comes with disturbances. When I learned about my communication barriers I was surprised, slightly shocked and grateful. Did you know that most people don’t listen with the intent to understand but with the intent to reply?

Sending a message seems to hold more value than receiving one. Why? Is it because we fear the silence that comes along with a break in our own thought

stream when purely listening? Or is it that current values promote doing over being, and giving over receiving? However, most of us will have had the experience of being with someone who is solely engaged in personal broadcasting. What does that make you feel? Listening is our access to understanding. Without listening there cannot be communication at all. Here are five common listening barriers:

- Automatic talking: Listening just long enough to find a word that you know something about. This is the most common form of blocking true communication.
- Being a “fixer”: A fixer is someone who tries to fix another person’s faults, problems or personality by offering a solution. Fixers



by Betti Wille

often cut off others in the middle of a conversation to offer their fix.

- Selective listening: Hearing another but selecting to not hear what is being said by choice or desire to hear some other message.
- Diverting: Pushing the other person’s issues aside by moving the conversation towards someone else or even yourself, e.g. “I know exactly what you mean, let

*Out beyond ideas
Of wrong doing and right doing
There is a field
I’ll meet you there*
– Rumi

me tell you what happened to me the other day.”

• Reassuring: Trying to stop the other person from feeling negative emotions, e.g. “Don’t worry, you’re doing fine.” Some of us tend to predict what the other is going to say before the whole message has been sent. In this case we’re occupied with assumptions instead of listening. Or, if someone tells us a story and we, without listening to the end, come up with a similar story from our own closet. What’s probably meant as an empathetic response turns out to be a killer of real

communication.

Now, let’s take a deep breath and note that nothing’s gonna change by being too hard on ourselves. Only acknowledging our mistakes with compassion and kindness will prepare the field for positive change.

Communication between humans consists of the following clues: 7% are the words we speak and 93% is conveyed by intonation of voice and by body language such as posture, gestures, facial expressions, etc.

To be actively engaged in listening we need to be open-minded and present. To be a really good listener we also need some awareness of our own thought stream. We can watch our monkey mind jump there, conclude here, defend over there... or produce judgements and assumptions

that would be passing through undetected otherwise.

We could ask, “What’s going on inside of me in this moment?” Listen to body sensations like the touch of the environment on our skin for example, feel the soles of our feet touching the ground or note how breath is moving. Whenever we’re in touch with a body sensation we are in the present moment. Listening from here can be a joyful experience as there’s less need to react or perform.

One more thing: Let’s try to allow silence... it may carry an important part of a message.

Betti holds a diploma in Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy and teaches pelvic floor classes for women in Nimbin. To contact her, write to: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com or phone 0490-292-138.

Sentience and horses

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

Sentience is the ability to perceive one's environment and experience sensations such as pain, hunger, heat, cold, pleasure or comfort and to have relationships with other animals and humans. An animal that is sentient receives internal sensation from its body and information from its environment, and interprets these as an emotion. The sensation may make it feel good, bad, or indifferent. It will determine how best to act based on this, and use responses in its body, or a behaviour, in order to fulfil its needs.

In 1997 the European Union recognised animals as 'sentient beings' under European law. Our understanding of sentience means we must treat them in ways that avoid suffering and maximise well-being. It is a moral imperative that if an animal feels pain and can suffer we take action to avoid, minimise or alleviate such pain and suffering.

It's important to distinguish the ability to think (reason) from the ability to feel (sentience). The way emotions are processed in the human brain is different from the horse because of the compartmentalization of the horse's brain. As humans, we have the ability to reason why we feel a particular way. Horses simply feel emotion (without reasoning) because they don't have the ability to rationalize the feeling.

This brings us to the topic of anthropomorphism. This is the

attribution of human traits, emotions, and intentions to non-human entities, in this case the horse. This is considered to be an innate tendency of human psychology which may explain its prevalence. What this results in though is the projection of human behaviours upon the horse that it just isn't capable of. People will say their horse is being 'naughty' or 'she knows how to do it she's just trying it on' or 'he's plotting against me' or 'she's being difficult because she doesn't like me' etc.

None of these thought processes are available to a horse. The horses' brain just doesn't reason in this way. Horses are reacting and responding to what is happening. If you change what you are feeling, thinking and doing then the horse will change along with you.

Often people spend enormous amounts of time, effort and money to train a horse to change how it does something, while they themselves keep doing the same thing. If the horse is responding to the human then they need to change what they are doing, and the horse will follow.

This goes against human tendency, we all prefer it to be someone else's fault. We would rather look outside ourselves for the solution rather than inside. Often the change that is required in the human isn't even in how they handle and ride the horse, but is more about their emotions, state of mind and energy.

There's an old saying that 'the outside



of the horse reflects the inside of the human'. When a tired, angry, wired human goes near a horse it doesn't matter how brilliant their skills are they will not achieve the same results as an alert, happy, calm human. A horse will react to the true you, even if you are unaware of how you are feeling. This is a great feedback mechanism and tool for self-growth if we're brave enough to listen to it.

Allowing a horse to be a horse without projecting human traits on it can be a great sense of relief. Instead of thinking that the horse is out to get you, you can start thinking 'how can I help my horse to understand what I want?', 'what can I change in myself that will bring my goal closer?' These are the types of questions that will bring real positive change to your relationship with your horse.

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Queensland Itch

by Les Rees,
Equine naturopath

Queensland Itch season has arrived and is already causing problems to those poor equines that have Culicoides hypersensitivity. For them, this season of year represents a harrowing time of torment and continual itching that can cause further damage to the skin as horses continually scratch and rub themselves in order to find some relief.

I came to live here two years ago having brought three horses with me from the cool climate of Tasmania. I can tell you that it was a rude awakening for me as I found that they weren't coping at all well with life in the subtropics. Since then I've been researching the various treatments on the market and developing some ideas by experimentation with my beautiful family of equines all of whom had fallen prey to these nasty biting Culicoides midges.

So what exactly causes the problem?

The answer lies in the midge saliva. When the skin is pierced the midge injects protein rich saliva containing vasodilators, anticoagulants and pro-inflammatory mediators. An onslaught of midge bites in hypersensitive horses causes a defense reaction in the body that sends antibodies, histamine and inflammatory

mediators to the damaged area to coagulate the blood in order to restrict flow to the site. But the clever thing about midge saliva is that the proteins send a counter signal that inhibits this process, reversing the effects of the horse's defense ensuring that the anticoagulants in the saliva will enable a stream of blood to drink.

This can cause extreme reactions in sensitive horses as damaged areas of skin become inflamed causing subsequent itchiness and further infection, due to the horse attempting to attain some relief by constant rubbing. If left without intervention, the horse can develop broken hair and subsequent alopecia, skin erosion and ulceration which can be extremely painful; and in the chronic stages hyperkeratosis, lichification (thick leathery patches) and scaling can develop.

Treatment includes topical creams, oils and sprays and internal medications. There is a vast array available on the market as well as veterinary products but science has yet to discover a way round the counter signal in midge saliva. Therefore we can only address the symptoms and for each equine those symptoms can be varied. That may explain why some products on the market have positive responses for some horses and not others!



Preventatives

1. Addressing diet modification and adding supplements. This may help make the blood less palatable for biting insects as well as supporting the overall health of the horse. There are several herbs that can help support equines with sensitivity issues and it is advisable to have each horse assessed individually.
2. The removal of horses away from marshy areas, still water and streams inhabited by midges.
3. Keeping yards free from manure will help reduce the midges' breeding ground
4. The use of light rugs, especially overnight when the midges are out. A lot of people may not like to use rugs but I'm of the opinion that if your horse is suffering, you need to address it in any way you

- can to make it comfortable and keep it healthy.
 5. Keeping the coat free from sweat, a simple sponge down and the removal of excess water with a scraper will help deter the insects.
 6. The use of natural insect sprays, essential oils and creams. The oil based products seem to create a barrier on the skin and blended oils have a number of uses including antiseptic, anti-itch and anti-microbial actions.
- I've recently developed an essential oil based spray that is working on my horses and has received some positive responses from clients around Australia. If anyone is interested in trying it out please contact me.

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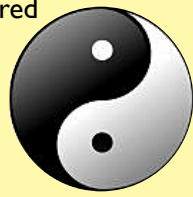
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Deepening perceptions

In recent times I've found myself embedded in stories of unusual perception and sensitivity. I re-watched *Tous les Matins du Monde* (All the Mornings of the World), directed by Alain Corneau, 1991, on the life of a 17th century viol da gamba player, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, who, on the death of his beloved wife, retreats from his daughter's fine house to a hut in the garden to practise his instrument 17 hours a day.

His musicality increases to the level that he is sought out for his extraordinary skill by a brazen young man who wants to learn everything from him, but the master says, "No, you have skill but no musicality."

Time passes, with tragedies, and the man returns after a life of glitter and fame and requests his first lesson. The old master asks him what music is; is it this, is it that? What music is, says Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, is that which wakens the dead, and thus the lesson begins.

This is a film, for me, of the extraordinary translucence of music, that strips away the extraneous useless matters of gestures and habituations of daily life, to the raw essence of being. It is here, at least

for me, where deepening perceptions begin.

A few days after watching *All the Mornings of the World*, I saw *Perfume, The Story of a Murderer*, directed by Tom Tykwer, 2006. Here is a story of a fictional Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, an eighteenth century man born with an extraordinarily heightened sense of smell (hyperosmia) who is obsessed with capturing the essential scent of young women, along with perfumes of flowers and fruits. He experiments with scent capturing techniques by murdering women and trying to urge off their pheromones into an unguent. Pheromones are those chemicals exuded by the body that affect the behaviour and physiology of other animals, including us.

And then I'm reading *Like Water for Chocolate, A Novel in Monthly Instalments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies*, by Laura Esquivel (1989). This about a woman who, forbidden to marry her lover, sheds tears that enter the meringue for the cake she makes for her sister's wedding to her own lover that alters the perceptions of all those that ate it. From then, everything she cooks transforms its partakers.



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell
M.Couns. PhD

And then there is my work with clients. Much is about expanding perceptual awareness so that stuck patterns of living are freed up.

It is very easy to get stuck. Taking up smoking or drinking or endless computer game playing or any other nerve calming activities in times of stress makes sense. What doesn't make a lot of sense is when these activities start to rule us. This is when tapping, once again, into doing things that naturally lead to expanded perceptual experiences can free us up, free us from the mouse-wheel of the same old, same old. The freeing up and the deepening of perceptual knowing in one individual has the capacity to change how we relate to other people and how they relate to us.

Making music, perfume making (I'm not advocating murder!) and cooking, are activities that can help expand perceptual awareness and enjoyment and change lives. There is dance, running, swimming, painting, gardening, and so on, as well. All are active and require embodied engagement, and not just sitting back and entering fantasy realms. The point, though, is that just doing these activities may be not enough to release a fixed mind-set that leads to harmful and habitual practices, we still have to know how to let go of them (even after we have stopped puffing), we still have to learn mindfulness techniques that deepen perceptual awareness, so that the symptoms don't return.

This is where counselling and clinical hypnotherapy are most valuable, but meditation or anything else that focuses on mindful participation helps. The talking cure of therapy is a very valuable one, though, for it takes the exercise into an interpersonal realm and that helps release us from the things that bind us, releasing us into a fuller participation in the world.

dr_mccardell@yahoo.com

Pregnancy, yoga and meditation

by Cameron Storey

Some people already have a yoga practice before they become pregnant so they have a head start in practice application over a variety of poses and differing levels. Some people start yoga practice motivated by the onset of pregnancy, a desire for optimal health of both mother and child and to facilitate anticipated delivery.

Research (via The Mayo Clinic) suggests that prenatal yoga can: improve sleep, reduce stress and anxiety, increase the strength, flexibility and endurance of muscles needed for childbirth, decrease lower back pain, nausea, headaches and shortness of breath.

Easy yoga warm-up exercises and slow sun salutations can be performed at all stages of pregnancy as can standing poses including standing balances and especially full-foot squatting. Standing twists are best performed in the opposite direction. Standing poses and squats are especially good for maintaining intervertebral space of the lumbar and sacral areas of the back as well as hip opening and hamstring length. While most twists can be performed during the first trimester, easy and open twists need to be performed during the second and third trimesters to maintain abdominal space.

Cross legs twist or chair twist are the easiest options. Experienced yoga students have several more open twist options. Forward bends also need to be modified by remaining upright and/or having the legs apart like wide-legged child. Back bends and abdominal exercises will especially need to be modified as the pregnancy progresses. If you have concerns about a miscarriage or a history of miscarriages consider waiting 'til the third month to begin posture practice but relaxation and meditation



can begin anytime.

Supine or lying postures are often an option with variations for hamstrings, hips and back flexibility. Inversions can safely be performed by students who have previously practised prior to becoming pregnant and with more caution by students learning during pregnancy. I've supervised experienced students safely practise headstand, forearm balance and handstand until a few hours prior to the birthing process, but this is not the case for most people. Split legs up a wall is a much easier option requiring far less yoga skill to perform. Yoga students learn about Mula Bandha, which refers to the lift slightly above the pelvic floor. Both the lift of this essential lock and its relaxation are integral parts of pre-natal, birthing and post-natal awareness and holistic yoga practice.

Many times when I attended 10 day meditation courses at Pomona there were women at varying stages of pregnancy who extolled the virtues of the breathing concentration and sensation meditation techniques. Both techniques offer benefits in dealing with the arising of numerous unpleasant sensations during the long hours and days of sitting and help prepare the mind for dealing with any future unpleasant sensations that may arise like: during the birthing

process for example. Ujjayi pranayama, that is normally performed by all students when practising postures, also offers concentration benefits that can be useful during the dissolution of painful bodily sensations or mental afflictions. Alternate nostril pranayama along with the two cooling pranayamas can all be beneficial both physically and mentally. By listening to the body, modifying when tired, working incrementally, being consistent, and allowing easy breathing which connects to the growing life inside the body, our yoga practice progresses with intelligence. Savasana (relaxation) can be practised, preferably with bent legs on a bolster, till about 12 weeks.

After this, the recovery position (one leg on a bolster) is better for maintaining the foetal blood flow and generally more comfortable. Over the last 25 years I've supervised thousands of students practise during their pregnancies, some several times, and with a steady, conscious practice applying sound anatomical and physiological principles there are many benefits from the gross to the subtle.

Pregnant students are encouraged to attend classes suitable to their practice level and modify when appropriate. The Dharma Centre has a range of classes and teachers. Phone 6689-7120 or check out our Facebook page: **Dharma Centre – Lillifield** for more information.



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Adrenal exhaustion

Adrenal exhaustion is a term being used more often, conveying as it does the feeling of being burnt out and running on empty, which apparently a lot of us suffer from. In our society there can be constant pressure to achieve goals, the expectation to be connected and available, and other time pressures all leading to depletion of the hormonal, immune and nervous systems.

Adrenal exhaustion may be looked on as a new diagnosis or condition. But Chinese medicine has recognised this pattern for a very long time, terming it kidney deficiency. The pattern can equate to, or include, sleep disturbance, depression, anxiety, allergies, osteoporosis, fibromyalgia, yeast overgrowth, premature aging, hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, and allergies as well as an overall feeling of exhaustion.

It is interesting to look at the adrenal function and equate it with Chinese medicine theory. The adrenal glands are small glands that sit on top of the kidney.

The adrenal cortex produces cortisol. It is yin in nature as is the kidney itself. Cortisol/kidney yin is depleted by worry, overwork, prolonged illness, insufficient sleep and lack of sunshine – Vitamin D is produced by the kidney.

The adrenal medulla is yang in nature. It produces the hormones dopamine, adrenaline and noradrenaline. These hormones are produced to give the flight or fight response, and equate with the emotions of fear connected to the kidney, as well as will power.

In Chinese medicine the kidney is the powerhouse of the body, with strong connections to the heart.

The kidney and the heart are a dynamic pairing, very sensitive to each other. Chinese medicine identifies the shen or spirit as being

the heart's energy. In cases of kidney deficiency this will be depleted causing depression, anxiety and sleep disorders.

Equally in Western medicine the kidneys and adrenals are a powerhouse, along with feedback from the pituitary and hypothalamus producing the hormones that keep us going – the afore mentioned adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol, dopamine, Vitamin D as well as erythropoietin (involved in red blood cell production), renin, testosterone, oestrogen and progesterone.

Kidney deficiency in Chinese medicine absolutely fits with the diagnosis of adrenal exhaustion.

It will take some time to restore, as it has usually resulted from long term depletion, whether from overwork, poor diet or stress. Sudden shock can also cause kidney depletion. The predominant pattern is yin deficiency. Our lifestyles are often too yang, contributing is the constant connection to mobile phones and internet, with little time

left for rest, reflection, and slow and deep assessment.

Also lack of energy from the sun, again connected to Vitamin D. In this area we are less likely to have this problem than in the cities, but there is still the potential for spending too much time indoors. Compared to a few generations back, where most people would have been growing their own food and being sensitive to sunlight and the changing daylength with the changing seasons, we spend more time indoors and with artificial light.

Restoring kidney or adrenal energy involves more rest – proper rest away from computers, good diet and enough sleep. Acupuncture, moxa and herbs effectively tonify the kidneys. As mentioned, the shen, our mental/emotional/spiritual side is intimately involved with kidney energy. Each patient needs to assess this aspect of their lives. Diagnosis of adrenal exhaustion is not a reason to feel despondent or desperate, but an incentive to reassess priorities and get back to a sustainable existence.

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



by Brigid Beckett

Natural law



by Helene Collard

Welcome to November – a month of wisdom, empowerment, courage and change. Indeed this month signifies great progress in the cycle of transformation that is occurring for each of us.

Intellectual and academic pursuits have their place and value, however it is our inner knowing or wisdom that will serve us best right now. We can activate our intuitive nature through regular stillness and silence. This enables us to correctly sense right timing – when to act and when to rest, when to use our strengths and when to use gentleness.

The value in sensing 'right timing' is immeasurable, as it involves tapping into a divine source that understands the needs of the whole. In contrast, charging through life without such consideration, indicates an egocentric attitude – that truly benefits no one. So invite a ritual of stillness and silence into your daily practice.

Transformation takes courage and strength, and always involves change. Sometimes it can feel difficult to let go, even

*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*

when we know something is harming us, and others. It is useful to remember that when we let go we create space for the new to grow. When we let go, we restore balance, as we no longer have to bear the burden of that which weighed us down. When we let go, we generate energy that no longer gets spent on keeping those old habits going.

There is a catalyst this month – feel radiant and empowered... let go. If you feel called to be supported with a calming and centering Reiki treatment, or an empowering Reiki course, I'd love to hear from you.

What's On at the Yemaya Centre

- **Gestalt Art Workshop** – 6th November
- **Evolve Event** – 16th November at 6.30pm. Topic: 'Ayurveda – The Science of Life' with Guest Speaker Judith Long
- **Reiki Circle** – 1st December, 5.30pm

Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing, is a Reiki teacher and the founder of the Yemaya Centre and Evolve Events in Lismore. Helene offers regular courses and circles, and enjoys making a range of wellbeing topics accessible to the community. She has been writing and delivering wellbeing workshops since 2008. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.

How long does postpartum really last?

by Kirrah Holborn
Traditional wisdom

Many people believe that postpartum lasts six weeks after the birth of the baby.

Women's bodies need to recover from the pregnancy and birth. It is hoped that by six weeks the mother has healed from any soreness, bleeding and cramping and that her moods have stabilized and she's got a handle on breastfeeding (if she chose to do this).

At the end of the six-week period, women go back to their doctor or midwife for their 'six week check-up' and there's this societal pressure that they will probably have it together and feel on top of things.

There can be feelings of guilt or inadequacy if women don't feel they have adapted quickly enough or look like they are coping and thriving 'like other mums'. I think it's really important to know that at six weeks, there may not be a magical transformation.

For many, it takes longer to adjust and step into their new role. Just knowing that is a huge relief for many people. It may take them 3 months, 6 months, 12 months or longer to emerge from their 'postpartum period'. Midwife Raven Lang says that many midwives she worked with considered the postpartum to be two years (or longer). She says, "As long as the baby's in diapers, and you're up in the night and your breast is being called upon by that person, you're postpartum."

In many traditional cultures, the postpartum time is considered to be around 40 days. Interestingly, this time frame roughly correlates with the medical textbook 'six weeks'. The 40-day period of rest or 'lying in' has some beautiful



Mother with 18-day old baby

traditions aimed at helping the mother heal, not only physically, but emotionally too. There is a sense of reverence around these forty days as caring support is given to the mother while she adapts to her new role. These traditional practices are ceremonial and also have practical and medicinal benefits.

I know many midwives who refer to the postpartum time as the 'fourth trimester'. I love this term. For the first three months after birth, newborns really like to feel that they are still in the womb. This means they like to be close to their mama, feeling her warmth, hearing her heartbeat and with food on tap (which means feeding frequently). It is most comfortable for them to be sleeping on the mama as much as possible (re-creating that feeling of still being inside her womb).

A great tip for embracing the fourth trimester is to get a comfortable carrier (like the hug-a-bub or ergo) so you can still do things while bub is attached to you. Babies need to sleep a lot and they settle best when they are close to their

Preparing for your postpartum

• Get a support network in place before you birth

Write down four friends or family members who you could ask to help with laundry, washing dishes, preparing food, watching the baby while you shower or sleep and could help with any older siblings.

Research what groups are around that can help you meet with other mums or get help with breastfeeding (for example, the Australian Breastfeeding Association).

• Have some meals planned ahead

Freeze some healthy meals like casseroles or soups. Be open to accepting meals from friends and family (this is so helpful in those early weeks).

• Plan to have some nurturing treatments

Write down what helps you relax and plan to do some of these things (for example a bath or massage). Ask a friend to watch the baby while you enjoy this necessary nurturing.

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 message text your name and email to 0429-308-851 or visit: www.traditionalwisdom.com.au

caregiver, especially during the first three months of their life.

There needs to be a greater understanding of the needs of the new mother during the weeks and months after birth. We are all individuals and the time it takes to heal and adapt is going to be different for everyone. If our expectations are too high, it

can feel really overwhelming if we aren't experiencing what we think we should be, by a certain time.

Having an idea of what changes to expect and having good support in place are important to help women move through the postpartum time. Nurture the mother so she can nurture her baby.