
ADVENTURES IN NATURAL HEALING



First person stories of self-help

Meditation Took Me Past Cancer

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In April of 1975, at the age of 34, I found myself in a hospital in Philadelphia, being told by my doctors that I had a spinal cord tumor, and that an immediate operation was necessary.

The tumor was located in my neck. For the previous two months, I had been experiencing a progressive paralysis. My right arm was of little or no use to me, and my legs were becoming more spastic daily. I had strange sensations running through my body—sensations of heat and cold simultaneously, electric-like shocks running up and down my spine and out to my fingers and toes, sensations unlike anything I had ever felt before.

The scene in the hospital had an air of nonreality. Was this really happening to me? I heard myself saying, "Well, there doesn't seem to be much choice, does there?" My doctor agreed. The operation was scheduled for 6:00 the following morning.

The next morning, I was wheeled into the operating room. When consciousness returned, I was immersed in pain. The nerve endings in my body seemed on fire. While the top half of my body was engulfed in searing pain, I had no sensations at all below my waist.

It was not extremely encouraging. Finally, one of the doctors asked me to move my feet. I pictured in my mind, as vividly as I

could, what it used to feel like to move my feet. When I looked down, I saw them waving back and forth! What a relief! Over the next three days, feeling slowly returned to the lower part of my body.

But the following day, the doctor came into the room, and told me that he had been unable to reach the tumor. It was evidently embedded within the spinal cord, out of reach of the scalpel.

"What now?" I asked.

"Nothing," the doctor answered. The tumor was malignant, and I was diagnosed as terminal. How much time did I have? Perhaps a few months, perhaps a year or two.

Going Home to Die

I returned home from the hospital, still very tender from the operation, and found Kate, my wife, waiting for me with my daughters, Jacquelyn and Heather. As I walked through the door, Heather, four years old, in a spontaneous expression of love, jumped up into my arms and hugged me as hard as she could around my still-painful neck.

My reaction was immediate. Lights flashed in my head, and my entire body winced from the sudden, intense pain. Heather jumped back, horrified at the anguish she had caused, when her only motivation had been to express the deep love she felt for her father returning home.

I assured her that everything was all right, but she was incon-

soluble. Later that evening, though, she came over to me, very gently and tenderly, and explained to me that every morning and every night she would give me magic kisses, until everything was all right. It was a promise she kept.

For the next eight months, I lived from day to day. I had no past, and no future. All I had was the immediate present. I felt like a very transient person in a permanent world. Everything I saw would be there the next day, but I might not. I was happy to have bought one more day.

I had no worries. I lived every day fully and completely. People felt sorry for me, and I found that so ironic.

Here I was, fully living, experiencing beauty, love in abundance, total freedom, and still remaining useful and productive within society. Anything that had life, or color, or form, I felt great love for, simply because it existed. And, of course, my days at home began and ended with magic kisses being applied to the back of my neck.

One day, I recalled a conversation I had with a friend who told me that he had taken a mind expansion course. The idea appealed to me, and I went to hear an introductory lecture for the course. The instructor was explaining one of the mottos of the program. "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better." I started paying closer attention.

Then the instructor began to

describe the work of Dr. Carl Simonton, of Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Simonton was working with terminally ill cancer patients, using visualizations, meditation and affirmations, all techniques which were strange and new to me. A number of these patients who had been told that nothing more could be done for them by conventional medicine were winding up with spontaneous remissions.

If someone else could do it, so could I. But first, I would have to learn these new techniques. Three weeks later, I began the course.

Meditation was presented in the course as nothing more mysterious than a physical state of relaxation, which induced a state of mental relaxation, where the brain wave frequency was quieted down from the normal range to the alpha level. I was told that at that level, a more creative and healthier state of mind, my mind could control the state of my body. With my mind quieted down, I would be able, in my mind, to see the tumor disappearing, and, I was told, it would.

It sounded like a lot of hocus-pocus, but for the first time since the operation, I was being given some hope, some chance, however

slim, of turning my condition around. I was ready to use the techniques.

For about 15 minutes three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening, I relaxed my body part by part, from my head to my toes, counting backward from three to one, and then from 10 to one. I then told myself I was at a more relaxed state of mind which I could use for a purpose—any purpose I desired.

On an imaginary screen in my mind, I pictured my body and the tumor. Each time I saw the tumor, I imagined it just a bit smaller than the last time I saw it. It was all in my mind, after all. I could imagine it any way I chose. I imagined that I could see the cancerous cells being dispersed by my body's natural immunity mechanism, and I told myself that they were being passed out of my body each time I went to the bathroom.

Whenever I heard an inner voice suggesting that I wasn't getting better, I would quiet it, insisting that I was, in fact, in a state of improvement. I repeated to myself over and over while in this meditative state, "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better," until I believed it. I

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imagined myself being examined by my doctor, chuckling to myself, waiting for him to confirm what I already knew—that there was no longer any tumor.

Focus on Healing Energy

In addition to the meditation sessions, I decided to reinforce my feeling of improvement in other ways. Each time I felt a strange sensation, or pain, in my body, instead of telling myself that it was the tumor growing, bringing me closer to death, I told myself that it was "energy" working on the tumor, shrinking it, making it smaller and smaller, making me better and better. I looked forward to the sensations I had formerly dreaded. As I felt fewer and fewer of the sensations, I told myself that it was because the bulk of the work had been done already, and that I was almost healed.

All during the day, every day, I reminded myself of all the ways in which I was getting better. I imagined that all of the food I ate was "energized," making me healthier and healthier. I reminded myself continually of all the people who loved me, and I affirmed to myself that this love was energy I could put to use, to strengthen the healing process even more.

I had no way of knowing whether all of these techniques were working or not, but I decided that if I felt better, they just might be. I had increasing mobility and energy every day,

just as I was telling myself. I decided to hold on to my new reality, and reject the old reality of the doctors' diagnosis.

Two months after I began reprogramming my mind, on the first anniversary of the operation, I was due for an examination by my doctors. I continued replaying the examination scenario in my mind, imagining the doctor's face when he found no tumor, wondering what his reaction would be, and *knowing* I had been healed.

The doctor found nothing at all wrong with me. The same doctor who had told me one year before that I was terminally ill, was now telling me that he must have made a mistake. There was no longer any evidence of a tumor. I began to explain what had been happening in my life, but the doctor walked out of the room in mid-sentence. It was just not within the realm of possibility according to the world he lived in.

I drove home, laughing all the way, to tell Kate the wonderful news, and to talk over the various things which all together had returned me to the world of the living. For my daughter Jacquelyn, it was her father's mystical ability to self-heal. For Heather, it was undoubtedly her magical kisses which were crucial, and from what I had learned of the healing power of love, they might very well have been. For the doctors, they believed that they must have erred in their original diagnosis. For me, it was academic. I was alive again. □