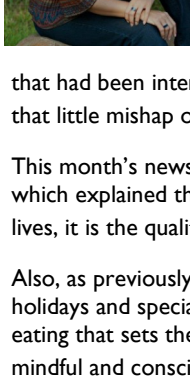


Conscious Connection

August 2011



Technology vs. The Human Condition



Although there are times when I consciously decide to take a break from writing, the past two months have not been my own conscious choice to go on hiatus. Multiple computer snafus and “bugs” have prevented me from getting the June/July newsletters out to you and after 5 trips to the PC doctor I’m back in business. I took the challenges as a sign that perhaps I needed to take a step back from the writing world and make sure the newsletter was going in the direction I had intended.

For the most part, I would say that it has. I have received many positive emails regarding the information provided, and especially appreciated the humorous messages I received as a result of my early June snafu in forwarding an old newsletter that had been intended to land in my home computer’s inbox instead of to the entire list. So sorry for that little mishap of the human condition! So onward and upward!!!

This month’s newsletter will explore the idea of “Interpersonal Health” as related to the previous issue which explained the Social aspect of the *Soul Health Model*. Although we may have “warm bodies” in our lives, it is the quality and “health” of our interpersonal interactions that make the difference.

Also, as previously promised, an article about “Conscious Eating” is included in this issue. Although holidays and special occasions often create challenges to our eating, it is our day-to-day awareness of eating that sets the stage for our overall patterns. This article will explore ways to become and remain mindful and conscious in our daily dining habits.

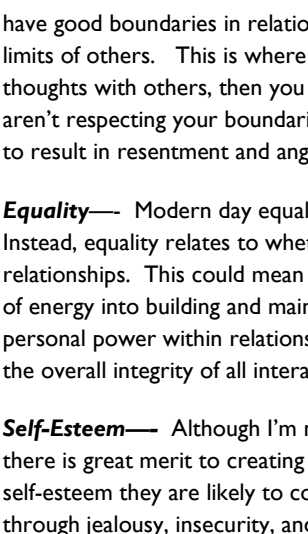
This issue also includes an article on raising your consciousness to the “moment-by-moment” level. It is impossible to remain aware and conscious when we are immersed in the day-to-day goings on of the human condition. But raising your awareness to acknowledge life beyond the moment can greatly enhance your experience of life. This article will provide creative ways to capture those moments.

As we ready ourselves for the upcoming fall, it is time to prepare for harvesting much more than the fruits and vegetables we have planted... it is time to take a look at the seeds of consciousness you have planted this year as well. May August provide you with a sense of completion of the summer as well as an awareness and anticipation of the bounty of awareness that is yet to come.

In shared light,

K Kelly

Interpersonal Health: Developing Conscious Connections



What qualities create healthy relationships? Many can list the qualities they want in a partner, but few look deeper to recognize the key ingredients of healthy relationships in general whether they be romantic partners, family, friends, coworkers, or anyone else we come into contact with on a regular basis.

One of the main reasons people choose to enter therapy is because their “Interpersonal” branch of health needs work. Our interactions with others form us from the moment we are born— how we are cared for and taught by our caregivers. This includes both verbal and nonverbal methods of “informing” us

about how our caregivers perceive the world to work which sets the stage for the rest of our lives. In many cases a healthy dynamic is formed, but in many the key ingredients are skewed or missing, which can set the stage for unhealthy relationships from that point forward. Like anything else, the foundation that is set from the beginning of a relationship influences all dynamics in the days to come.

By consciously considering the ingredients of your relationships, you can create much healthier interactions with others. In working with clients and workshop participants, I use a 5-point model to explain the key factors which are necessary in creating a healthy Interpersonal branch of health:

- 1) **Communication**— this seems like a no-brainer, but the truth is very few people really learn to communicate in a conscious manner. Conscious communication entails purely honest and direct conversation with others but from a non-critical and non-judgmental perspective. It requires a non-defensive posture as you listen and understand the others’ perspective, and offers openness to equal exchange between those speaking. Effective communication only happens when both parties feel heard and neither go away feeling dismissed.
- 2) **Boundaries**— Boundaries are defined as the indication of a limit or border. Therefore, in order to have good boundaries in relationships, you must not only know your own limits, but also respect the limits of others. This is where communication comes in— if you aren’t asserting your needs or thoughts with others, then you aren’t asserting your own boundaries. On the other hand, if others aren’t respecting your boundaries even if spoken, this can also create problems. Both scenarios tend to result in resentment and anger toward others, which inhibits growth within the relationship.
- 3) **Equality**— Modern day equality does not pertain to who is the breadwinner and who is not. Instead, equality relates to whether you see yourself and others participating equally within your relationships. This could mean anything from sharing household duties, to investing an equal amount of energy into building and maintaining all other aspects of the relationship. In order to maintain your personal power within relationships, each party must actively participate in developing and upholding the overall integrity of all interactions.
- 4) **Self-Esteem**— Although I’m not partial to the words self-esteem because they have been overused, there is great merit to creating a healthy perception of self and your partner. If one partner has poor self-esteem they are likely to constantly question themselves and lend instability to the relationship through jealousy, insecurity, and overall poor self-image. This is incredibly damaging not only for themselves, but for the couple as well. Both parties are responsible for their own self-esteem— and remaining conscious of any faulty self-perceptions can greatly enhance the health of your relationships.
- 5) **Respect**— This element isn’t part of the original relationship model that I have used with clients, but I have since added it in teaching others about the Interpersonal dimension of health. Without respect, none of the other qualities are possible. Not only must one have respect for the other person, but they must maintain their own self-respect. Once respect is not shown, it is nearly impossible to re-establish a healthy relationship.

As you might already see, all of these qualities are inter-related; one cannot exist without the other. Spend some time evaluating the health of your own relationships. Interpersonal health cannot be achieved without some consciousness about the quality of each interaction.

Mindless or Conscious Eating?

What did you have for breakfast today? How much of it did you really taste? How did you feel afterward? What was your level of hunger before you started eating? After? When was the last time you tasted every single bite of your food at a meal?

Emotional and/or mindless eating are rampant in our culture. Many people eat because they are bored, anxious, depressed, angry, and confused as well as that food is just too available and “convenient” regardless of our actual level of hunger. But when asked, most people don’t even remember what they ate for breakfast let alone how it tasted.

Conscious eating entails engaging in a moment-to-moment awareness of all aspects of your consumptive behaviors— awareness of physical vs. emotional hunger and/or thirst, emotional attachments to food, patterns of eating established as early as childhood but certainly into adult years as well, usage of food as reward or reinforcement, and any other dynamics that create eating behavior. Most people, however, remain primarily ‘unconscious’ in their choices and habits which cause problems with weight and/or other health concerns.

Try the following tips to enhance your own conscious eating:

Slow down— Many people know that it takes about 15 minutes from the start of eating to actually experience a sense of fullness. This means that if we don’t eat at a slow enough pace we are likely to overeat. Also, most cravings fade after approximately 15 minutes; therefore, before indulging in your current food craving, hold off long enough to let the feeling pass.

Pay attention— Most workshop participants hear what I call the “3-bite rule” which notes that after the first 3 bites of anything we aren’t really tasting our food, we are just eating as our minds move on to something else. We tend to miss important signals from our bodies that we are full or that something just doesn’t taste as good as we thought it would. If a craving should persist, I often tell clients to take 3 reasonable bites of this food, but eat it slowly enough to really savor each bite. Inevitably by the 3rd bite, most people are satisfied and can eliminate any further munching or snacking.

Listen— Our bodies are really quite capable of telling us what they need in order to reach optimal health and daily satisfaction. However, we are generally pretty rotten at listening or “interpreting” what our bodies are really trying to tell us. If we slow down to ask what our body (not our minds or emotions) needs we are much more likely to eat a more balanced and satisfying meal.

Breathe— It might seem silly to remind you to breathe as you eat. However, given the amount of stress-related eating that occurs, it is a reasonable suggestion. If people would slow down enough to breathe their way through meals, their stress would be relieved to some extent and less emotional eating would occur.

Savor— As mentioned, few people actually taste their food from start to finish. However, by taking the time to really savor your food, you can not only learn to stop eating once you are satisfied, but you will be able to identify whether a chosen food is actually worth eating given the quality or taste.

At least for today... slow down, pay attention, listen to your body, breathe through your meal, and savor each bite. Then sit back and watch your consciousness soar!

Taking one moment at a time....

Whew.... the summer is almost over. But how many moments did you actually capture in the last few months?

Jon Kabot-Zinn coined the term “mindfulness”, which is the moment-to-moment awareness of the good, the bad, and the ugly. It is the choice to become and remain “present” to fully experience your life right down to the moment.

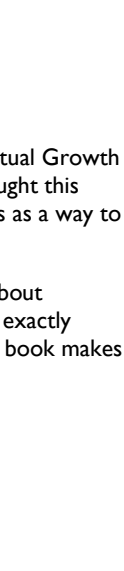
Consciousness takes mindfulness to the next level— it entails an active willingness to “look” at the moment to extract any relevant meaning. And it is in this conscious participation of each moment that we open the doors to our personal evolution. We cannot learn and grow without consciousness. And it is only when we commit to consciousness that we fully experience life.

How many moments from today have you truly captured? What have you learned from these moments? How do you feel when you step into your own consciousness?

Try this experiment:

Sit down in a comfortable and quiet place with a watch or clock nearby. Time yourself for 1 minute and ask yourself “What do I need to be most aware or conscious of today to make my life better?” Listen to what is generated and don’t judge the response. Let it simply flow.

Take as many other “moments” to check in with yourself as possible to become “aware” of your awareness. By training yourself to do this you can become much more conscious of your path through life as well as experience a great deal more meaning.



“Thumbs Up” Of The Month



This month’s highlighted book is “Until Today: Daily Devotions for Spiritual Growth and Peace of Mind”, a 365-daily meditation book by Iyanla Vanzant. I bought this gem years ago and have recommended it to numerous clients and friends as a way to either start or end your day more mindfully and spiritually.

The book offers day-by-day words of wisdom to inspire consciousness about common topics. On more than one occasion I inspired this book to find exactly what I needed to read for what was going on in my life at the time. This book makes a wonderful gift to self or others. You won’t be disappointed in this one!

Event Schedule

City of Winston-Salem Employees: “Stress Management Series”
4-Part Series starting Tuesday, August 9, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Forsyth County Employees: 6 Week “Weight and Wellness Series”-- Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. starting on August 17th

Continuing Education Workshops:

“Comprehensive Assessment and Treatment Methods for Integrating Spirituality in Healthcare”, October 13, 2011, Greensboro AHEC.



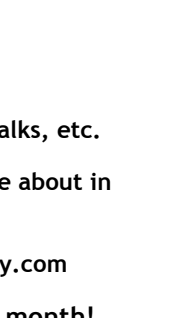
Presentations/Workshops open to the public:

- “Mindful Eating/Mindful Body” (September— date TBA)
- “Signs from Spirit: Using Signs and Symbols in our Lives as Guides to Radiant Living” (October— date TBA)
- “Living Through Your Soul: Soul Skills for Conscious Evolution” (November—date TBA)
- “Soul Sense: Tools for Gaining Access to Your Inner Wisdom (TBA)

About The Author:

Katherine T. Kelly, Ph.D., M.S.P.H. is a licensed psychologist in her own psychotherapy and consulting practice in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. With 20+ years of direct clinical experience, Dr. Kelly doesn’t just believe in helping others to heal; instead, her mission is to help them to evolve. Using her own integrative framework - the “Soul Health Model”-- Dr. Kelly approaches her work with clients from a “psycho-spiritual” perspective. She provides a uniquely progressive, yet down-to-earth approach to healing and is well-known in both the therapeutic and medical communities. She thrives as she helps clients to reach what she calls “consciousness evolution” through a variety of self-designed methods.

Dr. Kelly has authored several academic publications and is an ongoing contributor to local health and wellness magazines.



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Blog: <http://drkatherinetkelly.blogspot.com/>

Sneak Preview of the next issue.....

- Always.... More on Conscious Evolution
- Soul Health: Focus on Spiritual Wellness
- Solitude— an under-rated activity
- Updates on the book, upcoming workshops, talks, etc.



If you have topics that you would like to hear more about in future issues, please email me at :
evolve@drkatherinetkelly.com
As always— have a wonderfully conscious month!

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).
Questions or comments? E-mail us at evolve@drkatherinetkelly.com.