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The Great Journey: A Dance With Cancer

Manya Lindsay

Abstract

Sickness and health have fascinated me since I was a little girl in bed with the usual childhood illnesses. This was the time I had out of body experiences, explored other dimensions and what I called space. I called it time out and found it peaceful. Sickness has always been a time for reflection and understanding for me. I have had relatively good health apart from some gynecological problems. My main health challenge came with the manifestation of Cancer. I healed myself and am now in excellent health and able to share this experience with others who may find it helpful. I travel, teach and heal others.

Key words: Cancer, healing, self-healing, Vipassana, meditation, Martin Brofman

DEATH

*Found myself facing death
What happens when this being dies?
Who am I?
What is my purpose?
Where am I going?
I am a mass of changing energy
Which aspect of this is me?
Notice attachment to the physical body.
Which bit am I?
Watch the fear in and around me
I watch quietly and willingly
A creation of mine
A smile crosses my face
I welcome my friend and
Accept my power
I am a Spirit who knows
All is well*

What I am about to share with you is my Truth. If anything resonates, please feel free to explore it for yourself.

In September 2007 I was given a diagnosis of Invasive Ductile Carcinoma of the left breast. It was all about FEAR and DEATH. It was all about 'You better hurry up and do this or that if you don't want to die. Ummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

This followed a routine mammography which showed some abnormality. I then had a repeat mammograph at a breast clinic a month later. This lasted for 4 hours and they were looking for multiple growths in both breasts. The radiographer who worked with me was very distressed as she was aware of the bruising that was being caused. I reassured her that I was alright and continued to meditate.

It was at this time that I saw a small lump in my left breast. Having visualised this, I began my healing. Once the Oncologist was happy with the mammograph she used it to do a guided biopsy, which gave her more information. This process took four hours. I received the official diagnosis a week later confirming that I had a grade 1 carcinoma of the left breast. Grade one means that it is localized and has not spread anywhere.

The diagnosis is confirmed in a letter from a hospital consultant in an English breast screening service:

12 September 2007

This patient... was assessed... on 7 September 2007.

She had been recalled for further evaluation of a suspicious, 10 mm spiculate mass in the upper half of the LEFT breast and a tiny probable benign area of calcification in the RIGHT upper outer quadrant.

Clinical examination demonstrated a sublet mass, which was difficult to feel and would require localisation, in the LEFT upper inner quadrant. Subsequently, this was confirmed to represent a 7 mm suspicious, malignant appearing mass on ultrasound. Ultrasound of the LEFT axilla was normal. Ultrasound guided core biopsies were performed to this mass and this has revealed an invasive ductal carcinoma, grade 1 with associated low grade DCIS (85b/85a).*

Sterotactic guided core biopsies were performed to the calcification in the RIGHT upper out quadrant. Histology has confirmed this to be fibrocystic change with calcification (B2)**...

* Diagnostic category: Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS)/ invasive cancer.

** Benign

So what was it all about? It made me reflect on my life; a rich and beautiful life that had prepared me to face this creation in a balanced and positive way. A realisation came that I was never presented with anything that I didn't have the knowledge and capacity to handle. So instead of feeling DEAD already or in the process of dying, I felt optimistic and joyous at the prospect of this learning.

I was born in India and raised there through my formative years. This was a culture and a way of life that is close to death and has an acceptance of it as an inevitable part of life. My parents exposed us to all sorts of information and beliefs in an impartial way, providing an invaluable guidance system for

life, full of tolerance and compassion. This is a value base that was universal and valid through all time and across cultures and divides.

So where does a personal diagnosis of a Terminal Illness fit in? I created this through a thought in my mind – a decision that I had completed what I came for in this lifetime and a feeling that I was tired and wished to go. I didn't express this consciously but it was there in my subconscious and as far as the subconscious is concerned, it hears what you say exactly as you say it. It is like an order in a restaurant. And the subconscious executes it.

Why Cancer and not something else? My mother had often feared that I would get it. Somewhere I had stored this and in my moment of deep unhappiness, connected the two and bingo, a month later there was a lump in my breast.

Consciousness is amazing. Consciousness includes the subconscious and much else. It is the part of us that is all knowing and connects with all knowledge. It obeys our thoughts and stores our tensions. It is where all our manifestations begin. It is also where all is resolved.

We are all wise beings. However, many of us don't connect with this part of ourselves. Occasionally we allow ourselves glimpses into these deeper parts of ourselves, but even then we may dismiss an awareness such as mine as a coincidence. We have an ability to reduce our beingness to the smallest rather than see the huge and magnificent beings that we are.

We are energy that is constantly changing and moving. Nothing therefore is permanent or solid.

My personal experience and understanding of this came from Vipassana meditation. I practiced this for many years and it informs my life at all levels and on a daily basis. Therefore, to get caught up with fear and concern about dying was not a possibility. To accept and let go was an option that was clear and one I understood. I had a lump in my body. I accepted this without guilt. Many who face such life challenges ask, "What did I do to cause it?": "What did I do to deserve this?" "Who or what was responsible for it?" All of these are attempts to find a cause outside of one's self. With my understanding of the Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha), the buck stopped with me. This is an amazing journey of acceptance and letting go, even of death and dying.

Dying is transformation. Everything is transformed and changing all the time. Change is inevitable. Even at the cellular level and at the subatomic level this is so. Some change we can accept more readily – like old age and all that comes with it. These we see as normal and acceptable. These awarenesses form a belief system – one that is set in stone for most people. We hear comments and clichés all the time about what happens when we get old.

What we believe we manifest. What we focus on grows. If we focus on fear, that multiplies; if we focus on acceptance, it enables the body to become calm, and then natural healing can occur. The body is intelligent and knows how to heal itself. If this were not the case, we would have innumerable illnesses at any given time. We need to love and trust this body and assist it by being equanimous, being calm and trusting in the integrity of our body and the life-path that we are on.

I chose to focus on the impermanence and letting go of the lump by lovingly accepting it, allowing the lump in my body to be my teacher and to have gratitude for the learning it provided me. I chose to see any fears that arose with the same love, and lovingly ask them to leave, as I no longer wished to learn through fear. I thanked the fear for trying to help.

I had a lot of love and compassion for myself and knew during moments of reflection that I was guided from within. I have a wonderful internal Radar System, my Intuition, my personal satellite navigation system, to assist me. Most of all, I knew I simply had to ask and I would be led. Some people call this Faith, some call it stupidity, some call it irresponsible and others have a 50% belief that it might be a possibility.

So what is Faith? Is it blind? Who knows except the one who feels it.

FAITH
I know, I trust
I see, I am
I feel, I accept.
In wisdom, I flow
In the myriad universes
Within me
To be part of the One
In Peace.

So here is the conundrum for most people. Is having faith a belief in one's self or is it sitting back and giving the power to someone or something else?

One approach to addressing this most important question is to ask ourselves, "Who am I?" We could write long lists about our physical appearance, our age, our qualifications, our personality, our nationality, our family, our preferences and so on. Are we really all these things at all times? If I were to ask you, "In this moment, what are you?" what would you say? Would it be all of the above? It wouldn't be so. Yet we define ourselves by all those things, which are aspects

that arise and pass, that are impermanent. To all of these we further add emotions that we associate with them and add value, such as good, bad, not worthy of love, hate, happiness, criticism, shame, guilt, anger, resentment, jealousy and many more. We then choose to believe these as permanent. We water and nurture them with every new experience that is similar, feeding into the old pile. We become victims of our own negative beliefs and emotions. We create toxicity in our mind and body; tensions that cause dis-ease in the body and mind. We forget that we are beings of Spirit.

We are housed in this physical body in this lifetime on this beautiful planet Earth. Our body is a borrowed item that enables the Spirit within to shine through and it does so through its experiences and manifestations. Faith is an understanding of this connection between the perceived solidity of our physical world and an understanding of its connection with the cosmos, the universe, and all that exists. The principles are universal. This is an amazing and comforting thought but not one that says, "Relax and hand over your problems or your life for to someone to 'fix' for you." Faith helps you reclaim this power that informs through the stillness within. It is a 'knowing' It is a perfect guidance system. It is a space of quiet understanding, a place of peace and joy .A place of equanimity.

So what is spirit?

SPIRIT

*In The world of Spirit
There is only light
Light in you, light in me.*

*The flame is steady
A knowing from source
It offers delights
As a matter of course*

*No matter what happens
In this dimension
A choice could be made
Of the soft pink road and its loving shade.*

*No pushing, no pulling
No thoughts, no fears
No lack, no hate
Only light of the most amazing kind
Rainbows to overwhelm all mankind.*

*This is our life
If we let go
No shame, no blame
No pride to hide
The feelings inside.*

*True laughter and fun
Total inclusion
Perfect communication
Is our salvation
From darkness within*

Spirit is our individual soul, our blueprint. It receives the light from the universal source. It is the luminescence we are. Some refer to the luminescence within as beings of light.

Spirit is oneness. It can access anything it wants, easily and effortlessly and from anywhere in the universe. We simply need to ask and listen in silence. It does not engage in judgement. When there is harmony of body and spirit, we find peace. When there is harmony between two beings, there is oneness – a beautiful space. The heart is truly open and unconditional love flows for one and for all. This raises the vibration of a being, which causes a wonderful resonance with all creation – water, stones, plants and animals, birds and the earth and sky. It illuminates all other worlds and beings. There is then no place for darkness; lack of light, and negativity cannot surface or survive here.

When this alignment exists, there is only flow. Things happen in the right order and for the right reasons. And resolve naturally. This process is just a dance of light.

When we separate from spirit, whether our own or others, there is conflict and separation. The result

is suffering and pain. Alienation, a feeling of isolation and lack of love results. Life becomes fragmented and conflicted. Focus is lost and there is a tendency to run hither and thither.

*CONFLICT
Me and You
Right and Wrong
Can't hear, can't feel
There is only me.
You don't exist.*

*Words are spoken
That cannot be retrieved
Leaving scars
Pain and Grief.*

*Who are we?
Who speak so harsh
A fragment of our Ego
Blind to peace.*

*Love we want
Love we trash
We burn in the fury
Of hate and jealousy*

*Further and further
Does love go
As we wallow
In Craving, Aversion and Sorrow.*

Conflict with another always starts with conflict within oneself. It is a state of duality and judgement. It is a place of lack of self-love and therefore an inability to love others. Conflict seeks to control and somehow gain moral superiority. It attempts to close one's heart, which in turn leads to negativity and darkness.

Conflict thrives on fear and separation, on division, on delusion. Conflict causes ill will and animosity towards oneself and one's fellow beings, and this may extend to all sentient beings. Conflict emanates often from anger and ego – a sense of attachment to self as we see it. Conflict opposes peace and love and oneness amongst all aspects of one's self, as it does in the outer world.

The raft to steer one out of here is made of love. Love for self, love for others and love for all things around us. Unconditional love.

Conflict is lack of balance, a lack of being centred, a space of agitation. The action taken as a result is unbalanced and causes confusion. It is a space of non-peace, a delusional (I use this term in the context of Buddha's teaching) state. Often when we have a diagnosis of a disease, we can find ourselves in this space. So the actions we take are not balanced and result in the perpetuation of the imbalance. Triggers for imbalance could be fear, anger, resignation, sadness or deep unhappiness.

In a state of conflict, whether within one's self or with others, there is a tendency to create separation. Separation causes Isolation. Isolation makes one mistrust others – their actions, their words and their intent. Mistrust causes uncontrolled emotions to arise out of a sense of perceived threat. This creates further separation and the cycle continues. Actions taken in this context can only cause pain and suffering to self and others as it arises from an unbalanced state. There is an attachment to self and all its attributes – physical, mental, emotional and a forgetfulness of one as a being of spirit. There is judgment and prejudice. Once again we are in a state of duality.

When we create symptoms we have become separated from our body's natural state, which is perfect health. Conflict arises and doubt fills our minds. What treatment? Which doctor? How soon? What did I do? What should I do? The result is that we never hear our bodies or our own inner voice. We forget our wholeness. We get stuck in a paradigm that is almost wholly controlled by fear of death.

What is Self?

What if I started by saying that there is no self?

I can hear people's outrage at such a statement. However if you follow from the basis of all of us being Impermanent, which bit of us is self?

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>SELF</i> <i>S Separate</i> <i>E Ego</i> <i>L Longing for Love</i> <i>F Fickle</i></p> |
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The 'self' is an identity. With what?

Somehow we make ourselves separate, different, and isolated in life. We do this in many ways. When we are born we are free and have no constraints or limitations. We cry, scream, and ask for what we want, now. We love ourselves, including all that we make from our bodies. There is no shame and we explore. We then get given a name, we learn that responding to it is beneficial. This is the first step towards separation. Our identity is born. We start the process of separation. This process of separation then gradually separates us from others but it also causes separation within our self. Schools, family, and society complete the rest. Somehow all the connectedness that we are born with is removed efficiently by these agencies. Ironically we spend the rest of our adult lives trying to find this unity within us.

This self becomes the I, Me, Mine. This takes us into a space of duality. By its nature it leads to conflict, desire and dissatisfaction. Where there is an 'I,' there is a 'You'. Where there is a 'Me,' there is a 'You'. Where there is 'Mine,' there is 'Yours.' These are external factors.

Within ourselves there is a gradual separation from our spirit or soul. This can be a separation leading away from Oneness and Harmony. Something we all seek. We tend to view the world around us as hostile and the universe as non-benevolent. This is a common occurrence when a person becomes sick. The separate 'I' becomes a 'patient,' a different entity.

Whenever there is separation from our spirit, there is conflict and control. Love, the master healer, is blocked. In our constant search for answers, quick fixes, and constant dissatisfaction, our minds

become fickle, darting about here and there. Restlessness and anxiety become the norm. We leave no space for Gratitude and Appreciation, and Peace and Quiet.

Identity and name are relevant only as conventions to function in this world. Understanding this takes us on a journey that teaches us many lessons, and one mode for learning such lessons comes through dis-ease in the body.

Dis – ease.

As human beings with our physical bodies, we are all familiar with this word, disease. This word is very evocative. It causes FEAR at various levels. The ultimate FEAR is that of DEATH.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DISEASE</i> <i>D – death</i> <i>I – infirmity</i> <i>S – self doubt</i> <i>E – end of well being</i> <i>A – accident</i> <i>S – suffering</i> <i>E – emotion, a medley of them</i></p> |
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Dr. Martin Brofman, who is the creator of the Body Mirror System of Healing, offers wonderful insights into the way we manifest diseases in our body. He teaches us that all illnesses arise at the level of our consciousness and that they are the results of energy blocked or interrupted, or a call for love. He explains that when the tension in our consciousness gets to a certain level, symptoms manifest in our body.

I was fortunate to understand this at the core level of my being through meditation and experiential knowledge.

From my experience as a person working in health as well as someone who manifested Cancer, I had decided to Die. According to Dr. Brofman, anyone who has cancer has decided to die and I knew that I had decided to die.

I felt that I had done what I came into this world to do and I had jokingly decided on some funeral music and even told my children about it. Dr Brofman says, as a survivor of Cancer himself, that all patients who manifest Cancer are “deeply unhappy and wish to die.” I know that this was definitely true for me. He further explains the significance of the location of the Cancer through the system of The Chakras. This term originated in India and refers to a wheel or vortex of energy. An imbalance in the energy system causes dis-ease in the body.

The most common response when a terminal diagnosis is made and the patient is informed is fear. The very word spells death. Then the big wheel of medicine begins to turn and it is also driven by fear. The surgeon asked that I be whipped in for surgery within ten days of my original diagnosis or else it would spread very fast. He further informed me that he would be looking at the lymph nodes.

At this point I took a decision to go home and rethink. I wished to meditate on this situation. I knew that there is a lot of literature available about the spread of cancer through probing and surgery. I was

not comfortable being rushed, organised and parcelled as if I was on a production line. Further, all control and time scales lay in the hands of the medical staff and their routine.

I wish to make very clear that they had the best intentions but their methods did not appeal to me. So I decided not to have any treatment at all. This caused some consternation and my Surgeon was deeply offended by such a decision. However, my GP was with me and she was more than happy to support me on this path.

I was not suicidal, just quietly confident that I knew my body well and was aware of its innate ability to heal itself. If it could heal other ailments it could heal this too. I had in the past healed myself of Cervical Spondylosis, Fibroids and other ailments. The medical opinion about my spondylosis had been that I would need to wear a collar for the rest of my life. That was 28 years ago. I have never done this and am well.

All our cells are conscious and know what to do. The body is intelligent and can heal itself from many conditions if we let go and allow it to heal. Most important was the fact that I was not looking at controlling the outcome. My focus was not on dying or living. My focus was on understanding experientially. My focus was on trusting my intuition and being patient. I was not fighting an illness. I was allowing it to be and welcoming it. I had learned this through my Vipassana meditative tradition. There is an understanding in Dhamma that aversion towards something makes it grow and become bigger. So when we push or even just want to push something out, it magnifies. Similarly, when we crave and want something really badly, we can push it further and further away. I firmly believe that through meditation and relaxation one can get on with the process of releasing or reversing any illness through acceptance. This helps us to be present and it is in the present that the future is born.

Personally, I would like words like 'fight' and 'struggle' not to be used in this context. They are counterproductive energetically.

The body's natural state is perfect balance and health. So allowing this to happen was my intention. This trust in my body's intelligence helped me see that the lump that I had created would dissolve. I felt sure of this and went ahead with what was comfortable for me. I understood that my paradigms were different from The ones used by the clinicians and western medicine, and so was my understanding of illness and its cause. Whether we choose to have external interventions or not, if we relate to our bodies, listen and honour its wisdom and power, we can never fail to be back in balance. So I felt excellent and the lump dissolved very quickly.

There are many teachers and tools available for people to explore and use. It is necessary for each individual to find teachers and techniques that resonate with them. Choices are best made without fear and with total responsibility.

I owe absolute gratitude to all my teachers and guides, my great grandma , my grandparents, my parents, my children, my friends-young and old, many strangers, my body, and healers who absolutely validated my decisions, my GP, the flowers and birds and all of nature that gracefully showed me the natural rhythms of life and death. To the monastic community at Amaravati in Hertfordshire, UK. To Ajahn Sumedho I am profoundly grateful.

I owe to my being an appreciation for the courage to follow the true path without fear from within or from others. This healed my body. I cannot underestimate the love that surrounded me at this time from so many people, all of this I received with gratitude.

On the mundane level, I tried to get a scan in the UK, where I live, but access was blocked due to bureaucratic issues. I had a scan a year later in India. It was done by a professor of Oncology who specialised in breast cancer. He had seen me before and had done a repeat scan for me a year earlier to confirm the diagnosis. He was indeed dumbfounded that there was no tumour. He gave me a clean bill of health and that has been the end of an amazing journey. This journey has changed the way so many people around me view ill health. This has been very beautiful to watch. I lived to tell the tale and maybe this could help others take courage, too.

I would be very happy to share more information with anyone by email or Skype.

I have worked as a healer for many years. I am not extra-ordinary, and I really believe that all of us can do this and live a healthy and peaceful life. The nature of our life is that difficult situations will arise. It is how we deal with the situations, using wisdom and trust, that defines a life lived in balance. Balance is what we seek whether it is good physical, mental or spiritual health.

May you be well and at peace. This is my wish. May we as a community bring light within and around us. May we be the light.

I would like to say that death is also a choice and it is perfectly alright to make that choice. Whatever is born or arises, dies. It is simply how nature works.

If anything here resonates with you, please use it. If not, then simply put it aside.

Manya Lindsay

I was born and brought up in India. I have lived in England since my mid twenties. I have two beautiful children. I have an Honours degree in Psychology and a Masters degree in Social Work. I specialised in medical and psychiatric social work. I have travelled extensively and worked in many countries in varying capacities from hospitals in urban areas to working in remote places with no health infrastructure.



My awakening came many years ago when I met Martin Hlghbear, a wonderful, wise, and beautiful person - a Sioux Medicine Man. My eternal gratitude to him for setting me on a path I still travel sharing love and healing with all those I encounter. My greatest learning has come through Vipassana Meditation and its regular practice and applications in daily life. I have always had a deep respect and interest in indigenous peoples of the world and their wisdom. I have been blessed with the opportunity to visit and learn from many wise people across the world.

I work as a healer and my wish is to awaken the healer within every person I meet, to assist them to open their hearts so they can give and receive love. We are all healers and teachers and I respect this and honour the divine in all beings.

Contact: manyalindsay@gmail.com

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P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099

Phone (609) 714-1885 Fax (519) 265-0746

Email: center@ijhc.org Website: <http://www.ijhc.org>

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