



Balance Point Newsletter

December 2000

A Gift from
Nancy Lankston, RN, CMT
nlankston@balanceplace.com

Copyright 2000
Balance Point, Inc.
www.balanceplace.com
(913) 406-8857



Winter Solitude



*Stark branch on
Granite sky
Snow falls.*

*Tree limb, fence post
Grass stalk, foot path
A white caress.*

*Deep quiet
Still air
Echo within.*

*Sky opens, spills
into
Silent joy.*



I don't usually send out a holiday newsletter, but this year I was inspired. This newsletter is short and sweet so you won't have to feel too guilty about taking time away from the holiday madness to read it. I hope you will use this as an excuse to put your to-do list away and spend a few quiet moments with me.

In this issue I write about my own attempts to control "holiday shopping sickness." I also ponder the joys of solitude. And to keep you healthier this winter, I have included tips on natural remedies for the cold and flu.

So, sit down, put your feet up, sip on a cup of your favorite hot beverage and enjoy a little respite from the holiday hustle and bustle.



Nancy offers CranioSacral Therapy, Reiki, Swedish Massage & Nutritional Guidance in Overland Park, KS

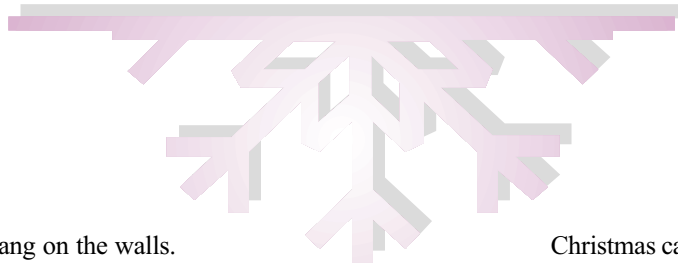
Pause and Find Peace in the Stillness



Nancy Lankston, RN, CMT
Balance Point, Inc.
(913) 406-8857
24375 Morning Deer Dr.
Paola, KS 66071



More, More, More!



Decorations in red and green hang on the walls. Christmas carols play softly in the background. And no matter where I turn, I see an advertisement for something that someone believes I really must buy. Candy, toys, books, music, clothes, DVD players, gourmet food – the selection is endless. Buy me! Buy me! Every TV ad, every store, every restaurant and every street corner beckons with yet another item that I must buy to make my holiday complete. The ads would have me believe that happiness is just a quick purchase away.

I am such a good little consumer; I can feel myself getting sucked into the holiday buying frenzy. Every year I succumb to holiday fever and spend myself silly. I act totally wacko when it comes to my kids. I spend hours searching for the one toy that each of my children is begging for. And eventually I find it and buy it. But buying that one special gift is not enough. I buy a few extra items. And then a few more. And a few more. I am the queen of spontaneous purchases – "Oh, isn't that cute! Maybe I'll get one of those too." On and on I go until my charge card is smoking from overuse and I can't begin to remember everything I've purchased. All with the heartfelt desire of creating a very special Christmas for my kids.

But I am beginning to have the sneaking suspicion that creating a special Christmas for my kids has nothing to do with buying them more stuff. I look in their rooms and see piles of toys they rarely play with. Many more and they won't be able to find their beds at night. Besides, I have been noticing that all of this "stuff" – toys, books, clothes, CD's and other gizmos – does not seem to make any of us happier. Oh sure, I get a thrill from my new suede shoes. But the joy fades quickly. And in the end I am still the same content or discontent soul I was before I bought those new shoes.

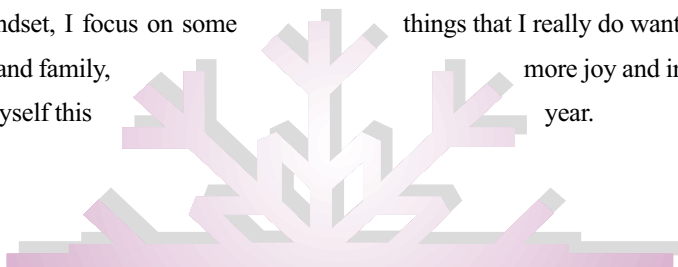
Is buying more "stuff" the path to happiness? Do I really believe that I can buy a happy holiday? Is it just that I haven't found the store that has my happy holiday stocked in the correct size and color? In the book, *How to Want What You Have* (Henry Holt & Company, 1995), Timothy Miller writes that most Americans are consumed with having more - more money, more status, more possessions. We are never satisfied with where we are or what we have right now. We want more, more, more. And the wanting leaves us miserable.

It may be downright un-American to say this, but enough is enough! Happy holidays cannot be found in any mall. All this buying just leaves me with more bills to pay and more stuff to store and clean and take care of. This Christmas I want to change my ways. No more over-limit charge cards and buyer's remorse in January.

That old saying "Out of sight, out of mind" applies here. I have stopped browsing through the catalogs that flood my mailbox. And I studiously ignore TV commercials. These simple actions have dramatically diminished my "I need one of those" list. If I don't see it, I don't obsess and ruminate about how much is lacking in my life because I don't own it.

It is still weeks until Christmas and I feel like a warrior preparing for battle. Fortitude! I can do this! Turn off that radio come-on. Avoid that mall. Think long and hard about what each person on my list really wants. Plan quick shopping forays when my endurance is at its highest. And a pat on the back for every day that passes without a crazy purchase.

It is hard work swimming against the tide of a consumer Christmas. Every ad is designed to whet my buying appetite. But when it gets hard fighting the "more, more, more" mindset, I focus on some things that I really do want more of this holiday: more hugs, more laughter, more quiet fun with friends and family, more joy and inner peace. None of those are for sale at my local mall. I plan to make them myself this year.



In Praise of Solitude

"If one sets time aside for a business appointment or a social engagement, that time is accepted as inviolable. But if anyone says, "I cannot come because that is my hour to be alone," one is considered rude, egotistical, or strange. What a sad commentary on our civilization."

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"Perhaps it would be a good idea some day, fantastic as it sounds, to muffle every telephone, quiet every motor, and stop all activity – just to give people a chance to ponder and reflect on what life is about, why they are living, and what they really want."

- James Truslow

"Stop and listen to the heart, the wind outside, to one another, to the changing patterns of this mysterious life."

- Jack Kornfield

"The individual who has experienced solitude will not easily become a victim of mass suggestion."

- Albert Einstein

"We're afraid of solitude because we're afraid of the feelings that will rise before we can be at ease, afraid to confront who we are when stripped of our 'doing' nature. We feel a need to be surrounded by people, by activity; to entrain with another's rhythm - anything but solitude...Solitude takes practice. It requires facing down loneliness and realizing that there is nothing more important you can do. Far from being an indulgence, quiet, solitary contemplation - "doing nothing" - is as restorative as any elixir."

-Stephan Rechtschaffen, M.D.

For years I filled my life with constant noise. The TV or radio was my constant companion. Silence felt like an empty space that I needed to fill. There was never time in my day for a moment or two of quiet reflection. Then one day I "woke up" and looked around. I was miserable. I was only thirty-one, with a husband and a very successful career. I felt horribly discontent and I had no idea why.

I went to church with a friend. I had not been to church since I was a teenager – I didn't like church. But this church that my friend took me to was different. This church had a ten-minute silent time in the middle of the service. I sat in the silence at that church, surrounded by strangers and I felt peace wash over me. I was more calm and content with myself than I had been in years. It was a revelation. After that one experience, I began searching for ways to put silence back in my life.

Today, almost a decade later, I still search for quiet and solitude. I close the door, turn off the TV and just sit enjoying the quiet. Now that I have kids, one of my favorite tricks is to go lie in the bathtub with the water up over my ears. I can't hear the kids yelling when I have water in my ears! Wherever I go to be in the silence, my goal is simple: Do Nothing. Just breathe and BE with me for a few minutes.

At times it seems impossible for me to get a few minutes alone in a quiet space – especially during the holiday season. Every spare moment is filled with holiday shopping, parties and noise and busyness. But on the days when I do find time to be still, I am so much more content. Alone time gets me recharged and focused and back in touch with myself.

Winter is the perfect season to cultivate a habit of quiet time. This is the season when Mother Earth gets quiet and still. Mother Earth knows that a season of quiet waiting in the dark is necessary to prepare for new growth.

Try this: Find a quiet spot and just sit. Feel your breath flow in and out, in and out. Think of 3 things that you are grateful for: a soft chair, central heat, sunshine. Then go wherever your mind wants to lead you. Watch your thoughts flow by like leaves floating down a stream.

Don't try to stop your thoughts - just watch them flow by. Suspend judgement, and just silently watch the flow. If you get anxious or agitated, go back and focus on your breath.

Cold and Flu Relief

I hate colds. I don't get many colds anymore, but as a child I would have at least 3-4 colds every winter. And at least one of those colds would turn into bronchitis. The only thing more miserable than a congested, runny nose is a congested, tight chest and a hacking cough.

Today I feel like I am catching a cold; my sinuses ache, my throat is scratchy and my nose is dripping. But I'm not worried. I know this cold will only last 3-5 days. How do I know that? Because today I have an arsenal of natural cold remedies that work fast. Here are the natural cold and flu remedies you will find if you peek in my medicine chest today:

Homeopathic Remedies: Homeopathy has been popular in England and parts of Europe for decades, but I just discovered it a couple of years ago. These compounds when used correctly are the closest thing to "magic" that I have ever found. Homeopathy works quickly and is very safe and effective against numerous ailments including the common cold and flu. But there is a trick to using homeopathic compounds; you must match your symptoms up carefully with the right compound. A good homeopathic reference book is invaluable.

Echinacea: This herb is what I reach for first when I feel a cold starting. Echinacea is made from the root of the purple coneflower and its healing properties have been researched extensively. This herb enhances and boosts infection fighting components of the immune system, as well as strengthening the cell membranes of the body against attack. I swear by it. I start taking Echinacea at the first sign of a cold and my illness is much shorter and less severe. Echinacea is also perfectly safe for my babies to take – I give my kids echinacea drops that can be added to water or juice. Echinacea works best when taken short term. So, I save this one and only use it at the first sign of a cold.

Vitamin C: My Mom and Linus Pauling were right; Vitamin C helps the body fight off the common cold and flu bugs. Vitamin C is required to build strong, healthy cell membranes that are able to protect the body from viral and bacterial invaders. Humans need Vitamin C in our daily diet. I eat oranges, pineapple, kiwi, grapefruit, tomatoes, broccoli or red peppers to get my daily Vitamin C. And when I have a cold, I consume even more Vitamin C rich foods. I also take a supplement. I take 500 mg of Vitamin C 2-3 times per day until my cold is gone.

Zinc Lozenges: I have found nothing is better for relieving the pain of a sore throat than zinc lozenges. They taste good and they work. Zinc is a mineral that is used by the body in numerous detoxification processes. I suck on a zinc lozenge 3-4 times per day if my throat is sore or scratchy. My kids also love them.

Saline Nose Spray: Saline nose spray is an easy way to keep my sinuses from packing up. Saline spray is available at most pharmacies. My body needs moisture and lots of it when I am sick with a cold or flu. So, besides using saline spray, I add 3-4 extra glasses of water to my day when I have a cold or the flu. Pure, fresh water is what my body needs to loosen up and expel all those nasty secretions.

Herbal Tea: I find a warm mug of tea very comforting when I am sick. And tea is a great way to give my cold or flu an "herbal treatment." There are numerous herbs out there that alleviate the symptoms of the common cold or flu. Useful herbs include ginger, honeysuckle, elderberry, licorice and forsythia. These herbs contain antiviral compounds. Slippery elm, anise and marsh mallow are also helpful for colds that involve a sore throat or lots of phlegm. Many of these antiviral herbs are also available in capsule or lozenge form.

Aromatherapy Bath: Soaking in a hot, steamy bath is my favorite way to loosen up sinus or chest congestion. I add 6-8 drops of Eucalyptus essential oil (available at health food stores) to the water for even more decongestant power.

This morning I could feel a cold coming on. I took Echinacea and extra Vitamin C. Now I'm sipping on my favorite Ginseng Peppermint herbal tea. For lunch I plan to have chicken noodle soup loaded with onions and garlic – another tried and true natural remedy for the common cold. Later tonight when the sun goes down and I am feeling especially crummy, I may soak in a hot, steamy bath to help my body expel this cold virus. By mid-week I will be back in top form.

I keep these Homeopathic remedies handy:

Oscillococcinum from Boiron: for a flu with the symptoms of fever, chills, body aches.

Sinusalia from Boiron: a mixture of several compounds designed to relieve sinus congestion, inflammation and pain.

Kali Bichromicum for nasal discharge that is thick and yellow or green in color, or thick postnasal drip.

Allium Cepa for nasal discharge that is profuse, watery and burns the nose and eyes.

Bryonia Alba for dry, hacking cough.

References

Castleman, Michael. *The Healing Herbs*, 1995, Bantam Books, New York.
Duke, James A., Ph.D. *The Green Pharmacy*, 1997, Rodale Press, New York.
Ullman, Dana, M.P.H. *Homeopathic Medicine for Children and Infants*, 1992, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, New York.
Ullman, Robert, N.D. & Reichenberg-Ullman, Judyth, N.D. *Homeopathic Self-Care*, 1997, Prima Publishing, Rocklin, CA.