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Holidays 2014 Newsletter:
"Breathe often..."

Greetings...



I hope this holiday edition of my newsletter, which I've kept brief, will help you engage this deep, dark, sacred time of year with peace, hope, and joy.

Happy holidays.

~Dan



In this edition:

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Reflections: "Breathe

often..."

I once saw a bumper sticker that read "Breathe deeply, breathe often." This time of year, therapists, life coaches, nutritionists, physicians, ministers, and other "helpers"...each have their own suggestions about how to cope with 'holiday stress.' Here's mine: "Breathe deeply, breathe often."

Taking a single breath--a *long...slow...deep...breath*--and doing it often...can make a real difference:

Before you get out of bed in the morning...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you hit the "on" button on whatever machine makes your morning coffee or tea...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you start your car...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you pick up your mobile phone, *every single time* you reach for it...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you turn on your computer, or enter your password (or both)...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you take a bite of anything you eat, or a sip of anything you drink (whether it's a meal or a snack)..take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you respond to something a family member has said at a holiday gathering (whether what they said has annoyed you or delighted you)...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you start your work day (however and whatever that looks like)...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you respond to a co-worker or a customer or a client...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you turn on your TV, or turn to the internet...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you swipe your credit card at any store, or enter your credit card number for a purchase on the internet, or reach for the cash in your wallet...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you open your paycheck (or check your online banking to make sure your direct deposit was, in fact, directly deposited)...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you start to buy, or wrap, a holiday gift, or write a holiday card...take one long, slow, deep breath.

Before you go to sleep at night, after you've turned out all the lights...take one long, slow, deep breath.

I'm not trying to be simplistic, or suggest that this will take away all the stress or anxiety or grief or depression in your life, but breathing does make a difference. In "The Power of Breathing," a chapter in his classic book on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, ***Full Catastrophe Living***, Jon Kabat-Zinn writes that breathing is "the pulse of life in us, the rhythm of the primordial sea internalized, the ebb and flow of matter and energy in our bodies." He adds "In meditation, the breath functions as an anchor for our attention. Tuning to it...allows us to drop below the surface agitations of the mind into relaxation, calmness, and stability."

Taking long, slow, deep breaths...won't increase your paycheck...or decrease the amount of traffic you encounter...or change how old (or young) you are...but it just might change your *relationship* to these, and many other, life experiences.

And that...can make any day...a holiday.

(P.S. After the first few "Before you..." items above, did you skip over reading "take one long, slow, deep breath" at the end...because it was starting to feel redundant? Go back, try it again...and this time...*as you read* "take one long, slow, deep breath"...try **TAKING**...one long, slow, deep breath).

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Quotes for inspiration and action...

"I'd rather be a dysfunctional soul than a well-adjusted robot"
(*Thomas Moore*)

"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."
(*Buddah*)

"I'm a grown-up that's still growing up."
(*Ellis*, from the song "**500 Crows**")

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Resources For A Richer Life

More than just "self-help," Resources For A Richer Life is meant to bring you music, movies, books, articles, web sites, events, videos, and more that will touch the depths of your soul and awaken the most alive parts of you.

(theater/audio CD): "A Christmas Carol" **performed by Patrick Stewart**. Before you roll your eyes at a story that has been

done so many times it seems almost impossible to imagine a version that offers anything new...know that this version is not a movie, not a book on tape, but a live, one-man show that Stewart performed in New York and Los Angeles to rave reviews. Nominated for a Grammy, this is a performance of the actual text of the Charles Dickens classic, with the voice of Stewart bringing every character (and more than a few inanimate objects) to life. After acting in the renowned Royal Shakespeare Company, Stewart went on to play Captain Jean Luc Picard in "Star Trek: The Next Generation" on TV and Professor Charles Xavier in the "X-Men" movies....Turn out the lights...light a few candles...pour yourself a glass of your favorite holiday drink...and listen...just *listen*. I promise it will be a holiday experience unlike any you've had in a long, long time.

(book) **The Co-Parents' Handbook:** *Raising Well-Adjusted, Resilient and Resourceful Kids in a Two-Home Family from Little Ones To Young Adults.* (by Karen Bonnell with Kristen Little).With a tested "here's how" approach, The Co-Parents' Handbook helps parents confidently take on the challenges of raising children in two homes. Addressing parents' questions about the emotional impact of separation, conflict, grief and recovery, the authors skillfully provide a road map for all members of the family to safely navigate through separation/divorce and beyond. Parents discover through practical guidance how to move from angry/hurt partners to constructive, successful co-parents. The pages are chock-full of helpful strategies to resolve day-to-day issues in an easy-to use format. This book is here to answer questions, help parents co-parent and ensure kids thrive. NOTE: **The authors will be doing a presentation at the monthly meeting of The Seattle Counselors Association on 1/16/15** titled "After the Divorce: Providing Co-Parents

With A Well-Stocked Tool Box." For details, go to the authors' **web site**, scroll down, and click on "Upcoming Events."

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3 Good Poems

Click on the titles below to read the poems online. You can also access them by going to the "**Writings**" page of my web site, finding the link for my "e-newsletters," and then clicking on the link for the **Holidays 2014** edition.

1. "**Things**" (Lisel Mueller)
2. "**For My Son, Reading Harry Potter**" (Michael Blumenthal)
3. "**At The Toll Booth**" (Marilyn Donnelly)

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Jungian Psychotherapy for Individuals & Couples.

"The greatest and most important problems in life can never be solved, only outgrown."
~C.G. Jung

I offer Jungian-oriented psychotherapy for individuals and couples. Whether you come to me with a problem or simply the sense that it's time for a change, I help you look at how that starting point is calling you to grow, and how you can respond to that call with creativity, vitality, and hope.

To learn more, visit my web site by clicking **here**.

To schedule an appointment, or if you have questions, call me at [\(206\) 523-1340](tel:2065231340).

Upcoming Lectures & Workshops.

To receive notice of my upcoming lectures, workshops, and other events, watch future editions of this e-newsletter, or visit the "**Workshops**" page of my web site.

If you would like me to come speak to your group, please call me at [\(206\) 523-1340](tel:2065231340), or **email** me.

On my web site, you can view a list of other **organizations** that have invited me to speak.

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That's it for this edition of my newsletter.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. You can call me at [\(206\) 523-1340](tel:(206)523-1340), or **email** me.

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