

Healing Journeys

2015 SPRING
NEWSLETTER

support healing activate hope promote thriving



support healing, activate hope, promote thriving

upcoming events

Radical Remission: Implementing the 9 Healing Factors into Your Own Life

July 24–25, San Mateo, CA

Workshop with Kelly Turner, PhD

Cancer as a Turning Point, From Surviving to Thriving™

September 12th, Denver, CO

FREE Conference

(Pre-registration suggested)

Presenters:

Lise Alschuler, ND

Jonathan Ellerby, PhD

Michael Finkelstein, MD

Susan Mazer & Dallas Smith

Jonna Tamases

... and more

Incredible! Thank you for all you've done. You were largely responsible for my sister being alive today. I brought her when she was at the end of fighting and hope.

Uplifting - Provocative - Educative. I heard concrete suggestions; real ways to improve my life.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

Awakening to a Deeper Relationship with Life

October 16–18

Westerbeke Ranch

Sonoma, CA

Retreat with Jonathan Ellerby, PhD



Director's Reflections

Jan Adrian, MSW

Some people retire because they don't love their jobs. I have definitely reached "retirement" age, and I've been talking about retiring for several years, but I am still loving my job. I have reduced my working hours and am having more play time than I used to, and I'm still enjoying creating programs for Healing Journeys. It continues to be rewarding for me, and the feedback I get demonstrates how beneficial it is for so many people. My assignment isn't finished.

In her research for her PhD thesis, Kelly Turner interviewed people who had experienced spontaneous remissions from cancer. When I read her thesis, I learned that almost every person described doing the same nine things to help heal their cancer. I've been writing a blog for several years about my personal healing journey, and my "treatment" of applying the nine key factors of Radical Remission to my life (you can find it on our website). Her book describing these, published last year, is called *Radical Remission: Surviving Cancer Against All Odds*.

We are sponsoring a two-day workshop with Kelly Turner in San Mateo, CA, on July 24th & 25th, focusing on how to apply these nine principles to our lives. This is another example of creating a program that I want to experience for myself, and you will also get the benefit. I felt inspired reading Kelly's book, and it will be useful for me to devote two days to deepen and clarify my personal plan to survive cancer against all odds.

Of the 9 factors, only two of them are physical: Radically changing your diet; and Using herbs and supplements. The other seven aren't easy to categorize. They are: Taking control of your health; Following your intuition; Releasing suppressed emotions; Increasing positive emotions; Embracing social support; Deepening your spiritual connection; and Having strong reasons for living.

One of my strong reasons for living has been to offer the *Cancer as a Turning Point, From Surviving to Thriving™* free conference. This year it will be in Denver, CO, September 12th, at the Althea Center for Engaged Spirituality. Jonathan Ellerby, PhD, is the Spiritual Director of this Center, and we are working with him to create this event. One of our first tasks is to raise \$50,000 to cover expenses. I have learned to trust this will happen, and we are enthusiastically moving forward making plans. We depend on the support of those who have attended a conference, experienced the benefit, and want to pay it forward. Please contribute if you can, and thank you for your support!

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VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that EVERYONE touched by cancer or any life-altering condition be empowered to move from surviving to thriving.

Turning the War Against Cancer into a Treasure Hunt

by Michael Finkelstein, MD



It's quite natural to want to get rid of disease quickly, especially one as life-threatening as cancer.

When confronted with a diagnosis, we often respond with a counter-attack, beginning a war. Occasionally this strategy works well, leaving only scars.

But, often, while we survive the initial insult with "medical weaponry," a chronic syndrome results, with collateral damage to our psyches and families. This is exhausting, affecting life on every level. Conventional weapons may hold the fort, but do not lead us from despair back to peace.

I've watched cancer up close, in my practice thousands of times, and in my home. At age 20, I watched my grandfather struggle on a ventilator, fear in his eyes, feeling helpless myself to assist. Later, as the "primary physician" for both of my grandmothers, I felt the limits of my profession – its fixation on disease at the expense of the person. Looking deeper I saw another path, which I want to share with you now.

Cancer is scary. The word itself is very powerful and is strengthened by the assumption that it is all bad, an enemy without any redeeming value. The only appropriate response is to kill it before it kills us, which we ask our physicians to do. Occasionally, the initial attack is sufficient. When it's not, it's a good idea to step back, reconsider the approach and if a battle is necessary.

There are many reasons to do this, but first is to understand that when we are in "fight or flight" mode, our sympathetic nervous system is activated in a way that actually impairs our natural healing response. Resources are redirected to supply more energy to run from the charging lion. But, in this case, we don't need to run; we need to maintain peak performance in our immune system and brain function.

Better is the parasympathetic, slow recovery system, which helps us fight disease. To turn that on, we need to deal with anxiety more effectively. That's difficult when facing cancer. But, that's what I realized helps us go beyond the limits of conventional medicine. The process I call Slow Medicine helps restore fertility to our soil, so whatever seeds we plant, our life feels whole, the truer definition of health.

An approach that restores equanimity cultivates a terrain that's inhospitable to cancer, offering the potential to realize a

more passionate and joyous life. This is the treasure that can be found by redirecting attention from the battleground to the flowers emerging in the garden alongside.

How do you do this? First, realize and accept that a war is counterproductive. Second, embrace a way of living that restores harmony in your system. There are seven tenets in my approach, each deserving attention: effective self-expression; cultivation of wholesome relationships with others; a vibrant community; coming into greater alignment with the rhythms and cycles of the natural world; reconnecting with your true life purpose; a living relationship to the sacred; and restoring the function and feel of your body itself.

My book, *Slow Medicine: Hope and Healing for Chronic Illness*, goes into these and the thoughtful questions that will help you tailor this approach into a plan that will work for you! The process will help you find your linchpin on which your healing depends. That's what explains why we work so hard, do the right things, and still suffer. There is a hidden gem, an opportunity that once uncovered sets everything back in order. It's rare that this linchpin resides in the physical body; but in other hidden areas, it's discoverable if we follow the clues, beginning with taking a full inventory of all of the symptoms, physical and otherwise.

The idea of Slow Medicine is to place the physical body into the context of the other parts, while keeping our eyes on the prize. Giving cancer the power to lead you away from your true path rubs salt in the wound. Staying on your path, keeping your focus on the beauty, even if it is temporarily obscured, is the surer way to find healing and peace and the treasure of the meaningful, purposeful, successful life you seek. That's my prescription.

Michael Finkelstein, MD, Bio

Dr. Michael Finkelstein, The Slow Medicine Doctor, has been featured in many top media outlets, and blogs on the topic of Slow Medicine for The Huffington Post. Trained at premier institutes for both conventional and integrative medicine, he is the recipient of numerous distinctions. Offering a unique point of view on today's healthcare needs and challenges, he provides a tried-and-true solution for healing individual patients and the medical system as a whole: Slow Medicine.

He will present at our free conference in Denver. SlowMedicineDoctor.com



support healing, activate hope, promote thriving

Mission Statement

Our mission is to support healing, activate hope, and promote thriving.

Vision Statement

Our vision is that EVERYONE touched by cancer or any life-altering condition be empowered to move from surviving to thriving.

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While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, please accept our apology if there are any errors or omissions with your name or gift.

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Director's Reflections *continued from page 1*

One of our speakers at the Denver conference will be Michael Finkelstein, MD, author of *Slow Medicine*. When I heard him speak in Sacramento earlier this year, I felt validated, empowered, and excited by new ways of looking at healing. I encourage you to read his article in this newsletter.

We are offering another retreat with Jonathan Ellerby at Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma, CA. This is our fifth retreat with Jonathan in four years. These retreats have been a major factor in my application of the "deepening your spiritual connection" factor in Radical Remission. I need to give some dedicated time to this each year, and am looking forward to another dose of the beauty of Westerbeke, the nutritious and delicious food, the wisdom and playfulness of Jonathan, and being in community with the participants.

A quick update on my personal healing journey – I have the same three tumors (metastatic breast cancer) that I have had for two years. We monitor them with PET scans every 6 months and their slow growth has gotten even slower. I am grateful for the gifts cancer continues to give me, and I resonate with Dr. Finkelstein's image of changing the war into a treasure hunt. Rather than fighting a disease, I am focused on creating the healthiest body, mind, and spirit that I can imagine.

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Following Your Intuition

by Kelly Turner, PhD

Ten years ago, when I first began studying Radical Remission survivors – that is, people who survive cancer against all odds – I hoped I would find common threads. I even guessed at what some of those threads might be, such as **changing your diet or reducing stress**. But the one I never saw coming was: ‘Following Your Intuition.’

Of the 9 most common healing factors that I found among the 1,500+ cases of Radical Remission I’ve analyzed, **I was not expecting ‘intuition’ to be one of them**. But there it was, in interview after interview. The Radical Remission survivors would say things like, “I suddenly heard a voice in my head,” or, “I just had a gut feeling that I should do it *this way*.”

The voices told them to do different things. For one person, the voice would say to leave her job; for another, it would say to leave his marriage. For others, it nudged them to improve their diets or increase their exercise regimens. **While the intuitive guidance varied widely from person to person**, the common thread was clear: pay attention to that intuitive voice.

As a researcher, I wanted to know if there was any scientific evidence behind intuition. I quickly discovered that, while not much research has been done on this topic, the studies that have been conducted are fascinating. First, we know that intuition is located in (at least!) two places in the physical body: the base of your brain and the 100 million+ neurons in your digestive tract (which explains why we have “gut” feelings). Second, researchers know that these **instinctual areas of our brain and gut react instantly**, without much rational

thought. That’s why these feelings or hunches seem to come up “out of the blue.”

Finally, other studies have shown that our intuition knows the best path to safety. For example, in one study, researchers looked at people’s ability to predict whether a picture was behind Curtain #1 or Curtain #2 (on a computer). The researchers also measured the subjects’ physical responses, such as pores opening on their palms. Remarkably, they found that the subjects’ bodies were able to predict the correct curtain 2-3 seconds before the computer had even decided which curtain to use. In other words, **the intuitive part of the brain knew the safer choice** long before the rational part of the brain even knew what was going on.

In the coming years, I hope to see more research being done on this important area of our brain. In the meantime, the lesson I take away from Radical Remission cancer survivors is this: When you’re faced with a life-threatening situation such as a cancer diagnosis, pay attention to any “gut feelings” or “inner voices” that come up. **Don’t ignore them, but instead write them down**. Later, when it comes time to make important health-related decisions, let that intuitive guidance have a seat at your decision-making table.

Kelly Turner, PhD, Bio

Dr. Kelly Turner is the New York Times bestselling author of *Radical Remission: Surviving Cancer Against All Odds*, which summarizes her research into the radical remission of cancer – when someone heals from cancer against all odds. She has conducted research in 10 different countries and analyzed over 1,000 cases of radical remission. She is a frequent guest on The Dr. Oz Show, and her book has been translated into 15 languages. A researcher and speaker in the field of integrative oncology, Dr. Turner holds a B.A. from Harvard University and a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Learn more at Dr.KellyTurner.com. Dr. Turner will teach the *Radical Remission* Workshop for Healing Journeys on July 24-25, in San Mateo, CA.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

“It takes a village” to create our events, and we’d like to thank some of the people and organizations who gave their time, goods, services, and hearts to Healing Journeys in 2014. We are grateful for the following in-kind contributions in 2014.

Cancer as a Turning Point conference

- Jenwah, stage art
- Karen Haas, graphics
- Ross Interrante, Chef
- Sugar Plump Fairies
- Trader Joe’s
- Whole Foods

20th Anniversary Celebration of Thriving

- Emmett Miller, MD
- Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD
- Susan Mazer & Dallas Smith

Cancer-Fighting Kitchen: Macon, GA

- Central Georgia Cancer Coalition
- Vineville United Methodist Church

Kerry Freeman

- Coordinated volunteers at events

Maria Arcara

- Our long-time office volunteer

Pat Farquhar – Requested a matching donation from her employer, Verizon

Susan Fetcho – Requested a donation from the Lois E. & R. Duke Miller Foundation

Timothy Nelson – Requested a matching donation from his employer, Chevron

A big thank you to the many volunteers without whom the events could not have happened!





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Tides

by Liz Organ

Grief

Grief is like the tide. Sometimes it's strong; it will wash over you and topple you over, and you struggle to get back up, struggle to get back to normal. And sometimes, it is right at the edge, just licking your toes, just making you feel like something is coming, only you don't know what. And sometimes it's not there at all and you're only left with the residue of the Tides of Grief.

On April 27, 2014, my aunt Karen died of cancer. She was diagnosed on September 19, 2012, with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. Stage 4 is the hardest stage. That's when the cancer gets outside of the origin. That's when it's not a question of if she'll die but when. Nobody quite knew exactly how it happened. She was healthy. She biked a lot. She was active. She had her mammogram only a few months earlier with no trace of cancer. And she always was strong, even when she was sick and her hair was gone and had doctors' appointments every week. She still made time for camping with her family; she still hiked. She still called my mom and they talked, and they laughed. But, we still worried. It was the beginning of our grief.

When she died, it was a form of relief. Now when the phone rings, we no longer dread the news it might

bring. Any calls down to the counseling office don't bring more than the usual fear for me. We all stopped worrying. But the pain and grief still continue. The tide still touches our toes.

Some people are afraid of these tides. They might want to take life delicately, "If I'm careful, I won't get hurt." Cancer doesn't follow those rules. Cancer can strike anyone. Different things — being overweight, family members who have had cancer — can increase your risk, but taking life delicately won't change anything. You need to live life to the fullest. Not in a hashtagYOLOIhaveadeathwish kind of way, but in a dowhatmakesyouhappy kind of way.

Karen lived life that way. She wasn't afraid to get her feet wet. She biked, hiked, camped, and spent time with her family. She did what made her happy, up until the moment she died. Karen is an inspiration. She really knew the meaning of Carpe Diem. That's my message to you: don't spend time saying I can't. Don't be afraid to let the tides wash over you.

"Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim."

~ Vicki Harrison



Liz is a 14-year-old 8th grader in Washington state. She has always loved the sound of words and uses writing as a means of making sense of her world. The death last year of her aunt from cancer affected her profoundly. She used an English class assignment to work through her feelings of grief. An avid reader, Liz lives with her mom, dad, younger brother, and golden retriever.

