

Spring 2010

# Family Nurturing Tree

## Body Image

### Learning To Love Who We Are

*Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals*

The statistics are alarming. The majority of U.S. women--some estimate more than 80 percent--are unhappy with their appearance. At least 10 million young women, and 1 million young men have an eating disorder. Girls as young as 6 and 7 are expressing disapproval of their looks, and most fourth-grade girls are already diet veterans. Most unsettling is the fact that more women, and girls, fear becoming fat than they do dying.

#### Combating the Images

How do you see yourself? Are you content with the person looking back at you from the mirror each morning or do you frown in frustration? Unfortunately, many of us are unhappy with the person looking back. Whether it's lamenting about having a pear-shaped figure instead of an hourglass, or exhibiting more serious, self-hating body dysmorphic disorders, body image is under siege in our celebrity-fixated society. While Madison Avenue continues to airbrush photos of svelte, 120-pound supermodels for magazine covers, others are trying to teach young girls to love their bodies, beautiful imperfections and all. One way to combat the Hollywood hype and to create an appreciation for the bodies we have is through hands-on massage and bodywork.

#### Why Massage Affects Body Perception

Being unhappy with our bodies has serious, and sometimes lifelong, ramifications. Feelings of unworthiness and self-loathing can set up a lifetime of self-deprecating behaviors. What regularly scheduled massage allows us to do is "get back" into our bodies and

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#### Mission Statement

Create a life of love, peace, purpose, health, gratitude, joy, and abundance, by harmonizing and celebrating an awareness of Divine Love

*"Security can only be achieved through constant change, through discarding old ideas that have outlived their usefulness and adapting others to current facts"*

*- William O. Douglas*

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*Massage can help restore feelings of self-worth and nurturing--key for body image issues.*

reconnect with ourselves. Massage can help us release physical and mental patterns of tension, enhancing our ability to experience our bodies (regardless of their shape and size) in a more positive way. Just as it facilitates our ability to relax, massage also encourages an awareness of the body, often allowing us to more clearly see and identify destructive behaviors, including overeating or purging. Massage also creates a sense of nurturing that is especially powerful when it comes to poor body image. Accepting the nonjudgmental touch of a trained therapist goes a long way toward rebuilding an appreciation and respect for your own body. If we find acceptance for who we are and how we look, we are giving ourselves permission to live comfortably in the skin we have.

### **The Value of Massage**

Research shows that touch is a powerful ally in the quest for physical and mental health. Not only does it help us be more in tune with our bodies, it can also help restore a sense of “wholeness” that is often lost in our segmented, overscheduled lives. When we regain that connection, it’s much easier to remember that our bodies are something to be cherished, nurtured, and loved, not belittled, betrayed, and forgotten. Valuable for every age and every body type, massage and bodywork have innumerable benefits. Here are a few:

- Alleviates low-back pain and improves range of motion
- Decreases medication dependence
- Eases anxiety and depression
- Enhances immunity by stimulating lymph flow
- Exercises & stretches weak, tight, or atrophied muscles
- Increases joint flexibility.
- Improves circulation by pumping oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs.
- Releases endorphins--the body’s natural painkiller.

### **Every Shape and Size**

Whether a client weighs 30 pounds or 300 pounds, massage and bodywork therapists are trained to appreciate all bodies, without judgment, and to deliver the best care possible. As in any session, a therapist’s goal is to create an environment that feels safe and nurturing for clients, all while delivering much needed therapeutic touch. For heavier clients, some minor adjustments might be needed in the delivery of the bodywork, but its nurturing, therapeutic, nonjudgmental role will remain unchanged.

### **Through the Scars**

We also have to remember that a negative body image is not necessarily about those few extra pounds on the hips. It might instead be tied to the scars of past injuries and surgeries. Massage can help here,

too. For burn victims, research has shown massage can help in the healing process, while for postsurgery breast cancer patients, massage and bodywork can reintegrate a battered body and spirit. In addition to softening scar tissue and speeding postsurgery recovery, massage and bodywork for these clients is about respect, reverence, and learning to look at, and beyond, the scars.

### **Finding the Stillness**

Experts say that when the tissues start to let go and relax under a massage therapist's hands, profound shifts occur emotionally and physically. A softening happens, and the brain and body begin to integrate again. The chasm between body and mind that created the eating disorder,

or fueled the negative body image, begins to narrow. In her book, "Molecules of Emotion," Georgetown University Medical School professor Candace Pert explains that the body is the "actual outward manifestation, in physical space, of the mind." She says that if we generate negative energy in response to our appearance, it can eventually find its way into reality. Self-acceptance, then, is paramount for living well, and massage/bodywork is a healthy path to get you there. Finding the stillness in a massage session allows you to just "be," without judgment. Partner that with the comfort that comes from allowing your body to be nurtured by someone else, and we begin to remember our value, regardless of our outward appearance, or what we perceive it to be.

## **Making A Difference - Opening Humanity's Heart**

### **Ground breaking film, internet, & television experience**

Collaborators from around the globe are joining together for a united endeavor of opening humanity's heart through a ground breaking, co-creative experience using the positive power of film, television, and the Internet.

I have been to other inspirational group events or presentations focused on inspiring and opening our hearts. My heart was definitely opened, but there was a void left as there was no structure or community put into place to take our open hearts to the next level of action.

I received an e-mail from an Australian film company about a new film project focusing on opening humanity's heart. Family Nurturing Tree's web site was found as part of a search for collaborators with a similar vision as the project. I decided to check it out and on March 1, 2010, I found myself at a Project Briefing for "The Difference" and was amazed at the global vision and awe inspiring action, the Founder, Jacqueline Bignell has brought into form. Not is it only opening hearts, it is creating space for those who feel called to service to take their gift into action for the benefit of humanity.

By the end of the briefing a flood of emotion came over me knowing that all of my efforts and experiences in creating and taking Family Nurturing Tree into form was being

offered an amazing opportunity for global connection and collaboration. I joyfully joined the project as a collaborator that day. The journey has just begun, but the magic is already flowing with an experience of open hearted community, service oriented action, and most of all gratitude for being able to be apart of this amazing project.

One person can truly make a difference! This was mirrored back to me as I joined the on-line collaborator community. I connected with a woman in Las Vegas. We both seemed familiar to each other and found our connection was De Anza Community College where we both attended the massage program there. I was a teaching assistant in her class at the time and she told me she remembers a conversation I was having with our instructor and how it inspired her in her approach to her work. One single conversation made a difference years ago and now we find ourselves both as collaborators!

I encourage you to visit the web site and hear others voices, explore the history of the project and how it came to Jacqueline, and her own personal call to make a difference. Each of us have a unique gift or skill and we are making a difference!

**To learn more, go to: [www.thedifference.tv](http://www.thedifference.tv)**

# Co-creating Bountiful Gardens

## Partnering With Angels & Elementals

*Debi Melzer*

My journey with gardening came as a call to remember fond memories of my favorite flowers from my childhood: lilacs, daises, and grape hyacinths. Later as I came to work with flower essences I began to understand my love of flowers and nature as a child.

I have found great solace just sitting in a garden feeling the sun on my face, the wind in my hair, but something magical happened when I started connecting with the angels and elementals of my home. Plants I had never seen before started to pop up in unusual places. One of them was scarlet pimpernel. The article is posted at the "Knowledge Page" of the web site so you can read more about this beauty. This year they came back filling in the center section of the medicine wheel garden. Now each quadrant representing the 4 directions is filled with bright smiling salmon colored faces and holding a circle of trust, faith, and light.

### Childhood Joy and Giddiness

My other connection is with dragonflies. When I first prepared the garden area last year I received an intuitive nudge to plant blueberries and a little beauty called love in a mist. Both plant energies made complete sense to



*LOVE IN A MIST*

plant both in their fruit, and their beauty, but also on a vibratory level. Blueberries white bell blossoms ring the gift of truth incarnate and love in a mist...well that one is pretty self explanatory. As soon as I had finished planting them, I was headed back with the hose to water them and out of now where came a dragonfly. Not unusual, but what happened next was. It began circling the entire gardening area, then zipping towards the back of the house, and back to the garden area circling over and over again. This went on for 15 minutes. I sat down in the dirt and just watched this majestic beauty weaving a planned and purposeful path. I felt a childhood giddiness rise up in me that I had not felt in a long time. Weaving love and healing was what I kept hearing as I sat there in awe.

This year I was called to again plant blueberries this time at the front of our house. I discovered a new way of gardening which is a great time saver and creates the space for me to truly just bee in the garden (see reference at the end of the article). As I finished these 4 new blueberry plants a dragonfly landed nearby just as I began to water them. I know myself, the land, and the plants were all receiving a blessing of love and light as we grow in service together.

### Trusting The Unseen & The Cycles Of Life

Just a few days ago I was clearing out branches and leaves from beneath our large mulberry tree. It was time to open up the space again connected to this gentle giant in our yard. Several years ago a toyon bush, which is a native plant here, began growing at the base of the tree. My intuition told me to leave it bee. It grew and seemed to be happy in its shady place. I knew somehow it was serving some greater purpose even if I didn't understand it. As I began clearing out the old to make room for the new, I was guided to remove the plant at the base of the tree and the runner it had created several feet away. It had one long branch that had grown reaching out to the sunlight. It had tiny, gem like white blossoms which I felt a strong heart connection to. I felt a presence of energy around me and the most profound peace with these words:

*“We have served our purpose here and our gift and strength need to move elsewhere. We cannot thrive in the dark anymore and need Light. Trust in your heart our energy of form will not be wasted, it will be transferred into something even brighter and more beautiful.”*

I lovingly removed the plants with an awareness of faith and physics that energy is never lost or gained, it merely changes form. I set the branches on the top of the pile and no sooner than I had done that, a large, orange carpenter bee showed up. Much like the dragonfly dance, this bee began to make a very repeated and purposeful path. First making large loops out from the center of the pile where the blossoms were and then back to center, and then this little jig in front of one bunch of blossoms. This pattern kept repeating itself for nearly 30 minutes. I of course stood there like a small child discovering the world anew. The bee never went to the blossom to gather pollen, just this loop pattern followed by the little dance at the blossom. So I heard this little dance and bee were taking in the vibratory wisdom this plant had gained while under the mulberry tree and it would be transferred to its new location. Now I may never know where that is, but it truly doesn't matter, for I was gifted with something much greater...to know in the silence, the stillness, there is another world at work in our lives if we only stop and listen, look, and try to feel it.

## Order & Harmony

I continue to work in partnership with the angels and elementals. Some promptings come in dreams, other times it's like a gentle hand leading me to a particular plant to buy or seed to plant. It is **always** an energy of love. When ever a new plant or seedling gets started I go to my inner silence to give it a blessing of love, ask it what it needs, and how I may care for it. I have also been guided to leave certain areas of the yard wild. This creates a space for the angels and elementals to do there work in a way that is beneficial to all of form. I have found by leaving some areas wild, the native plants (what others may call weeds) tend to protect the other plants by attracting slugs, snails, or other species that my cause harm to the garden. I do not use pesticides ever and have found by working in cooperation with my gardening

friends all is maintained in order. I have little if any issues with aphids, slugs, or snails. If something does seem to run amuck I just ask for guidance about what needs to be done to restore balance. Sometimes it is to just send love. Other times I am guided to ask the angels and elementals to restore balance or offer protection to the plant in question. The slugs and snails and other critters are still there, but so are the lady bugs, praying mantis, and aphid midges which all create natural balance. There truly is space for all to live and bee.

## A World Waiting To Bee Discovered

I was guided to leave the north side of our house untouched this year. It is filled with giant purple thistles which offer a protective vibratory strength and tiny pink



*PINK BEAUTY*

beauty blossoms which I believe are a type of wild geranium. These tiny pick blossoms are only a 1/4" in diameter but reveal an infinite wisdom of the universe. There is within each of these blossoms an inner set of blossoms that is barely visible to the naked eye. But if we slow down, as I did to capture this close up photo, a whole new world is revealed to us. This tiny flower mirrors to us the inner beauty just waiting to bee discovered, and it has always been right there within us waiting to be found. The bountiful garden is more than just the visible plants enjoyed or eaten from the garden, but the opportunity to experience the cosmic connection open to us all.

### References:

**Lasagna Gardening:**

**A New Layering System for Bountiful Gardens:  
No Digging, No Tilling, No Weeding, No Kidding!**

**By Patricia Lanza**

Check your local library or favorite book seller

# Upcoming Events

Njeri's Morning Glory School & Art Center - Saturday May 1st, 2010

Family Nurturing Tree will have a booth  
at the Spring Multi-Cultural Faire

Come by for a visit and enjoy the faire!

## Spring Multi-Cultural Faire

Come Together  
crafts, music, games, maypole dancing and food from all over the world

Saturday, May 1st, 2010  
10:00 am- 2:00 pm  
4660 Eastus Drive San Jose, CA 95129  
[www.njerismorningglory.com](http://www.njerismorningglory.com)  
408.255.5520

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### [Family Nurturing Tree Blog](#)

For other articles and inspiring information  
check out the latest blog post



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As an expression of Love and Gratitude, please include the web site and contact information - Light, Life, Love

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