

Body Memory

© Copyright 2000 by silli_artie@hotmail.com

This work may not be reposted or redistributed without the prior express written permission of the author.

This is so weird. I'm sitting here, and I'm aware of it, aware of trying not to do it. How is it that I wasn't aware of this a long, long time ago? This is going to be quite a habit to change, to break.

It happened Thursday. I had an appointment for some bodywork. My left shoulder was screwed up again. That's where the stress hides, among other things.

Dea is very talented -- she practices Chinese Medicine, and she practices with courage and compassion.

We talked about the various traumas I'd experienced recently, both physical and emotional, as she checked my pulses and looked at my tongue.

I stood and she ran her hands over me briefly, prodding gently. She remarked, "You know, you're never going to have a flabby butt, the way you clench it all the time."

I thought it was humorous at the time.

She nodded and told me, "Now I know what to work on today!"

She left the room so I could get undressed and get situated on the massage table with the towel over my bottom.

She tells me my Chi stagnates up high in my chest and shoulders. She was working on my hips, to open up the Chi blockage there, and let it flow down to my legs

She'd moved my knees together a bit, and pressing on one side of my butt, she said, "Now try to relax right here..."

That's when the memory hit me. How old was I? Nine or ten? I had a serious allergy problem. I was getting weekly shots for it. I got them in my butt, and went through the same ritual -- knees together, relax right here. The shots hurt like hell, when I got them and for days afterwards. They alternated sides. I remembered crying, screaming -- I was scared, it hurt. I remembered the feel and the smell of the antiseptic of the office and the cotton cover on the table underneath me, the feeling of the tears running down my face. And I remember my mother, saying, "Stop crying, it doesn't hurt."

The memories were so strong -- but I've learned, I went with them, and described them to Dea. She helped me stay with it, exploring and letting it come to the surface.

It was hard; it was intense. I was so afraid of those shots, and they hurt so much. Dea could feel me tighten up from one end to the other. We worked with it, processing and letting go of the memories my body had held for so long.

Body Memory

So I sit here writing this, learning to sit anew, learning to sit using balance, rather than clenched muscles. It's a challenge. It's a trip.

And revisiting those memories in the last few days, mulling them over. How do I feel about that experience? How do I feel about my mother, and her role in this? I have the memory, the vision, of her standing far away from me during these procedures, not touching me. This must have hurt and scared her as well.

The pattern fits all too well. When I had braces on my teeth, that hurt. I told them it hurt.

It probably started before then, but those incidents certainly taught me I was on my own, and that feelings, emotions, were not to be shared or talked about.

And how does this affect me as a father, as a husband, as a person? Over the last few years I've learned I'm a creature of emotion, not of intellect. I've learned to acknowledge feelings and emotions. I've also learned that while I have emotions and feelings, I am not those emotions and feelings.

My wonderful wife has taught me, helped me to share feelings. She's also taught me how much I need to be held, and how much I need to hold her.

As a father, this has taught me how the seemingly small things we do, or don't do, can have lasting effects. Did my parents intend to leave me with painful memories? Of course not -- they were acting in my best interest.

But can I learn from this, and in acting in our children's best interest, not cause them similar problems? Yes, I can. I can, by hugging them, holding them, and letting them know I love them -- not just with words, but with actions. Never deny their feelings. Teach them to express themselves, including expressing feelings in appropriate ways. Give them outlets. Be there for them.

Dea said something else, Thursday. She told me, "You know, these memories only come up when we're ready to handle them."

To which I replied, "Barely able."

She laughed and agreed.

What's the next one going to be? I wouldn't have known how to handle this one, a few months ago. In another six months, hopefully I'll have grown more. What will the challenge be then? That's scary!

Namaste-
artie
6/4/2000