



Life Lessons Learned

By

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“Your greatest achievement is yet to come.” I use this motto to remind, and encourage, myself at every instance of consciousness to add to my accomplishments, little by little, like dropping grains of sand into a well. Even though I might not be able to see the eventual result, I am quite sure of it and am willing to remain at the present moment, to enjoy what I am doing. I’m satisfied with what I have been doing, and continually search for balance. Of course, disequilibrium occasionally occurs as a norm, since the most certain thing is uncertainty.

The world is always in a state of flux; nothing ever stands still. Things happen, evolve, and transform. Sadness or gladness is just temporary feelings. The state of equilibrium where I try to remain is not easy to understand, but not too hard to find, depending on each person’s psyche. Free choice is granted to all beings. Each living being may choose to shape the world according to its own desires.

Each life is a packet of energy capable of creation or destruction, just as this world is one of duality: light and dark, love and fear, pull and push. As a result, citizens of this world have become too immersed in illusions to understand that each person can maintain equilibrium by loving kindness, staying above worldly strife and in the light. Wherever there is light, darkness disappears, since darkness does not really exist: it is dark only where there is no light.

Various feelings thought to be in the same negative category as darkness, such as fear, hopelessness, boredom, loss, sadness, anger, and destructive hatred, will eventually disappear in the presence of contented neutrality, understanding in our true nature/self, trust and belief in existence, with heart filled with benevolence toward ourselves and all beings, wishing others happiness, understanding the interconnection of all things as a global family, and living a life of service to others so we can coexist and share, instead of causing disharmony and seeking personal glory by destroying rivals, with world war as a result.

We are free to choose, so which way do we go? Even though we may choose the neutral path of light, we still need perseverance and endurance, having gone through numerous exercises given by the world as a training ground in life lessons. Every human being in this world is so absorbed in his own ego, while filled with fear, anger, and a deep-rooted desire to return to the light. At least 80% of the world population belongs to some kind of religious organization. So, which path do we set our mind on, what type of belief do we adopt? Letting ourselves be obsessed with worldly riches is like water flowing downhill: it is much easier.

As the youngest child, I had a trouble-free life, physically. My family's frequent cash-flow problems, however, caused endless squabbles between my parents and made me apprehensive about marital life. Yet I chose marriage in order to please my mother who was always mindful of her anticipated short life on account of the heart-valve leakage condition that had been diagnosed since she was thirteen years old. Mother had been dependent on heart medication for as long as I can remember. My parents did everything possible to help their two children get a college education. Then, all of a sudden, my father died in his sleep, without saying goodbye, very soon after my graduation. As I was still a single female, Mother urged me to get married so I could pursue a postgraduate education in the U.S., even though she would have to live by herself as a result.

In 1978 my new husband and I moved to College Station to attend Texas A&M University. Life with my husband in a foreign country was quite different from that with my own family, as there were no money problems. We managed to live thriftily, bicycling in the cold weather to classes and grocery stores. We had no disagreements. He is a very wonderful person, always understanding, always friendly toward all beings. Our community of Thai students was just a big family with members helping one another.

Our first-born arrived after my finals, so I got a master's degree just to take care of a baby! He was very moody when he was born. At feeding time, his crying would usually precede his cot being wheeled in by a nurse. He was not a typical textbook baby that's supposed to sleep a lot: just little sleep, much crying, and requiring the service of three adults (parents and my mother). His quick temper and strong will became more pronounced as he grew up. After Grandma

returned home, the pressure on the new mother started to build up, turning her from an even-tempered person into a quick-tempered one since the son would not comply with his mother's wishes. On top of that, the needs of the second infant son, even with the father helping out as best he could on housework, made the situation worse. Fortunately, our second son was far different from the first. He was a textbook baby: sleeping long, smiling easily, and not crying much when properly looked after.

Nonetheless, the first son continued to try my patience. Spanking a child with anger is never the solution for him/her to behave. This is like adding more logs into a burning fire, intensifying the heat and making it more likely to burn out of control rather than extinguishing it. One day, I was so angry with my three-year-old screaming nonstop for hours that I was determined to spank him and really hurt him. Just then a thought occurred: where was my maternal love when I was angry? I happened to grasp the source of problems between mother and child. A friend with her son visiting us saw the problems and recommended a psychiatrist who correctly diagnosed the situation right away without even seeing the child: this was a problem in the new mother's mind.

Another friend sent me several books on Buddha's teachings. One that I still remember is "Ego" by Dr. Amara Malila. The author described her experience at a retreat in a remote Buddhist temple. The instructor-monk had lent her a battery-powered tape player so she could listen to additional teachings on her own. On a trip into town, she bought a box of batteries intending to give them to her instructor in exchange for those currently in the tape player. In the bus on her way back, she sat next to a well-to-do and well-dressed lady. Someone remarked that giving batteries to a monk was among the best gifts, worth a lot of merits, since they helped generate light. Now the well-dressed lady wished to obtain those merits, but the bus was already heading back to the temple. So she placed a very high-valued bank note (way above the batteries' cost) on the doctor's lap and took the box of batteries! The good doctor's ego naturally felt a little resentment at this insensitive act. But her mind had been sufficiently trained to perceive that the end result would be the same: the monk would definitely get the batteries. The only difference was the monk would probably not know that the idea for the gift was the doctor's, not the well-dressed lady. Furthermore, it could also be argued that the lady's money could be put to other, more useful purposes. Hence, the lady deserved praises, not resentment.

So, along this line of thought, the new mother made up her mind to try, from then on, to understand her son and see situations from his perspective, which was likely to differ from hers. Problems often occur because we look at things only from our own viewpoint. When a son is angry, that is his problem. But when his mother gets angry in reaction to his anger, this would be her problem, since she does not understand that he has a problem. So we need to practice opening our mind to become more sensitive to other people's feelings in order for us to understand one another and, as a result, live with one another in peace.

It was in 1984 that I started practicing meditation by sitting and doing nothing 5-9 minutes almost every day. I just had to be aware of my breathing and follow it in and out. At first it was not easy because the mind is very active and I often lost my awareness of breathing in thoughts. I also felt like I was wasting my precious time and was focused on the result of meditation rather than the act itself. Even so, I continued to read every book on Buddha's teachings that I came across. Later on in 1991, I met the Venerable Prasert Jittasettho, a monk from the Natural Buddhist Temple in Chicago. He brought my husband and me to feel the result of meditation. We were in bliss and felt buoyancy both in body and mind. Now I was so happy that I wanted to shout to the world: "Buddhism is the only way, the best way. No other religions even come close!"

Just when I thought that as long as I keep doing good deeds, I would be well protected, something happened to my body. One evening in January 2004, I felt like an electric current was running down my right leg, once or twice. I paid no attention to it, thinking the feeling would soon disappear. The following day, however, I felt ten more waves and I could not lift the right leg. So I managed to walk by dragging my right foot along into the doctor's office! She immediately gave me aspirin and sent me to a hospital for CT scan and MRI. A golf ball-sized meningioma (tumor on the brain's lining) was discovered on the left side of my brain, pressing on a part of brain that controls my body's right side movement. A strong dose of anti-seizure medication was prescribed, bringing about hallucinations as a side effect. The spoken English that I heard was interpreted by my brain as gibberish Thai, my native tongue. The doctor also saw that almost half of my brain was inflamed, so I was prescribed Cortizone. With these

medications my right leg functioned almost normally, but the neurosurgeon recommended immediate brain surgery as the best solution.

The friend who sent me books on Buddha's teachings now suggested natural/bio-energy therapy. She also recommended her energy healing teacher, Dr. Thanh Van Le, a Vietnamese doctor specializing in traditional medicine who lives in L.A. With constant practice of meditation and helping people, he maintains a large reservoir of healing energy which he channels into his patients to help restore their health. He is very kind and does not demand payment for his services, just leaving it to the patient's discretion. He gave me a few Chinese herb medications and taught me some kinesiology called the O-ring test to communicate with my body's wisdom. I can use it to measure the size of my brain tumor and to tell the correct medication, dosage, etc. All of this was exciting, useful new knowledge to me. Most of all, I trusted Dr. Le because I could feel that his energy was like what I felt from my meditation master, Master Prasert.

In retrospect I had been warned that something awry would happen prior to the discovery of my brain tumor. In June 2003, I was in Thailand with another Buddhist monk, Master Pornthep Limvivat. We went there to meet a great master from Vietnam, Tai Thay. My group from Houston was an interesting mix of nationalities (Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Thai, and American), but we had the same interest in meeting with the great master and feeling his light energy. We meditated, learned how to generate loving kindness energy and enjoyed our time spent together. Master Thay saw that the upper left side of my body was dark and warned me. However, I did not pay attention until I was admitted to the hospital 6 months later.

Whether or not to choose surgery was a very tough decision. All my physician friends, with their advanced education, trusted modern medicine more than traditional medicine. They do not believe in healing energy. But from my personal experience, I know that healing energy, although invisible, really exists, just like the earth's gravity or the attraction and repulsion of magnets. There are too many preternatural forces in this world for us to acknowledge them all.

Another close friend who recently returned from Thailand gave me the telephone number of Master Sakda Panarak, a well known psychic whom the friend had recently visited. It so

happened that Dr. Le had told me that he went on a trip to other dimension with Master Sakda while they were in Thailand long ago. Although I did not know him personally, Master Sakda was very kind and willing to help when I called. To my question “Should I undergo surgery?” he immediately replied, “Certainly not. You’ll end up in a vegetative state!” I was shocked by his answer and decided, per his instructions, to just concentrate on merit making and spending more time in sitting and doing nothing -- until another seizure occurred. It lasted mere seconds but scared me. I felt like I was trapped in an electrical cage and could not control any part of my body including my voice. I wanted to call out to my husband sleeping by my side but there was no sound out of my mouth.

I then made an appointment for surgery, which happened to fall on my birthday, U.S. time. My sister-in-law who practices astrology had once advised me that I should schedule the surgery before my upcoming birthday, if surgery was what I chose. But she was referring to Thailand’s time, which is about 12 hours ahead of the U.S. Although this matter of timing was rather unclear, I was still worried and the fear of making a wrong decision was on my mind throughout the entire week. On the appointed day, at 5 a.m., a nurse from the surgery center phoned to inform that my neurosurgeon had been called out to an emergency case, and my operation had to be postponed to Friday. I was so relieved, like a heavy burden had been removed. Right then, I made up my mind to go all or nothing, to be either cured or dead, and chose the energy healing. On top of that, our second son, who had been intensively training in weight lifting, had just torn a ligament in his shoulder and had his operation scheduled on that same Friday. So I had a perfect excuse for my surgeon: it was impossible for both mother and son to have surgery on the same day!

Three years later, in 2007, I had another seizure that went on for almost two hours, so I decided to go to the hospital. Before the doctor could do anything, however, the seizure simply stopped by itself. This is what my sister-in-law had warned me about concerning my illness, according to her astrological knowledge.

My husband, who had neither been interested nor believed in healing energy before, enthusiastically joined in the energy healing movement and made huge progress. Now he could

channel his energy into me daily so that I could maintain a state of bliss for almost five years. Although there were still occasional numbness and seizures, I managed to live my life rather normally.

In 2002, one of my husband's cousins had confided to him that she was able to communicate with an entity. Yet she was not sure whether it was all in her mind, as her close friend who had a similar experience later took up residence in a mental institution. She was afraid and came to my husband because she needed help. In November 2005 my husband and I met the entity, Master Roam. He used her voice to talk to us. The three of us were overwhelmed by his fresh buoyant energy. He became our nonphysical teacher!

During this time, I also became acquainted with the work of OSHO and other spiritual masters. All of the things that I learned helped open my mind. Each of us takes our own different path, but there is no right or wrong because everyone gets energy from the same source. In other words, we belong to the same family. If we can fill our hearts with love and understanding, empathy, helpfulness, and sharing, all of us will find freedom. Our spirit will be free, able to understand impartiality and buoyancy, with benevolence toward everyone as we all belong to the same family. Every member has his own function, performing acts of kindness, just like when Master Roam and others come to show the way toward world peace. Every time I chatted with him, I felt buoyant in both body and mind, so gloriously blissful. We chatted every Sunday, for about one to two hours, from 2006 to 2009.

And then another change happened yet again. I had hoped to be cured from this physical illness so I could work to help show the peaceful path to fellow human beings. But in 2009, my seizures occurred more and more frequently, with longer duration. The buoyant feeling had disappeared, and in its place a large boulder was crushing my chest. I was very disappointed. Not only did the energy not cure my illness as I had hoped, but also it had changed for the worse. The more disappointed I was, the less self-worth and self-confidence remained within me. I felt hopelessness and considered myself a failure. I not only had no self-respect, but also hated myself and envied others' happiness. The energy that my husband used to channel into me to induce cooling blissfulness now felt hot and hurtful. Headaches -- which occur in the majority of

people with brain abnormality, but which I never felt in the beginning -- now began appearing more and more frequently, but not yet intense enough to require painkillers.

To outsiders, my life seemed normal, but privately weariness of life and melancholy made increasingly frequent appearances. Sometimes I cried because I happened to feel like crying. As I was crying, I felt my life was in a rut. I was tired of life, tired of this world. All housework was neglected. I once read a book by OSHO about happiness in being sad: you don't want to get rid of your sadness even though your teacher told you to. When I am stuck in my thoughts, I am not in the present moment. Unfortunately, it is much easier said than done to be here and now. When I am lost within my thoughts, I keep repeating those thoughts and end up with a bad feeling and distress. Master Roam said "If my mind cannot be in silence yet, think only positive ones, thus making the best out of a bad situation." Getting rid of one's thoughts may be easy for some, but very difficult for those who still can't quite grasp the concept. I am one of the latter.

I have been facing melancholy – not constant, but often enough – for five years. My doctor told me about medications that might help my depression. But I was told to use this condition to train my mindfulness. This is called the power of paradox. The result: I was neither cured nor dead! On some days I managed to laugh, on others I cried all day long. Sometimes I succeeded in using chanting to keep my mind concentrated on the words until buoyancy occurred, sometimes not. Playing games on the iPad has helped distract my thoughts on some occasions. I have also added regular exercise including ping pong, swimming, yoga, and Pilates to my daily regimen. Still, I'm continuing to search for a cure as I keep reminding myself that there's nothing that will not change; every problem must have a solution! The numerous symptoms that I've been dealing with are no exceptions: they change from large, clearly visible to minuscule ones that blend into my normal feelings, making them harder to detect. There have been various instances of chemical imbalances in my body. Sometimes heat emanates from the nape of my neck, yet my feet are so cold that they have to be wrapped up in a heating pad. Some evenings I have had insomnia, lying in bed with eyes wide open all night. In these situations, getting out of bed and playing games helps somewhat with inducing sleepiness. Reading has not always been successful: sometimes I have no comprehension at all because I cannot concentrate. Some days I feel hopeless, some days hopeful. Master Roam -- who had stopped talking to us for almost four

years -- has come back and suggested that I write about my experience. The result is what you're reading!

At the end of 2012 my second son went to see a psychic suggested by his former girlfriend. She could not read him but told him to listen to Kryon.com. When I listened to Kryon, tears of joy were in my eyes. My son and I met him in person in August 2013, when he came to have a session in Memphis. It was quite an extraordinary experience for me. We met a young girl there who told us about Bashar.com. Then I understood the power of paradox. I must consider whatever happens to be happening *through* me rather than *to* me; I must realize that I am not the victim. My bad experiences are only lessons born out of my ego until I can love myself and find my true nature/self (which is love/light), and I will be healed.

My faith has grown and expanded from only one religion to the Oneness of everything. We all are connected but we think we are separated. I was so touched when I read words written by Native American Chief Seattle in the meditation garden at Memphis Zoo. I felt the same energy that I feel when I am with my masters, or at Buddhist and Indian temples, or in churches. We all are parts of nature!

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Today, January 6th, 2014, I celebrate the 10th anniversary of living with a brain tumor without a surgery.