

Ethical Dimensions

Cultivating your practice with Compassion, Wisdom and Clarity

Summer 2011

Summer's here and the time is right for dancing in the street ~ so the song goes.

The presence of warmer weather, increased sunshine and for many of us; attending to our gardens are common threads that connect us in some way. Look around – there is lushness everywhere, a richness and depth. The rhythm of the seasons outside in nature is active within our own heart and also active within the client – practitioner relationship.

In my previous newsletters, I have often compared the client – practitioner relationship to the rhythm of the seasons, and to the rhythm of the soul.

When it is summer in the world of nature, there is much light, growth and balance. There is blossoming everywhere. Summertime in your soul can be a time of growth, blossoming and balance. How do we manifest these same qualities with our clients? How do we bring light, invite growth and maintain balance within the therapeutic relationship? The answers to the above questions are multi-faceted.

Within this particular sharing of thoughts and ideas I offer you the following question to consider and reflect upon

What is the difference between giving care and taking care?

Giving care can feel like an offering, something sacred. Taking care can feel like a burden, perhaps a quality of heaviness, control and efforting. Giving care can empower the client; taking care often has the opposite effect. Often our clients are suffering ~ this suffering comes in many different forms. Our personal relationship with suffering may have something to do with how we approach this dance of giving care and taking care. It is important to recognize we live in an imperfect world, that suffering is part of that imperfection. The impulse to do everything we can to alleviate our clients suffering and pain is the automatic response of our natural compassion. However, this too can get in the way of finding meaning in the struggle – finding the light even in the dark. I invite you to pause for a moment in quiet and stillness. What thoughts come to you, what are your beliefs regarding suffering, around giving care and taking care, what happens in your body as you sit with your thoughts? Can you feel the difference between giving care to you clients and taking care of your clients?

Sometimes the techniques we use can create change, sometimes they cannot. There is no question that the techniques we use are important. They are cornerstones, and yet they have limitations. When we take care of someone, we want our method our technique to be just right, we want it to produce effective results. On the other hand, when we give care we are offering something that is less result oriented, less efforting. Giving care is something deeper, something that touches the heart, connects two souls ~ something that offers light and invites growth. Perhaps giving care is simply an offering from the deepest part of our -selves to another. Can we gently move away from helping our clients too much, feeling overly concerned about the results or their situation? Can we allow room for our clients to grow and blossom? Can we enter into the depths of humanity that is deeper than the suffering and pain itself?

Allow the season of summer to be a time of attending to the light, the growth, the potential ~ not only within the therapeutic relationship but within our own souls.

The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

If all else fails ~ love them with your touch!

~ Kathy Ginn