

Sacred Attitudes for cultivating a more joyful and meaningful life.

Seven Sacred Attitudes® -- How to Live in the Richness of the Moment

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S E V E N

SACRED

ATTITUDES<sup>®</sup>

e-book

*How to Live*  
in the  
*Richness of the Moment*

Erica Ross-Krieger

Foreword by Rick Carson  
Author of *Taming Your Gremlin*<sup>®</sup>

# **SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES®**

## **How to Live in the Richness of the Moment**

by

**Erica Ross-Krieger**



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## **A Still Mountain Press Nonfiction Book**

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**Dedicated with love**

*to my husband, Steve, who holds open*

*a space for me in the world.*

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“This engaging life manual teaches you to rely on Sacred Attitudes to nurture your inner wisdom, cultivate serenity and allow happiness to emerge. Following Erica Ross-Krieger’s simple daily process of Stop, Breathe, Notice and Choose will help you focus on the heart-centered present.”

ROGER JAHNKE, O.M.D.

Author of *The Healer Within*  
and *The Healing Promise of Qi*

“Seven Sacred Attitudes is the road map for those seeking total well-being and balance in their lives, helping them avoid all the modern day pitfalls and learn to be a success in the game of life.”

GARY QUINN

Author of *May the Angels Be With You*

“In this personal, heart-full collection of essays, fables, and thought-provoking inquiries, Erica Ross-Krieger invites us to reflect on life’s greater purpose and meaning, tap our own intuition and cultivate insights that deepen our understanding of ourselves. Full of practical wisdom that can easily be applied, Seven Sacred Attitudes is a wonderful companion for all spiritual travelers and anyone seeking to enrich the quality of his or her life.”

ANN K. LINDSAY

Author, *Watercolor: A New Beginning:  
A Holistic Approach to Painting*

“I laughed, I cried, I opened my heart, I examined my own attitudes. And in so doing, I moved further along my own path to wholeness. Thank you, Erica Ross-Krieger, for your insights, your humor, and your teachings. This must-read book will light the way for anyone recognizing the need for his or her own ‘attitude adjustment’ on their sacred path to healing.”

PATRICIA J. MEYER, N.D.

Naturopathic Physician  
Founder, Namaste Natural Healing Center

“Caution! Reading Erica Ross-Krieger’s Seven Sacred Attitudes may change your life. Through a series of entertaining personal essays, each followed by a set of life-expanding questions, she invites us, with gentle yet compelling power, to reflect on the meaning and quality of our daily lives.”

A.J. GARROTTO

Author of *Circles of Stone*

“As you savor and contemplate the many delicious gems inside *Seven Sacred Attitudes*, you will find Erica Ross-Krieger has accomplished two marvelous things: first, by sharing her most vulnerable moments, she reveals the Heart of a true Teacher; and second, in entertaining style, she gives us a new model for being with ourselves, coaching others and making our lives full and meaningful. This book is a smorgasbord of delights and a must-read for all those called to awaken their passion.”

CRAIG CARR, CPCC, PCC

Founder, Coaching Elements, Inc.  
Senior Trainer, Coaches Training Institute

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**SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES**

**FOREWORD**

I first met Erica Ross-Krieger when she attended a two-day Taming Your Gremlin® seminar I was conducting in Northern California. I liked Erica immediately and was thrilled when she later applied for the Gremlin Taming™ Institute’s Professional Training Program. I’m honored to claim her as a graduate.

Erica’s commitment to authenticity is unwavering and she is extremely kind. This is a rare blend and as a result of it there is simple and beautiful elegance to the way Erica relates to people and events. This graceful style is reflected in her work with her clients and seminar participants and, as you will see in *Seven Sacred Attitudes®*, in her writing.

Erica uses entertaining vignettes from her own life to illustrate each of the *Sacred Attitudes*. Because her work is bereft of jargon and stilted concepts, and because she’s a wise soul and a damn good writer, you are sure to enjoy this work immensely, to find it useful, and to want to share it with others.

Rick Carson

Author of *Taming Your Gremlin®*



## SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES

# INTRODUCTION

Some of our attitudes hold us back from being and doing all we are meant to be and do. Some even rob us of the richness of the moment and make our lives more difficult and complicated than necessary.

There are other attitudes that foster meaningful action in our lives, lead to wellbeing, and deepen our learning along the way. I call these attitudes **sacred**.

One definition of the word *sacred* is “worthy of respect.” The attitudes that bring us more fully into the world are indeed worthy of our respect.

The small book you hold in your hands is not a book about *positive thinking*. Rather, it’s a book about *attitudes*. An attitude is all-encompassing. It includes more than just our way of thinking, it also involves our physical being. Ballet dancers and pilots are very familiar with how comprehensive the word “attitude” is; in their respective fields, “attitude” involves the physical position of



the body or an airplane.

To illustrate further, suppose I told you I went to a restaurant last evening where the young waitress had an “attitude.” Suppose I also told you that her “attitude” was even more evident when I asked her to bring my salad dressing on the side and my water without ice cubes. Now, if I were to ask you to stand up right now and adopt the actual physical posture of a waitress or waiter with an “attitude,” you would know exactly what to do. It would likely involve putting your hand on your hip, rolling your eyes upward, and maybe even clicking your tongue and sighing.

Once we become conscious of our attitudes—how they show up in our thinking and physical being, we become empowered to choose our attitudes.

My first awareness of the full concept of “attitude” came almost 20 years ago when I needed to slow down due to a physical health challenge. As I began to slow down, I noticed that the process involved much more than decreasing motion. Slowing down involved a new way of thinking and a new way of being. In order to slow down in every way, I needed to adopt a new *attitude*.

When I looked up “attitude” in Webster’s dictionary, I knew the word was the right one to describe what I was learning—**attitude: a physical posture either conscious or unconscious, (especially) while interacting with others.**

Yes, I thought, *Go Slow* is an “attitude.” I *am* different “with others” after adopting the *Go Slow* attitude. I stand at ease, have a different way of thinking, and I behave differently.

I found that I when I was in a *Go Slow* attitude, I saw things I

didn’t see when I was in a “Go Fast” attitude. I noticed the sweet details of life, like the rhythm of my breath, the way my husband held his pen when he wrote, and how my food tasted.

I learned that it was unrealistic to expect the *Go Slow* attitude to take hold overnight or to set up a permanent camp in my life. Instead, I knew that developing the *Go Slow* attitude meant giving it my conscious attention on a daily basis. I would have to cultivate this attitude, much like a gardener tends crops.

After seeing what a remarkable difference adopting the *Go Slow* Attitude made in my life, I began a conscious journey to discover what other Sacred Attitudes might help me create a more meaningful life.

I began to pay attention to the attitudes I was harboring whenever I felt stuck, and I started to notice the effect different attitudes had on my life. The more aware I was, the more obvious the attitudes became. For example, someone we didn’t know well invited my husband and me to a summer barbeque. For weeks before the barbeque, I struggled to remember why we’d said yes. I didn’t want to go; I just wanted to stay home and work on an idea I had for this book.

One minute, something deep inside told me to go to the barbeque. A minute later, I found myself thinking the idea was ridiculous and inventing excuses so I wouldn’t have to go. The inner battle continued.

And then I stopped. I purposely took a deep breath. I noticed my “attitude”—my physical posture—the way I’d been breathing. I noticed I was scrunching my brow, thinking too much, and holding my breath. I was ignoring the warm and calm feeling

inside that was telling me to go to the barbeque.

I purposefully took another deep breath and made a firm choice. I would use my inner wisdom. We would go to the barbeque.

Soon after we arrived, Tom and Julie, a couple we'd known for some time, showed up. We had no idea they'd be there or that they knew the host. Seeing them was a pleasant surprise and reason enough to be glad we came. But there was another surprise.

Later that evening, Tom told us a story about his recent pilot's license exam. The story was about the power of attitudes. (His story is in chapter one.) I was amazed. The story was just what I needed to round out my book idea. I wouldn't have heard it if I'd stayed home.

I realized I had come across another Sacred Attitude: *Use Inner Wisdom*.

There is no mistaking the presence of a Sacred Attitude. Once you allow one to enter into your life, there is more space for your natural self to shine—more room for you to “come to life more fully,” as author John G. Sullivan says. I believe there is also more room for *life to come to you more fully*, as it did for me that evening.

During my journey to discover more Sacred Attitudes, I continued my spiritual and psychological studies and expanded them to related fields. I spent time with many great teachers of spirituality, philosophy, somatic emotional psychology, Yoga, nutrition, Tai Chi, and the principles of Chinese Medicine. They

have all enriched my life. However, I have found that the greatest lessons of all come from giving daily attention to my attitudes and how they affect my life experience.

Over time, I have found Seven Sacred Attitudes that bring more meaning to my life:

- 1) **Use Inner Wisdom**
- 2) **Accept What's So**
- 3) **Go Slow**
- 4) **Do Less**
- 5) **Show Up**
- 6) **Trust the Process**
- 7) **Be With the Questions**

Making these attitudes a regular part of my life has become my top priority. The simple daily process I use for cultivating Sacred Attitudes is:

#### **Stop    Breathe    Notice    Choose**

- **Stop** means to do just that.
- **Breathe** means to take a few slow, deep breaths and pay attention to the physical effects.
- **Notice** means to observe the “attitude” I am holding. Am I insisting? Going fast? Fighting for answers? Doubting myself? I notice the physical aspect of my “attitude.” Am I wrinkling a brow? Hunching my shoulders? Holding my breath? I notice what is before me. Right here, right now. If it is an emotion, I feel it fully. If it is a burned roast or a frozen computer, I just notice it (after I notice my screaming).

• **Choose** means to take an action that supports one of the Seven Sacred Attitudes I want to cultivate. Use **Inner Wisdom. Accept What's So. Go Slow. Do Less. Show Up. Trust the Process. Be With the Questions.** I might choose to stop rushing, and to *Go Slow*. I might choose to stop insisting, to experiment, and *Accept What's So*.

**Stop    Breathe    Notice    Choose**

This daily practice is simple to do when all is right with the world. It is not so simple when we're faced with the challenges of daily life or when in the face of tragedy. But if you've become accustomed to cultivating the Sacred Attitudes in the less challenging moments, it becomes easier to cultivate them in the hardest of circumstances. Cultivating Sacred Attitudes is an ongoing practice. We do the best we can do each moment in our lives.

You'll notice that I use many stories in this book to encourage you to explore and practice the Seven Sacred Attitudes. As Barry Lopez's fable, *Crow and Weasel*, teaches, "*stories are the way we care for one another and they are the bread for our journeys.*"

Stories can show us that we have options and that there are places for us to test out new attitudes. New postures. New ways of thinking and being in the world. And this is where the fun starts.

Each of my stories represents one of the Seven Sacred Attitudes in action. The inquiries—powerful questions to ponder—that follow each essay are meant to help you reflect on

the message of that story and see how it applies to your own life.

Use the stories and inquiries for inspiration. Use them for introspection. Use them for discussion groups with friends. Use them to help you cultivate the Seven Sacred Attitudes in your life.

Erica Ross-Krieger  
Walnut Creek, California  
November 2007



SACRED ATTITUDE ONE  
**USE INNER WISDOM**

*I have an inner compass.*

—Julia Cameron

*You cannot listen to the God of your heart,  
while you are busy monitoring the god of opinion.*

—Dan Millman

*Why do you weep? The source is within you...*

—Rumi

Every day we are bombarded with images, advertisement slogans and magazine articles telling us how to care for our bodies, minds, careers and pocketbooks. With these daily reminders that something or someone outside of us knows what we need and what is best for us, it's no wonder that many of us are confused—we even wonder what foods to eat and what colors to wear. And to alleviate the confusion, we ask “experts” to

guide us.

But sole reliance on what others think is a pricey habit to adopt. Like the sounds of static from a poor cellular phone connection, too many opinions cause us to forget where true wisdom resides—keep us from hearing our own inner wisdom.

We can put aside the crackling and confusing sounds of external opinions and tune in to another channel. All we have to do is stop and take a breath.

It's true.

When we stop and take a breath, we make room for the still, small voice of our inner wisdom. We also make room for hearing what our own bodies tell us. Our own breath, the center of our physical being, the breath of life that connects us to all living things, is part of us all the time. Taking a breath is the first step in tuning in to our inner wisdom.

#### More than Intuition

The first Sacred Attitude, *Use Inner Wisdom*, reminds us that inner wisdom resides in our hearts and in our bodies, for inner wisdom is more than intuition. It lives in the cells of our bodies. Those cells contain volumes of wisdom—from past physical training we've had, to knowledge of what foods are best for us.

In the health realm, for example, once we have taken a deep breath and tuned in to the channel of our own being—our Inner Wisdom channel—we can put conscious attention to our actions and ask ourselves questions such as “What health routine works for me?” “How does my body feel about Yoga, skiing, or broccoli?” “How does that morning coffee make me feel?” “How does my body *feel* after inhaling a cigarette?” Then we can adopt the

Sacred Attitude, *Use Inner Wisdom*, and listen to what our bodies have to say about our actions.

This Sacred Attitude, *Use Inner Wisdom*, also begs us to listen to our internal wisdom in other realms (financial, career, relationships.) When we do, we may be surprised by what we learn. For example, let's say that you're struggling with a decision about a financial investment. You might **Stop**—go outside, stand and stretch, give yourself a break. Then **Breathe**—take a few deep breaths. Take a minute to **Notice**—check out your “attitude”—and be a fair witness to what you observe. “Hmm, my stomach is in knots, my breathing's been shallow for hours and I have a headache; I have solid, positive information about the XYZ stock—from the advisor *and* from my own research—and at the same time, I have a strong, intuitive sense that this isn't the right stock for me.” Finally, you **Choose**—choose to *Use Inner Wisdom* and see what happens. “I think I will *Use Inner Wisdom and trust*—I have to let this stock go.”

For some of us, the inner wisdom we seek is revealed to us through bodily sensations. Our guts rumble when we think about changing jobs. For others, inner wisdom is a quiet knowing. No matter what the form is for you, the first step in accessing inner wisdom is to stop and take a deep breath.

#### Begin Now

Something greater than we are put the gift of inner wisdom inside each of us. Our job is to access that inner wisdom and put the wisdom to use. As a global community, we need each person on the planet to adopt the Sacred Attitude, *Use Inner Wisdom*. And we can begin right now...with the next breath we take.

The essays and inquiries in this section invite you to access your own inner wisdom—to listen to the wisdom of your heart and body.

So, go ahead.

Begin now.

Breathe.

Then, listen.

Your *Inner Wisdom* is waiting to speak.

## RECOVERY FROM UNUSUAL ATTITUDES

Some evenings are more memorable than others. There is one I will never forget. It was the 4th of July and my husband and I were attending an evening barbeque at a friend's home in the Berkeley hills. But it wasn't the gourmet food, the sweet evening air, or the brilliant fireworks display that took my breath away. It was the story I heard.

Between bites of potato salad, our friend, Tom, told us about his recent accomplishment. He had just added his instrument rating to his private pilot's license and was still excited about having done so. He told us:

“The day before my final Instrument Flight Rules check, I went out to the airstrip to get some more practice. I'd hired my instructor to fly with me for a few hours. He was also the FAA examiner who'd be with me for the check the next day, so I knew I'd get some good feedback.

“I climbed into the left seat of the Cessna I'd rented and my instructor, Bill, sat beside me. He told me to take the plane up to five thousand feet, and that he'd instruct me further once we got there.

“When we reached the altitude he'd indicated, Bill's instructions surprised me. 'I'll be taking over the controls here, Tom. I want you to close your eyes.'

“I was scared as hell. But I trusted him, and so I

did as he instructed.

“Just sit tight, Tom. I’ll let you know when I need you to open your eyes and take over again.’

“First, I could feel the plane climbing higher and then level out. I had no idea what Bill was planning.

“The next thing I knew, the motor turned fewer rpm’s and the plane slowed down. I heard the familiar ‘click, click’ as Bill flipped switches and changed settings. But that wasn’t all he did.

“There are two sets of rudder pedals in the plane that are connected to each other. Since I could feel the set moving beneath my feet, I knew Bill was also manipulating the rudder.

“I could tell that the plane was turning to the right. I felt the left wing rise. The plane stayed that way just a little too long for my liking. I was dying to open my eyes. My hands began to get sweaty and I felt a bit queasy. The nose was up also and I knew that if Bill didn’t make a correction soon, the flight of that airplane could go into distress.

“Then Bill said, ‘She’s all yours, now, Tom. Get this plane stabilized.’

“I opened my eyes and my panic turned to terror. We were in the midst of a cloud and I didn’t know which way was up. I had to rely on the instrument panel. In that instant I realized this was the test.

“My fear didn’t leave, but somewhere in the

midst of my panic I found myself flying the plane and just...breathing. With each breath, I found all my flight lessons were there for me. I did what I had to do. Before I knew it, I had stabilized the plane and was flying straight and level.

“Bill smiled. ‘Nice work, Tom. Now do a steep 720-degree turn to the left and come out on a heading north. Then do the same thing to the right. After that, descend from this cloud cover.’

“I did the rest of the required maneuvers he’d instructed and brought us down out of the clouds. I could see the airstrip again. I took the Cessna in for a smooth landing and taxied to the tie downs.

“I turned off the engine and looked at Bill. He shook my hand and said, ‘Great job up there, Tom. You passed the test.’

“I breathed a sigh of relief. The whole experience was quite incredible.”

“Wow!” I said, when Tom finished the story. “Did the instructor create that situation just for you or does he do it for every pilot’s instrument flight test?”

“Oh, that’s a regular test,” Tom said. “It’s called Recovery From Unusual Attitudes.”

“Attitudes?” I said. “I thought the word was *altitude*?”

“No, *attitude* is a term that means the relative position of the

plane to the horizon. When the wings are level and the nose is parallel to the horizon, you're in a stable flying configuration. When you execute a maneuver other than that—make a turn, or lift the nose to go higher—the plane is in what's called an *'unusual attitude.'* If a correction isn't made soon, a hazardous flight condition can occur.”

That's when I became speechless. Tom's words struck a deep chord in me—as if a rich, low-pitched gong had gone off inside my head and vibrated through my heart. He didn't know it, but Tom had just given me a gift. In one short story he had summed up my belief in the power of *attitudes*. His words left me in a reflective mood for weeks.

I thought about what it means to have “unusual attitudes” in life and what it takes to recognize them. I realized that we all hold attitudes that cause us distress—ways we make ourselves miserable. How often do we take the time to identify them? I wondered. How often do we make a concerted effort to make “attitude” adjustments and get back to flying straight and level?

Tom's story also caused me to think about the oh-so-familiar attitude of “self-doubt.” During his pilot's test, Tom faced that attitude head on. But it was more than his training that helped him move past self-doubt into more important territory. It was his *attitude*—the way he'd remembered to breathe, focus on the job in front of him, and trust his inner wisdom to access his skills—that helped him bring the plane back to stable flight. His story will always remind me to choose to do the same—to mind my *attitude* and use my inner wisdom.

#### INQUIRIES:

- **What attitudes keep you flying on course?**
- **Where in your life do you engage the attitude of “self-doubt”?**
- **What support do you need to *Use Inner Wisdom*?**



## FIVE DANGEROUS WORDS

One crisp autumn morning, I drove downtown for a breakfast meeting with a client. I hummed along to the oldies music on the radio and found myself smiling.

When I stopped at a red light, I noticed a faint whisper of steam in front of my car. It was rising from the space between my front bumper and the back of the mini-van that stopped in front of me. I figured the source of the steam was the mini-van's warm exhaust meeting with the cold air. So I turned my attention back to the song on the radio.

At the next traffic light, the mini-van scooted through the intersection as the light turned yellow. I caught the red light. As I sat there, I noticed steam-like vapor rising from the hood of my car. But this time there was no mini-van's exhaust pipe in front of me. The cold air against my car's warm engine is causing this vapor, I thought. I glanced at my temperature gauge just in case the engine was more than warm. But the car was fine. The gauge indicated a medium temperature. So on I went.

I found a parking spot, met with my client, and then drove home.

At 6:30 that evening, I got back into my car and headed to my Monday night writing class. At a stop sign along the way, I noticed a faint bit of steam rising from the hood of my car again. I pulled a familiar bit of reasoning from my short-term memory. Okay, it's got to be the cold night air against the car's warm engine that's causing this, I figured. But unconvinced of my logic, I checked the temperature gauge. It said normal. I shrugged, drove on and got to

class a few minutes later.

I took my seat and pushed aside any concern about my car's mysterious vapor. I was relieved to focus instead on the writing lesson of the week.

I had an uneventful ride home. When I walked in the door, I mentioned the vapor to Steve. "I'll take a look under the hood for you tomorrow," he said.

A week of tomorrows went by. Neither of us remembered to check under the hood. But I didn't see any vapor that week, either.

So I went on about my business, paying less and less attention to the car's temperature gauge each day. I figured the less I checked the gauge, the less my chances would be of finding anything wrong.

At the end of the week, I drove to my chiropractor's office. I settled into a chair in the waiting room. Not in the mood for thumbing through the old copies of *Reader's Digest* or *People*, I amused myself by looking around the room. I checked the clock on the wall a few times, noticed that the Boston fern was greener than the one I had at home, and stared at the geometric pattern of the blue and white carpet.

Whoops. I turned back to the wall. Something next to the clock had caught my eye. Something I hadn't noticed before—despite the many times I'd been to my chiropractor's office. That *something* was a small, brown, wooden sign:

**Five dangerous words:**

**Maybe it will go away.**

The sign was posted to encourage my chiropractor's clients to

listen to their bodies and to come in for treatment sooner rather than later. But the sign said much more than that to me that day.

In a flash it told me to attend to that vapor coming out of the hood of my car. And as soon as my appointment was over, I drove straight to the Toyota service department.

I told the attendant on duty about the vapor. One look and she had the mystery solved. “Your radiator is cracked,” she told me. “One more mile and it would have overheated. You must know your car pretty well to have come in when you did. It’s a good thing you listened to the signs.”

She had no idea what *sign* I’d “listened” to.

We each face at least *one* situation in our lives we wish would either go away—disappear with a snap of our fingers and a magic phrase like “presto-change-o”—or be transformed overnight without any intervention on our part. Whether that circumstance is a dissatisfying career, an unrealized dream, a bad marriage, an injustice we don’t want to mention, signs of abuse that we’d rather not acknowledge, or a mile high stack of unopened mail—one thing is certain:

Wishing that “maybe it will go away” won’t make it so. Only action holds the power of transformation.

#### **INQUIRIES:**

- **What are you pretending not to know?**
- **What are you hoping will just go away?**
- **When will you take action?**

## **BUBBLING SPRING**

Hal Bailen, M.D. (1935-1991) was a wise and loving man whose compassion, mastery of acupuncture and gentle kindness brought comfort and healing to many. I was blessed to know him.

Hal began to treat me with acupuncture in 1985, to help me improve my overall health. After three months of treatment, I knew with certainty that Hal’s work and wisdom were just what my body and soul needed.

“Hal,” I said, at the end of my treatment one spring day, “my physical and emotional stamina has increased since I’ve been coming to see you.”

“Tell me more,” Hal said.

I scooted off the treatment table and took a seat on the antique upholstered side chair next to Hal’s desk. “Well, as long as I come for treatments each week and keep taking my herbal supplements, I have the energy and strength I need to enjoy a productive day. That wasn’t true in January.” I bent over to put on my Addidas.

“Hmm. This is not such a good thing,” Hal said.

“It’s not?”

“Well, it’s good that you’re stronger,” Hal said. “But it’s not good that you attribute your increased energy to things outside of you.”

I leaned my elbows on Hal’s old brown desk. “But aren’t the things that are helping me outside of me?”

“Yes and no,” Hal said. “Yes, herbs and acupuncture are outside of you but they are not the source of your growing energy and strength.”

I squirmed in my seat and wrinkled my brow.

“Let me give you a homework assignment,” Hal said, looking at me over the top of his silver bifocals. “Then you tell me what is making you stronger the next time you come.”

“Okay.” I took a pen and notepaper from my Day Timer.

“There’s nothing to write down,” Hal said. “Take your right shoe off and lift up your foot.”

I untied my laces, took my shoe off again and stuck out my foot.

Hal got down on his knees and held my foot. “Right here, in the middle of the ball of your foot, and toward the center a bit, is the point the Chinese call the Bubbling Spring.” Hal pressed his thumb into the spot with a light touch.

“Yup. I feel it all right,” I said, smiling through a slight grimace, “but you can stop pressing now.”

Hal took his thumb off the spot but continued to hold my foot. “Bubbling Spring is the heart of your sole,” he said, as he gave my foot a loving squeeze. “It’s located in the same place in your other foot, also.”

“Okay. So what’s the homework?”

Hal stood up. “Bubbling Spring is a powerful acupuncture point,” he said. “But we don’t need needles to activate the energy it provides. Each time we step we activate the Bubbling Spring point.”

“So I don’t need to do anything different? Just walk?”

“Be mindful,” Hal said.

“What?”

“This week, be mindful of Bubbling Spring as you walk. Keep

in mind that each time you step you activate a Bubbling Spring of energy that’s within you,” Hal said. “In other words, you cultivate more of your own Life Energy.”

“That’s it? That’s all I do?”

“That’s plenty,” Hal said and gave me a hug goodbye.

I walked to my car, paying attention to my steps.

I stayed as mindful as I could of Bubbling Spring that week. Doing so became a challenging game—one that I enjoyed. It also perked me up.

Although I had a few particularly long days that week—in fact, sitting in front of the TV after supper took about all the energy I could muster—I had a new tool. When I sat, I took my shoes off and pressed the Bubbling Spring point. Within short order, a new round of energy kicked in and I was back in action—off to balance the checkbook, clean out a drawer, or start an art project. One night I even organized an entire linen closet. This isn’t something I usually have energy to tackle this late at night, I thought, as I moved towels. I knew it wasn’t the TV that had perked me up—so I figured I had activated my own energy reserves by massaging the Bubbling Spring point.

Throughout the week, I walked wherever I could. As I did, I imagined that an unlimited supply of energy came bubbling up from my feet. And, somehow, I felt more bounce in my step.

I looked forward to telling Hal what I was noticing—especially about the changes that seemed to be coming as a result of my *attention* on Bubbling Spring as I walked.

Two days before my appointment, Hal’s secretary called.

“Erica, Hal has to reschedule your Wednesday session,” Susan said.

“He can see you next week at the same time, though. Does that work for you?”

“I guess so,” I said, checking my calendar. “Hal hasn’t rescheduled me the entire three months I’ve been seeing him,” I said. “Does he do that often?”

“To tell you the truth, it’s a first since I’ve worked here,” Susan said, “and I’ve been here a year. It’s some personal thing that’s come up. But he’s seeing clients tomorrow if there’s an emergency...is there?”

“No,” I said. “I’ll be there next week.”

I hung up the phone. My neck was knotted with tension. Now what? I really needed those sessions each week to keep me strong and my energy up.

Oops. I stopped.

I took a deep breath.

Then I grabbed a sweatshirt and headed outside for a walk.

As I started down the street, I put my focus on the Bubbling Spring points in my feet.

Within one block, I discovered I could be mindful of my steps and still take in the sweetness of the plum blossoms that decorated the neighborhood trees.

Within two blocks I could sense the powerful energy that seemed to come from the Bubbling Spring of my own steps.

By the time I got home, my shoulders had relaxed and I knew with certainty the source of my healing.

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The following week, I met with Hal. “Well,” he said, “what’s the report?”

“That was a great assignment,” I said, hopping up onto the treatment table.

“What did you learn?” Hal held my wrist and checked my pulses.

“My own Bubbling Spring showed me that healing energy is right here within me.”

Hal smiled.

“I also could feel the earth itself supporting me,” I said. “It made me realize I don’t have to rely solely on my own willfulness each day—I’ve got another means of support.”

“Sounds like focusing on Bubbling Spring gave you a nice way of connecting to your *soul* through your *sole*,” Hal said.

“Sure did. But I *do* have a question, Hal. Did you reschedule my appointment on purpose?”

Hal’s eyes twinkled.

#### **INQUIRIES:**

- **What will your day be like if you give your attention to your steps?**
- **When you step, what do you notice?**
  - **Are your steps hesitant?**
  - **Are your strides confident?**
  - **Are you pulled up, tight in your chest and unaware of your feet?**
- **What is it to be a Bubbling Spring?**

## MAKING LIFE MORE COMFORTABLE

As I sat there, in the stillness of the warm evening sun, sipping cold bottled water and watching the soap splatter my windshield, I smiled to myself. Life had become slower for a moment and much more comfortable.

For years, my Yoga teacher and friend, Ofer, has asked a simple question in Yoga class. Each time we settle into a stretch or pose, he says, “How can you make this more comfortable?” It’s an invitation for us to adjust our positions and attain comfort.

A few minutes later Ofer says, “Now, how can you make this same pose even *more* comfortable?” His rich, deep voice and Hebrew accent seem to add to the importance of the question. Once again, we alter our positions—ever so slightly, most of the time—so that our bodies enjoy the postures.

Regardless of what our stretch or posture looks like compared to our Yoga teacher’s, we are to find a way to do the postures *our* way—the way that is most comfortable for us that day.

Ofer says the idea behind his question is to get us to see that our bodies respond much more to comfort than to discomfort. He wants us to see that more comfort and more awareness become available to us when we seek more comfort. What a concept.

Here in the Western world, we seem to pride ourselves on making things harder and more difficult, rather than more comfortable. This tendency is apparent *everywhere* we look—not just in gyms and fitness classes. Even as I write this essay I wonder why I am hunched over the keyboard, shoulders tensed, holding my breath.

Some time ago, I thought it would be a good idea to apply Ofer’s question to the areas of my life outside of Yoga class—to make a practice of living with his question, “How can I make this more comfortable?”

I did fine for a while. I’d notice I was doing something with some discomfort, make adjustments and then do the same thing with more ease. From adjusting the way I bent to tie a shoe, to disorganizing my wrinkled brow as I talked on the phone with a client, I found lots of ways to make things more comfortable.

I also noticed that by making things more comfortable each day, I had more access to my inner wisdom. For instance, I knew what words to use on a once-troubling writing piece when I sat in a more comfortable position at my desk. When I adjusted my posture at the dinner table, I enjoyed my food more and found that my body just naturally stopped eating when I was full. I guess that my intuition was freed up when my unconscious attention wasn’t focused on discomfort and pain.

Then somewhere along the line, my daily practice of making things more comfortable slipped. We bought a new house, moved, and I got caught up in the busy-ness of life. I once again became familiar with the discomfort of stress.

Last summer, my “making it more comfortable” practice clicked in again. It was a warm 97-degree day. Everything I did drained my energy. And I had lots to do that day. In the back of my mind, I knew I had to have enough energy left to get to a not-so-engaging watercolor class at 7:00 that evening.

As 5:30 approached, and my To Do list was still long enough for any two people, I stopped. I slowed down. I took a breath. I

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