

Excerpt from *As Easy as Breathing* by Margaret Dubay Mikus, Ph.D.

**Remembering
(A Peaceful Moment)**

It was dawn.
Waves began
again lapping
against the shore.

Light broke
against the dark,
gradually and silently
commanding the sky.

Night quiet
slowly ceased
in chirps and peeps
of beginning stirring.

I sat alone on the sand
of the cold damp beach
and watched and breathed
and listened.

I Am Willing

I am willing
to change what doesn't work
for me in my life.

I am willing to listen
with an open heart,
without judging.

I am willing to plant seeds
that take a long time,
if ever, to grow.

I am willing to feel
and let go.

I am willing to make mistakes
and learn from them.

I am willing
to live in the present.

I am willing to forgive
and forget in my heart.

I am willing to love as much
as my endless spirit will allow.

I am willing to be seen
in all my radiance.

I am willing to be fearless.

I am willing to be powerful.

I am willing to be peaceful.

I am willing to stand tall.
and walk gracefully.

I am willing to sing with my stunning, full voice.

I am willing to allow.

I am willing to let go.

I am willing to change.

I am willing to see
and be seen.

I am willing to hear
and be heard.

I am willing to feel
and be felt.

I am willing to heal
and be healed.

I am willing to love
and be loved.

I am willing
to be fully human.

August 10, 1996

Dear Family and Dear Friends,

I am writing to ask for your help. Several weeks ago, following testing, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. This type is the one most commonly found and is slow growing. The mass appears to be localized in one area and has not spread as far as can be determined by physical exam and pictures. We are optimistic that the outcome will be positive.

My first response was probably similar to yours, shock and confusion, denial and anger, "why me?" fear and anxiety. In dealing with all this, as well as deciding on a course of action, the whole family went through up days and down days, as expected. I both thoroughly fell apart and was very peaceful.

We talked to the kids, as they are a part of this and surely would sense something was wrong. This is not a dark secret to be hidden, but rather a part of life that can be discussed openly, any questions answered and feelings aired. They are doing well and have a lot to offer me in this process, from their potent hugs to reading me funny stories.

In these past weeks, I put together a team of highly skilled health professionals to help me heal. Surgery is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27, in the morning. I continue my use of alternative or complementary medicine including meditation and inner listening, visualizations, affirmations, yoga, Reiki, writing (especially poetry), psychotherapy, energy balancing, singing and playing piano. I am renewing my skills in stress management and using a homeopathic remedy that promotes healing. I'm reading books that seem appropriate and am calling on the support of family and friends. My focus now is on boosting immunity and being balanced and centered so I can make clear decisions about my care options.

To go back to my initial statement, I am writing to ask you to help me in this healing time. A number of studies clearly show what many knew already, that prayer or positive support or thoughts sent can make a difference in healing. So I am asking if you could do this for me: send me positive energy in whatever form you like—as prayers, or images or loving thoughts or...? I picture myself in the middle of a giant, glowing web of positive energy strands.

In addition, it's clear that humor can have a positive effect on healing, in part by counteracting stress, which is a suppressor of immune function. You can't be stressed out if you're giving a good, hearty laugh. Laughter also triggers biochemical changes in the body that support healing. So if you would, send me any funny stuff you run across, cartoons, jokes, etc. I've enclosed a postcard to use if you wish.

Through these means, I believe we can participate in the healing of each other in times of crisis as well as everyday. It is very natural for you to have your own questions and anxieties about my health. Please feel free to talk to us or to anyone else about them and please remember that every cancer and every individual is different. We are confident that this time will lead to a greater awareness of the loving energy that surrounds us.

Thank you for your support.

With love,

Margaret

If I Do Enough

and do it right
and am willing enough
and read all the right guideposts,

then will I be healed?

If I eat the perfect wholesome foods
and exercise and manage stress
and read the right books
and do all the healing exercises
I feel drawn to,

then will I be healed?

Just how is this accomplished,
to become one of those rare species,
who have remarkable
and unexpected recoveries?
In my case, two of them.

Voice: Being is more important than doing.

Me: Just what does that mean,
doing nothing?

Voice: No, just be true to your heart in what you do.

Me: A guarantee would be nice.

*Voice: No guarantees, except
expect the result to be
better than you can possibly imagine.*

Me: Oh, if I could believe this fully.

Voice: Yes

Birds on a Line

How many birds
can sit on a line
not quite wing to wing?

How many birds
can sit for how long,
waiting patiently
to burst into song?

To Suspend Disbelief

that is the key
to beginning
to unravel the tangled yarn
of a "mature" life,

one filled with semi-truths,
old and stale, if ever true,
certainly not currently serving.

Don't look at the task
from the whole mass,
but pull at a bit in one
small part until a space opens.

Then work another place. Easily
almost without notice,
space joins space
until the whole is free.

Suspend disbelief...
trust...ask for help and
receive the help that is offered,
that is the key
to beginning.

Winter Morning: Looking East

I feel aware of
every blade of grass
that pokes up through
late patches of snow

and every dried flower
with stem bent in the wind,
of warm, wan late winter sun,
now hidden behind cushion of clouds,
now gently shining.

I see ice crystals
nestled in nests of dried leaves
collected in old flower beds,
leaves of oak and maple and ash.

I see footprints coming and going
made last week before the blowing
wind shaded in the edges.
I see false hopeful shoots

of the Dutch irises
that poke up on every new warm day
only to curl back frozen
again and again.

I see red berries turned brown,
uneaten on branches still reaching.
And everywhere is hushed expectation
and knowing the hardest is over.

To Dance Is to Be (Thank You Hubbard Street Dance)

To dance is to fly
is to sing with every muscle

is to be fluid
no waste

is to be rhythmic
and graceful.

To dance is to cry
out and in

with every muscle
with every grin or grimace.

To dance is to celebrate
to let out the gift within,

to shout with joy
in every movement,

to pair or part
to dance alone

to be with great company.
To dance is to sing,

joy and sorrow in every muscle,
to be fully human...

to be soaring light.

After Lisel Mueller

Sometimes
you have to stop

and take stock,
be quiet enough

to listen,
raise a finger

to the wind;
be still enough

to hear direction
even when heart

pounds in the darkness
sometimes.

Sometimes
living life

is not writing,
but living,

not writing,
but waiting.

Sometimes
you must breathe out

before you can
breathe in again.