

The Gift of Stones

The doctor's words, "It is likely pancreatitis and that usually means hospital time" hit me hard. Given that many businesses were closing at noon and schools had already closed, my thoughts swirled like the snow outside as I made plans to spend some time with friends who lived near the main road. I knew I needed to wait until morning when the doc would have the blood test results to confirm his diagnosis.

In less than 24 hours, the perfunctory healing of my body was underway as I lay on a hospital bed watching the meds enter my body through the IV in my right arm. Upon learning of my hospitalization, my dear friend and mentor Ia called and asked me outright if I had a death wish?

I defended at first and said no, though intuitively I knew I did. Ia's inquiry of whether I had a death wish arose when she learned that surgery was needed to open my blocked liver duct and of the difficulties I had with the imaging tests the doctor ordered to confirm the diagnosis. I had thrown up the drugs needed for the CT scan immediately after the scan was complete. And in the cold room for the MRI, when the nurse asked me to put my arms above my head, there was no way for my body to tolerate this position. Assuring me that the test could also work with my arms at side, the nurse then set about securing a film pak on my abdomen in a way that restrained my arms as well. Though I willed my body to do her bidding, hysteria took over as soon she started moving me into the tunnel

After Ia heard my story, she explained that she was seeing a memory about my being forced to take the poison, after being pinned down, and that all those players were in fact the doctors and nurses on the stage now "attending to me" and further that I was still holding the poison in my bodies. Her tidbits of information were enough to open the door. The rest was up to me. I knew then that I had to journal my way to some inner healing.

I wrote about telling the hospital doctor about the burping and belching discomforts I had had since my gall bladder was removed some 15 years ago. And of the doctor telling me that each time I went back to eating just apples and oatmeal I was in effect self-medicating my chronic pancreatitis for all that time. The doctor explained how my liver duct, which was used by the liver and pancreas was blocked and that both my liver and pancreas were inflamed because they were blocked. He told me the remedy was a procedure whereby the surgeon would put a camera probe down my throat and into my stomach so that he could see the blocked duct and remove the blockage, which were likely stones. He assured me that when the bile and enzymes could flow freely again, my recovery would be fast, and that I would be a new woman in short order.

But deeper than this perfunctory healing, I knew there was a core memory playing in the background of my psyche and that it was something about being

poisoned and dying. I wanted to see why this happened, and how that experience has something to do with my current writing block.

My reflective muse next took me to a Greek seaside village. I wrote about being paid a small stipend to be The Scribe - the one to record official and community events for the people. I lived alone in a small one room home under the seats of an amphitheatre. My life focused around writing a news sheet most mornings and mingling outdoors with the people in the afternoon and evenings. I taught those who wanted to learn their letters, debated philosophy with others, and shared my spiritual understanding with those who asked.

My refusal to record the deaths of the two Senators as accidental got me in trouble with the Governor. From listening to the people, I knew these men, despite their high office, were working with the underground to free the people from the political agendas of the temple oracles. When the Governor, through eavesdropping, learned of my alliance with the underground resistance, I was closely monitored and called the loyal leader of the opposition.

In short order, the temple oracles decreed that wooden wedges were to be placed between my fingers such that I could no longer write and that I would have a government caretaker to feed and assist me. As word of this silencing and monitoring spread, my influence and inspiration grew to such an extent that temple and government officials began to fear a revolution.

It was then decided that I should be made sick with poor quality and even rancid food. When the "bad" food did not slow me down enough for the governor to rest easy, he next plotted to have the oracle decree that I should be given a particularly bitter herb to improve my declining health. The plan was to restrain my body and pour hemlock poison down my throat with the help of a tube. The official record would read that I choked while being given a medicinal herb.

In the roughly two hours that it took for the poison to its work, my body convulsed with seething anger about what was happening and how I could do nothing to stop the course of the poison. I vowed to expose the reprehensible decrees from the oracle and to never trust those with power again. I died with hemlock poison in my body and poisonous thoughts in my mind.

As my muse receded a bit and I rested, I pondered the memory that surfaced and marveled at how so much of my present life repeated the memory.

My years of writing about government meetings for the local paper came to mind immediately. And I was struck with the parallel of self-medicating my chronic pancreatitis and coping with the "bad food" from my caregiver. I saw the writer's block I had wrestled with all fall as a bleed-through from this memory that said my writing would cause my death again. I saw how my body recognized those who had restrained me in the past, and automatically fought them again as they

worked to hold me still. Nor did template of my throwing up the bad food of the past and the drugs for the CT scan escape my attention.

And I saw the emotional repeats as well. I noted how bitterly I resented any misuse of power and reasoned it was safer to control and restrain myself than to ever risk having anyone else control me.

It gave me great pause to note that the play had replayed to where it was time for the same players to put a tube down my throat again. A chill came when I thought about how long I had self-medicated and refused to see a doctor, hoping to put off the inevitable.

I knew it was up to me to see my mental and emotional resistance to having the doctors put anything down my throat again as programming from the past and let it go. I knew my healing was about receiving all of their healing care with gratitude. And with the support and guidance of many, most notably Ia, I was able to do just that.

It is now nearly six weeks since my ERCP (short for Endoscopic retrograde Cholangiopancreatography) surgery, and I am pleased to tell you I am healthier and stronger than I have been in a long time. Seeing these relevant parts of my history has given me a much greater understanding of my programming and the chance to let the past poisons go. True healing requires looking beyond the surface.