



DENVER CENTER FOR ANTHROPOSOPHIC THERAPIES

Three Paragraph Newsletter-late March 2020

Breathing in the Time of a Pandemic

I've been thinking a lot about the novel coronavirus and its illness, COVID-19, and the fact that it generally does not seem to be such a severe illness for children. That fact is unusual. We generally worry about children becoming more ill with a new virus because they have not encountered it before. The seemingly continuous "six-month-cold" that virtually every child gets when she begins school or daycare is really the repeated process of working through one infection after another. There is a whole repertoire of respiratory viruses they have never met before. With each illness process immunity builds, and in time, the inflammatory reaction becomes brisker and the child more resilient. As adults, we are surely exposed to those same viruses and bacteria all the time, but have gained protection, gained "experience" around working with them. We therefore do not have the same repeated symptoms. But meeting the coronavirus seems to be different, almost opposite. No one has existing protection from this virus--that is why it is labelled as "novel"—and yet, young age seems to be of physiologic benefit. There is something about the way younger children get sick that we should pay attention to.

What characterizes the way a young child gets ill? Honesty. When sick, they don't try to hide it or power through it. They get a fever, or vomit, or are flushed or pale very quickly, get a runny nose with lots of mucus that drips out. They get diarrhea, and when they cough and sneeze it flies out, a total release (try teaching a two-year-old to cough into his elbow). This is not to say that we shouldn't cough into our elbow--we should--but children process and release very honestly and flexibly and directly. They detox well. Different recent news reports about the WHO cautioning against the use of ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatories when you have the coronavirus speak to this aspect. Blocking or suppressing inflammation does not seem to help. Anthroposophically, we can say that children are much more metabolic, more strongly connected with processes of digestion and detox and release. In contrast, adults are much more nerve-sense, which makes us prone to be too cool, too awake and fearful, too structured and retentive. So, for this illness, working to soften, loosen, and breathe out is essential. With so much fear and so many unknown aspects we are all taking huge in-breaths, but we need to remember to breathe out. Children do this naturally and honestly. Stress them out and they will predictably get a cold and need to rest and sneeze and sleep and soften.

Being exhausted from so much worry is not a good way to prepare for getting ill. Predictions show it is likely that 40-60% of us will get ill with the coronavirus. So, if it is a coin flip, how do you prepare? How do you keep breathing? Body, soul and spirit are connected, and worry influences immunity. Worry burdens immunity. Here are some suggestions for how to breathe-out:

- Breathe fresh air every day. Keep your social distancing but feel the breeze or the sun or the rain on your face.

- Do some cleaning. Clear out a closet. Going through the conscious process of recognizing “this really isn’t part of what I need and I can get rid of it” mirrors the immunologic process of meeting and clearing out a virus. Be less burdened (this is especially good if you are having to spend a lot of time in your house...)
- If there is something on your mind and you keep thinking about it over and over, act on it. Make a step to do it, or release it. Determine, “is part of me?” or is it not? This time of late Spring is archetypally a time when those kinds of questions come anyway, in any year, and signal a time when the heaviness of what is old can be shed.
- Create some time each day when you really engage and do something purposeful, accomplish a task (an activity breathe-in) and also time when you stop and do nothing (an activity breathe-out). Computers and movies do not count for either.

This might seem insignificant in the face of an unknown, unpredictably life-threatening illness, but we cannot hold our collective breath for two weeks, or two months, or eighteen months. That is clear.

Small children live each day with fresh eyes, and release. That gesture can help us.

Wishing you health and safety in the days and weeks to come,

Dr. Blanning

A reminder of other resources:

Recent guide to [*Working with the Flu*](#)

Also an article about [*Why Trying Harder Doesn't Make Anxiety Better*](#)

Very practical guidance for Parents and Caregivers about [*Working with Fever*](#)

Nursing Support and External Applications for Fever and Chest Congestion: Natural treatments you can do at home

Nursing Support and External Applications for Fever and Chest Congestion: Natural treatments you can do at home

Thursday, April 2nd 8:30pm EST/7:30pm CST/6:30pm MST/5:30pm PST via Zoom Webinar

Presented by the North American Anthroposophic Nurses Association (NAANA)

Open to the public and all who are interested!

A practical teaching webinar sharing uses, needed materials and application methods for a lemon leg wrap, foot bath treatment, chamomile inhalation and ginger chest compress. There are not enough Anthroposophic nurses and doctors to meet the coming need, so we hope to share these treatments with a broad community of individuals capable of efficiently providing supportive home care for family members and loved ones.

This webinar does require registration; donations are requested and appreciated to

support the Anthroposophic Nursing work, which has had to cancel its annual training week and is facing a significant shortfall. [Click here to register](#)

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