

## A Heart-felt Blog

Everyone loves good news and when it seems to come out of nowhere, the surprise factor somehow seems to make it that much sweeter. In light of my profession as a preventative health care practitioner, I couldn't have bubbled any more with joyful receptivity at the recent good news about my heart health. Besides, methinks it is a particularly fitting subject to mark the occasion of my first blog, some might say desperately needed to liven up my website.

Let me preface by saying if someone were to ask me if I thought that one particular disease stood out as being the likely cause for my ultimate demise, I would have to admit that heart disease would easily roll off my tongue. Not because it's killing millions of women each year, rather because it knocks on a door, close to home. I'm referring to family deaths like my mother, her mother, brother, etc. all dying of either heart attack or stroke. This is the Blood Type A side of the family, so pointed out because statistically, you see, heart disease claims the lives of more Type As.

So what is it that I had done? I had a clinical test on the Arterial Pulse Wave Analyzer which is very fine 21<sup>st</sup> century technology that uses a finger probe to observe changes in pressure, blood flow and velocity. I sat comfortably for 5 minutes with my finger snugly clamped with lines connected to a computer and on the monitor the tester and I could watch my arterial pulses graphically recorded, much like an electrocardiogram. A point of clarification though . . . I kept my eyes closed all the while, smiling down on my heart and envisioning a strong beating heart with blood navigating effortlessly through healthy blood vessels.

I was told that the report ultimately would provide information such as heart rate variability (low HRV points to higher mortality) or put quite plainly in laymen's terms, it would either point to premature stiffening of large, small and peripheral arteries or other signs of arterial wall abnormality, or not. Of course I was hoping for the latter.

Some of you, who are more savvy about health matters, have come across technology that determines the biological age of a person's organs or body systems. It really makes a person sit up tall when they are told that their body's biological age is 65 when the subject being tested is 40 years old. An announcement like that would be quite sobering, wouldn't you agree?

Well as I've already alluded in my opening, I was the recipient of good news so here it comes . . . my arteries, measured in several different ways, were proclaimed to be 30 years old, biologically speaking. To appreciate the significance I must of course tell you that I'm in my 53<sup>rd</sup> year. And my mother had quadruple bypass at age 56.

Ironically, receiving such uplifting news, I suppose, could instigate a steep rise in blood pressure so the celebration I chose in my mind's eye was more of a resounding hissing yesssss as opposed to a jumping up and down eureka! Now I have to admit

that the peripheral arteries (not the large or small arteries but just the little tributaries) were a hair below normal on the test. Well that only makes the technology believable because I can tell you that dad's passed down spider varicose veins are no stranger to my legs.

Those who know me well as the barracuda intent on gobbling up as much knowledge as possible in the fascinating world of natural health won't be surprised to watch me speculate as to why my arteries have earned such a fine report card. At first my mind raced to the top five reasons why I would be blessed with good arterial health, at this time, since good genetics didn't seem to provide the most solid foundation.

If you are curious enough to continue reading, please bear in mind that my musings are simply that, reflections of all of the possibilities. I'm exploring accountability. I truly don't believe that I could be so definitive as to conclude that my 80/20 adherence to the blood type diet or the fact that I've consumed dozens of litres of potent whole-food green smoothies the past seven months would account for the 30-year-old arteries. However, I certainly believe my diet provided the solid foundation for a healthy cardiovascular system.

Since the days of my own chronic illness with fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, environmental sensitivities, and candidiasis (this is just a short list), my investigation of what natural health had to offer always followed a winding path back to a good diet. The problem was, of course, defining exactly what that was. I may be closer to knowing what's best for me than ever before; however, I truly believe that we have to discover for ourselves, or in a sense revisit the options based on where we are in life.

At the time that I first learned about microorganisms which were causing every dimension of inflammation in my body, I didn't even know that there was good and bad flora in the intestines and that eating more alkalizing food as well as whole real foods instead of processed food really mattered. Not having enough digestive enzymes, the cross for As to bear, I discovered always made things worse and especially if one ate meals hurriedly or mixed starches with protein. I had to become a conscientious eater. Since my uncomfortable symptoms were ever so slowly lifting, I was encouraged to do more.

The same concept of being mindful of our food choices applies to how introspective we are in looking after our bodies. People focus too much on hair, makeup, and perfume and ignore what is happening inside of their bodies. It seems quite logical to me that good nutrients makes for nice shiny hair and clear skin; however, that logic escapes many. If the digestive system, which impacts on every other system in significant ways, is given a helping hand with routines such as ensuring sufficient fiber in the diet plus seasonal cleansing or purification – for me this is achieved with homeopathic remedies, colonics and liquid fasting -- one can only expect to see real improvements in the way they feel.

In the span of the last decade, I may have changed my mind several times about which foods to eliminate and clearly I've wrestled with the decisions about what to include more of in my diet based both on common sense and experience, eg. my body loves fresh cold-water richly oiled fish and unpasteurized goat yogurt with fresh fruit. However, I have come to realize that my research into the food industry as well as my personal experience with food I prepare and eat is all fine and well; however, my belief that all will be well hinges just as much on nurturing a spiritual life. The good health which accompanies strong arteries is accessible to those willing to go for the whole package deal.

First of all, let me say that I probably have an audience of people who embrace the holistic belief that all disease and illness has an emotional/spiritual or mental component. Those who don't know that are actually spellbound when they realize this truth as it applies to the more serious diseases, such as the many cancers related to lack of forgiveness (self or other) down to less serious conditions like stiff joints that many believe reflect one's lack of flexibility. Read Louise Hay in case this is new to you, and Dr. Christian Northrup is another excellent resource, for women's health, in particular.

If I can weave that thought back into the theme of good diet, what I'm alluding to now is my suggestion that it's always best to find happiness (actually claim happiness would be better stated), and that includes being happy with our food choices. I would be remiss to not mention that one's appreciation for the food we have to enjoy today is key. You've heard some people make comments like "there's no calories in that chocolate cake" to break up the negative energy associated with guilt. Some people encourage us to "bless your food" so as to raise the positive energy. I agree with both points of view plus I highly recommend that people get passionate about their food and allow the appreciation for organic garden-fresh food or perhaps the masterpiece they've created in the kitchen with their own hands, to resonate positively.

Getting back to those spunky youthful arteries that must surely be noticing that different organs in their midst may not appear to be holding up quite as well. Ahem, my tongue markings don't yet show a completely rejuvenated liver and I think Chinese Medicine practitioners might agree that my spleen is damp; however, I'll take whatever good news I can get because since I turned 50, as my daughters will attest, I suddenly chose to become immortal. At 52, becoming the Green Smoothie Goddess, I announced that my next birthday would make me 10 years younger. It's coming in August . . . zzzzip . . . my body's biological age is heading for 43, I can feel it. Reminds me of the time we switched the number candles on my best friend's birthday cake when she turned 34. When she clued into our prank, we heartily exclaimed: "wow, Edith, you look great for 43!"

Let's turn our attention to mindset, for a moment. What about our thoughts? Where our thoughts go, energy follows, as they say. My interpretation of that as it relates to the subject at hand is that the more we let go of resistance which is thought that

makes us criticize or dread or not want to do things, the more in alignment we become with who we are and our destiny, and this clearly has a lot to do with good blood flow. The more "in the flow" I am about all of the good things being manifested in my life, my arteries have no choice but to cooperate.

About a year and a half ago, when my attention was drawn clearly to the ominous very prominent left lateral quadrant marking in my eye (a red heart line in the sclera) I joked, in the company of my peers taking a Sclerology class, that it was my self-employment line. I began taking Holy Basil to "reduce the negative effects of overproduction of cortisol" which simply means helping to protect my heart by canceling too much fight or flight hormone before it causes damages the heart muscle and cardiovascular system.

I also discovered the meaning of rest and relaxation so I choose to do more of that. My activities also include sacred circle dance which is full of laughter and play. And I'm listening to my tapes and reading books that are all making me feel that much more in sync with life and living. New friends and new opportunities are coming into my life as a result.

If I might get a bit clinical again, my metabolic profile and BMI done around the same time in 2006 showed a shift just past the normal range for fat cells. For most of my life this was never really an issue; however, my genotype (D'Adamo's new book) interestingly points to thrifty metabolism as a keynote for the type I have been matched to. In plainest terms, the youthful slender Warrior genotype turns into a saggy jawed, barrel-chested pudg if they don't pay close attention to diet and exercise. Hilary Clinton is my type (also Peter D'Adamo's) and you betcha, I'm watching her profile closely on the US primaries. D'Adamo's looking pretty spiffy because he knows what to do to look as good as he does.

I decided then to take action to shift bad habits, like snacking just before bed and long periods of sitting at the computer which quite frankly defines me, when I'm not running amuck on the road. Oops, you caught me red-handed because the toffee bowl is right beside me and it's 1 a.m. Guilty as charged? No, wait, I've decided to let go of that thought because I have been doing my tai chi and slowly getting back to my walks – brrr, it's cold out there. My metabolic rate is much improved because of that. And besides, not all toffee is equal. This one was made with agave nectar, no white death sugar in the house, and plenty healthy alkalizing almonds, soaked in order to be easily digested. Even the fat is a healthy saturate which I can handle in little bites.

Yes, I'm having a lot of fun writing this diatribe -- so much so that my serotonin levels have improved which is contributing to improved blood flow and viscosity. Point made . . . humour produces good feeling endorphins and that relaxes the body causing stress relief. I need this because clearly my blog is feeling water logged. Ok, I can be serious now to conclude this endless exploration pertaining to defining the whys and

wherefores that might account for the elasticity in my ever lovin' arteries and lack of plaque.

Now without delving too deeply into the world of quantum physics, I would be amiss, as I wind down, to not sneak in mention of the importance of opening up one's heart chakra. There are numerous ways of doing this and anyone can do it without having to mediate for hours or embark on a shamanistic spiritual journey in a land far away. In quite simple terms, my understanding of how I can benefit from having this energy centre (what a chakra is) more open and expanded is that my daily living will encompass more love, security and confidence.

They say perfect love casts out fear and fear keeps company with anger, greed and selfishness. We all know that negative emotions weigh heavily on our vital organs, eg. anger resides in the liver and fear in the kidneys. Weakened organs of elimination do not a strong heart make.

Some 16 months ago, at Enlightened Warrior camp at the foot of the Catskill Mountains in Ellenville, N.Y., I spent plenty of time engaged in making eye contact; singing and dancing along heart themes; making decisions from and expressing feelings through the heart. Sounds a bit whacky and playful . . . yeah, it was. Yet the enlightenment which shone through our activated heart centers or chakras gave rise to the power within, making way for the emergence of the Warrior within. In case you may have noticed, yes, I'm twice a Warrior since the discovery of my Warrior genotype. Once you learn about the six types, there is the Teacher, Explorer, Nomad, etc. it won't be as confusing. Stay tuned for an announcement about that! :o)

The legendary Warrior (the Samurai type) is characterized as being strong and possessing the sure-footedly skills of climbing, jumping, and maneuvering through challenging terrain not due to their athletic prowess rather trusting and believing in themselves and recognizing the connection through mass consciousness with others. We had tribes at Enlightened Warrior Camp who were our families.

I developed an appreciation deep within of the "sameness" of people. How we felt like we were all in it together – having to rise above the circumstances we encountered that were clearly fear-based and in the process of reaching above, reclaiming the power of love. We cared about each other and focused on what each of us had inside that could safely be brought to the forefront. Now that's definitely an experience I will always cherish in my heart.

So when I talk to people – my clients, colleagues, friends and loved ones – about the connection between physical illness and emotional, spiritual and mental well being, I'm not just whistling Dixie. I'm saying, whatever it takes to get you to a place you want to be. For me, having a very positive outlook about my healthy cardiovascular system is something I am very thankful for. Yes, I can admit now that going into the test, I figured it was a 50-50 chance of good new/bad news. A classic case of whodathunk.

Here's another gold nugget . . . appreciation is one of the strongest vibrations that will always move you forward. And it's a different vibration than gratitude which has its place, too, however, consider that it ties you closer to what was "wrong" being "righted" as opposed to appreciating all of the good which has always been ours to claim. And the "true secret" is that our emotional guidance system easily takes us to the door of appreciating all that we have. And appreciation attracts more good things to appreciate.

Perhaps I will hear (and be given permission to share) your thoughts about wellness. My story may mirror someone else's concern about cancer in the offspring or diabetes, MS, maybe even Alzheimer's disease. With illnesses in our modern world running rampant, I could easily list a page full that have people spinning. Oh and for William Shatner of Boston Legal fame, a plug for Mad Cow disease.

The thought for the day I'd like to leave you with is consider where you've been and where you are going. We have a new year and in numerology it's a 1 representing everyone's opportunity to claim for themselves, what they want in life – we are all number 1. If I've sparked your interest in bringing a new reverence to food or made you contemplate finding a buddy to accompany you on walks, or whatever warm and fuzzy has been ignited, then I've happily launched my first blog with good intent AND results.

With heart-felt love and appreciation,  
Helen