

## **Learning to Stress Well.<sup>1</sup>**

Becoming Bigger Than....That Which No Longer Serves Me

by Mary Elaine Kiener

When I consider the concept of "transcending"--the 12th dimension of the wellness wheel--I often think in terms of that which is greater, bigger than or beyond our individual selves. Within that context, we might easily talk of "the divine" or the impact of our individual decisions and actions on future generations. However, a recent experience has led me to understand this dimension in a totally different and intimately transformative way.

My friend's eyes were brimming with anticipation as we moved to greet each other with a hug. In a hushed tone, she eagerly asked, "How IS everything?" while I disconcertedly recalled the "some" thing embedded within her more generic inquiry about "every" thing. "Well.....not so good," I quietly responded. "But", she protested, "you were so happy and excited, with such a glow about you." Her disappointment graciously reaffirmed how contagious my own enthusiastic optimism had been during our last conversation, a few weeks earlier. Ah, yes--I guess I was. Then. Now, the situation had become simply "what it is", with its ultimate meaning and outcome suspended in uncertainty.

At some other point in time, I might have been tempted to regale her with drama-filled stories of what, how and why the once hope-filled situation had unfolded into its present circumstances. Fortunately, our "catch-up" time was interrupted as the meeting we had come to attend got called to order.

As the morning's meeting progressed (and my mind occasionally wandered), I recalled my friend's memories of my earlier outward manifestations of anticipation, playfulness, hope and inner joy. Without realizing it at first, I also began to relinquish the previously-held drama within the situational details.

Gradually, I noticed a warm inner glow inside--as if those positive emotions had permeated some of the blessed spaciousness that was now available. Then came a gentle shift--as that now-glowing inner space began to widen into a quiet--yet persistent--invitation: "How might I continue to nurture these positive, playful, hopeful and joy-filled feelings inside--whether or not the originally hoped-for outcome ever occurs?"

The next morning at church, I walked to the front of the sanctuary to light a candle, initially prompted by a momentary sadness about the still-unresolved situation. Within a few steps forward, however, that sadness gently transcended into a fresh glow of gratitude.

No matter what happens within the larger context of the entire situation, I have welcomed a new-found wellspring of life-forwarding energy, compassion and joy. I now accept the responsibility to live and act from that deep, inner place of love--thus bringing me full circle within the never-ending spiral of learning to stress well.

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<sup>1</sup> Kiener, M.E. (2015, December). Learning to Stress Well. Becoming Bigger Than....That Which No Longer Serves Me. *Sibyl Magazine. For the Spirit and Soul of Woman*. Retrieved from [www.sibylmagazine.com](http://www.sibylmagazine.com).