

## Practice Tending to the Pool

Practice, practice, practice. We get loads of practice in any given day at steering ourselves back to center. Something happens and we respond with worried thoughts, predictions about what will happen next. Any number of old habits of response, maybe irritation comes up or fear or worry. And here we are—again—hooked. Back in the murky waters of discomfort.

If you have a pool to swim in you know the joy of dipping into the fresh, cool water on these hot and humid days. You know the pleasure of floating near the surface and feeling the water hold you up. You know the sheer joy of watching your family jumping/splashing/playing in water.

You also know very well that bugs and leaves and sand and algae settle into the pool. The bottom of the pool gets dirty. Bugs, moths, leaves float on the top of the water.

It's not the fault of the bugs or the sand.

It's not the fault of the person tending to the pool.

It's certainly not the case that the water is faulty in some way for "attracting" the little bits that find their way into the water.

We would never believe the story that "if only I had a better pool it wouldn't collect leaves".

You don't vacuum the pool once at the start of the summer season and expect that it will stay clean and clear all summer.

When you have the privilege of having a pool you know that it requires tending to—ongoing loving attention. You fully and completely accept that the joys of swimming in a pool come with the need to care for the pool and the water.

You regularly monitor the pool, the water, the hoses, the filter system. When you notice the water level is low, you add water. When you notice "floaters" you use the net thingy with the long handle to skim the bits off the top of the water. When the skimmer is full you dump it out. You check the chemical balance of the water and add pool chemicals as needed.

You know that if you were to stop paying attention to the needs of the pool algae and dirt and muck would take hold, making it a bigger job to clean. Daily tending with care and attention keeps your pool clear and refreshing.

You also know the joy of being human, with a body, mind and soul that is so wondrous. When we are feeling strong and healthy it comes easy to rejoice in our bodies. We know the sheer joy of a clear mind and a happy soul. If we're mindful we savour the happiness and peace in our lives.

It's also true that we are inevitably going to have aches and pains and injuries to our bodies. We will have worry, fear and sadness. Our minds will naturally get stuck on a worry track. For one reason or another we'll touch a nerve—a hot spot. And we will feel it viscerally. We are all activated (worked up)

by something, somewhere. We might be hooked by money, or trust, or scarcity or work ethic, or...or...or...

When this happens do we find ourselves (or others) faulty in some way?

Do we believe old stories like: "I shouldn't feel this way" or "By this point in my life I should..."?

Do we tend to these "hot spots" once and have some expectation that they will never snag us again? (I wish!)

Just like the pool benefits from ongoing attention and care. And just like the dirty paw prints need sweeping—yet again. And just like the pile of dishes need washing—yet again. And just like the weeds need pulling—yet again. We also benefit from showing ourselves regular care, attention and tending to—yet again.

Regularly checking in with our own landscape (remember the "Weather Check In"). Plus over and over and over, again and again, coming home to the practices that care for us and our hot spots.

This is all part of being human. We benefit from kind and attentive observation. We also need "tending to" with care and loving attention. Care of self is not unlike tending to and caring for our pool. Simple, but not easy.

Warmly,

Becky and Shelley

P.S. If I had my life to live over, I'd spend more time floating on my back in the water.

