

Column #4-2004:

Dear I.O.W.A.:

### *Spring in the mud...*

Spring on the farm is great when it isn't too muddy. However, with the rains comes the mud and when it is on the cooler side of temperatures, newborn calves do not get up and nurse quickly like they do on warm, dry days. Consequently, as in this spring, we have more calves not nursing; some are on the bottle and some are being tube fed. It may take a week to get a calf up and going on its mother. So, the pens are full of special needs moms and babies.

One calf was stepped by accident in the pen as the mother was upset. This calf has two broken legs, both in the back. One is in a cast and the other break is so high up that the vet cannot cast it. We're still not sure if we are going to be able to save this baby. In the meantime, my husband gets the baby up twice a day and feeds it, first on the bottle and now on the mother. The mother is quite calm, thank goodness, and she eats her food while my husband holds the calf up next to her to nurse.

Now the baby is starting to get up on his own and this morning I coached the mother to come to the baby—with food, of course! But, for the first time, the baby actually nursed on his own, without being held. We're hopeful...now, if we could just get the others to start nursing on their own, it would be a big relief!

My wardrobe during calving is pretty much limited to three pairs of sweat pants, a chore coat and outside coveralls. Sometimes I change three times a day, so there is always something being washed and dried!

When the mud came in over the top of my chore boots, I knew it was time to get out my knee-highs. With mud this deep, it is easy to see why calves get in trouble trying to nurse. We will welcome some warmer, dry weather.

### *Lemon-Shrimp Couscous Risotto*

2 1/2 cups water

1 can (14 oz.) fat-free chicken broth (you decide: regular or less sodium)

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 cup chopped green onions

1 cup uncooked couscous

1 1/2 tsp. Grated lemon rind

1/2 tsp. Salt

1/4 tsp. Pepper

8 ounces medium shrimp, cooked and peeled

1/2 cup grated fresh Parmesan  
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, flat type if available

Simmer the water and broth; keep warm. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Sauté onions 2 minutes. Add couscous. Cook 2 minutes; stir constantly. Stir in 1 cup broth mixture, rind, salt and pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until liquid is nearly absorbed. Add remaining broth mixture, 1/2 cup at a time; stir constantly until each portion is absorbed before adding the next. Add shrimp. Cook 2 minutes; stir constantly. Remove from heat; stir in cheese and parsley. Serves 4. From *Health*, April 2004, p. 144.

### ***Principles of Mind-Body Integration Therapeutic Techniques for Wholeness***

For five days this past month I had the wonderful opportunity to study and work with Anodea Judith from California. We looked at the basic seven chakras, which are roughly equivalent to the nerve ganglia at the top of the head, in the middle of the forehead, in the throat, in the chest, just below the breastbone, in the abdomen, and at the base, or the pelvic floor area. We studied where the “charge” was moving or stuck in the energetic body and practiced different movements to help discharge the excess “charge.” One entire day was devoted to armoring, which is our body’s defense system, and looking in depth at various ways we are traumatized, even by accident, as children. We then looked at symptomatology in interpreting illnesses and worked at integrating our learnings through practice sessions.

I especially appreciate the mind-body bridge in this therapeutic approach and the somatic therapy exercises encompass yoga and qigong as well as meditation and visualizations. All of these help us understand the communication from our body and talking communication is such a small part overall. The body is “our unconscious mind” and it holds the trauma, the injury, the “whatever it is that happened to me” and it is from the body that the message is given. Our job is to watch and to listen as the body speaks. The workshop was a great experience and also an opportunity to make some new friends!

One exercise I really liked uses my big exercise ball and by lying backward over the side of it, this helps open up my chest so that I breathe better. For people who sit in front of a computer for hours at a time, it is really easy to become “collapsed” in the chest, thereby reducing the ability of the lungs to draw in fresh air.

### ***Spicy Steamed Broccoli with Green Olives***

Be sure to lightly steam the broccoli to keep the pretty green color.  
2 pounds broccoli, trimmed and cut into spears.  
2 small garlic cloves, minced  
2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar  
1/2 cup pitted green olives, roughly chopped  
1 small fresh red chili pepper, minced

1/2 tbsp. lemon juice  
2 green onions, chopped

Steam broccoli just until crisp and tender, maybe 4 minutes. In the meantime, combine garlic, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, olives, chili pepper, lemon juice, and green onion in a small bowl. To serve, toss steamed broccoli with olive sauce and serve at room temperature. From *Body & Soul*, April 2004, p. 86.

### *My chickens...*

At last, a friend of one of my friends came to the rescue of my extra roosters and they are going to a new home in the country with folks who like roosters! I had an offer to send them to a swap meet, which I turned down. It didn't sound like the roosters could go straight from my home to a new home and I would rather not stress them too much in being moved. So, this is working out just fine and soon they will be out on grass and waking up their new owners with their wonderful early morning crowing. Yes, I realize some folks don't like roosters crowing in the morning. But to me, it is a comforting sound, something I can count on day after day, steady and predictable.

My neighbor took a dozen of my eggs to incubate and soon it will be time to see what hatches. I picked a nice variety of eggs, brown, green and blue, so every chick should be uniquely marked. Can't wait to see the differences!

### *The Book Corner...*

*Chakra Balancing* by Anodea Judith, published in 2004, contains a workbook and 2 cds, and in a very condensed manner walks us through the seven chakras, providing exercises in which we draw our response in colors to the questions relative to a particular chakra. In addition, on one of the cd's is a morning and evening practice of yoga which covers seven different variations of the Sun Salutation, one for each of the main chakras.

The chapter on the root chakra covers an introduction to the chakra so that we have an idea about it along with characteristics of excess and deficiency. There are suggestions on how to deepen our connection to the chakra including focusing on our body: diet, exercise, and medical attention, along with a discussion of the endocrine system gland involved in the chakra. Additional information is provided re: home, work, family, and environment, along with a focus on grounding. Psychological issues are covered followed by a section on healing and balancing the chakra, including looking at Feng Shui and activities, practices such as yoga, massage, and bioenergetic grounding stance.

Each chapter ends with a chakra assessment in which we have an opportunity to assess our strengths and weaknesses, to set goals, and to determine the best tools or exercises for the particular chakra. This little book (about 100 pages) along with the 2 cds makes a great introduction to thinking about our chakras and is a quite interesting read. If you haven't yet studied the chakra system, please consider doing so.

### *Holism.... The Poet's Corner...*

This month I am featuring the writings of Celeste Bowman, my writer-turned rancher friend in Texas. She used to live in Houston where she was also active in local theatre. Now she lives on a small “ranch” in Texas where she has built a cabin. She has 3 cows and 3 horses and more work to do than she ever imagined when she lived in the suburbs. She has been twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. In her very spare free time, she studies watercolor and really loves painting. Her poem brings to mind the need to do what we can to help the world-wide community of women. Consider supporting groups such as the *Global Fund for Women* based in San Francisco ([www.globalfundforwomen.org](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org)).

#### *Sisters*

Her French nails turned out so  
badly, she laments, she should  
have stayed with acrylics, and her  
ex-husband's wife just got a new  
Porsche, paid *cash*, and if they'd  
only take the children this weekend,  
she could go to the Met, wear her  
Vera Wang, maybe meet a man,  
*finally*.

\* \* \*

She digs in Honduran mud,  
searches for scraps, shoulder  
to shoulder with hogs, but finds  
nothing that's not rotted, and for  
another day, she cannot feed her  
children, and the sores on her feet  
crust with pus beneath the caked  
mud and blood, and her parched  
tongue cracks in her mouth.

#### *Women's Knees...*

“Women are six to eight times as likely to sustain knee injuries as men.” With this in mind, we might consider three knee exercises featured in this month's *Health* magazine at page 62: Hamstring Curls, straight leg raises, and wall squats.

Hamstring curls: “Attach one end of an elastic exercise band to a pole or the leg of a heavy piece of furniture, and tie the other end around your ankle. Stand facing the pole, so the band is pulled tight. Keeping your hips stationary, slowly pull your leg back, bending your knee. You should feel a slight burn in the back of your thigh. Switch legs.”

Straight leg raises: “Lying on your back with your legs straight, slowly raise one leg off the floor for a count of 1 or 20 seconds, then very gently lower it back down. Switch legs. To challenge yourself further, add ankle weights for more resistance—start with 3 pounds, and gradually work your way up to 8.”

Wall squats: “Stand with your back against a wall, with heels just over a foot away from the wall, and a medium-size ball (a soccer ball or basketball will do) between your knees. Squeeze the ball as you slowly slide down the wall until your knees are as close to a 90 degree angle as is comfortable. Count to 3, then slide back up.”

**Remember: in all exercises, consult your doctor and listen to your body, exercise is to help, not hurt!**

That’s it for this month. It’s gardening time!!! ‘Til next time when we’ll explore more on body-mind-spirit issues affecting our health in “The WellFem-in-Law™” column.

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