

Balance with Grace

A monthly newsletter by Grace Durfee, personal coach

Volume 10, Issue #1, February 2010, *Open Hearts*

How do you hug? I know this is a rather odd question, but think about it for a moment. Do you put your arms around someone with your head toward the left and their head toward your right, or is it just the opposite? Perhaps because I'm right-handed, it's always been my habit to hug toward the left. However, I've recently learned that hugging toward the right is best because this puts your heart right next to theirs. While it still feels a bit awkward to change a long-engrained pattern, it feels as if heart-to-heart hugs foster a deeper connection. The next time you go to hug someone (with today being Valentine's Day, I hope there's a lot of hugging going on) remember, "Right is right" and hug in that direction to open your heart to the other person.

You may be thinking, "Whoa! I'm not going to open my heart to another. That's too risky." We've probably all experienced the pain of a broken heart at one time or another. In order to keep from being hurt again, you may have chosen to protect yourself by not allowing your heart to be open and vulnerable. While a certain degree of guardedness can be a good thing, for instance, not getting into a car with a stranger or taking on someone else's misery can be wise self-preservation. However, closing your heart off pushes people away and can lead to loneliness and lack of intimate, meaningful connection.

Opening our hearts can make a positive difference in our lives and relationships. An open heart increases our ability to love, to forgive, to be generous and compassionate. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, when your heart is open to love, when you feel worthy of being loved (all love must begin with self-love), when you come from a place of love, that's what you attract.

In addition to hugging the "right" way, there are a number of other practices that can help us open our hearts. An easy place to start is to look at how you comport or carry yourself. Do you sit or stand with shoulders slumped, chest caved in, and head forward? A simple adjustment of bringing your shoulder back and down while raising your sternum will open you up and will have the added benefits of making you look taller and feel more confident.

If you are a yoga practitioner, there are many yoga poses that are heart-openers: Bridge, Wheel, Cobra, Upward-facing Dog, Fish, Bow, Camel, Gate, and Crescent are a few that come to mind. A typical yoga class will alternate forward bending or contracting postures with backwards bending or expanding counter-poses. If you've had some yoga instruction and want to practice at home, create your own sequences of folding and opening postures, letting your breath initiate each movement, inhaling with expansions and exhaling with contractions.

A simple body prayer that I learned during a local coaching conference session from Gabriele Ganswindt is another lovely heart-opener:

"May I receive" –hands stretched out overhead in a "V"

"What I need to nourish myself"—hands crossed over heart

“To give what I have to give”—Uncross hands and hold with palms facing upwards
“To serve”—Bring hands together in front of the heart in prayer position

May these ways of physically opening your heart help you also open on the emotional and spiritual levels. Happy Valentine’s Day!

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## **Programs**

### **Wellness Day at North Parish**

March 6<sup>th</sup> (snowdate March 20<sup>th</sup>)

190 ACADEMY ROAD

NORTH ANDOVER, MA

11-5 PM

\$25 if pre-registered by February 27

\$30 at door

For more information or to pre-register, contact Susan Van Drie at [susanvandrie@mindspring.com](mailto:susanvandrie@mindspring.com) 978•886•3311

This is the second year I’ve helped co-ordinate this fundraiser. Wellness Day includes a light lunch, at least one individual session of coaching, Reiki, massage or other body work, and over 20 workshops including: Five-Minute Energy Routine, Stress, Health & Coping Mechanisms, Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine for Women, Exercise & Back Pain, Conscious Eating, Create Your Vision Board, How to Get the Most from your Healthcare Provider, Your BodyStory, Animal Totem Cards

### **Group Mentor Coaching with a BALANCED approach**

If you are launching or wanting to increase your coaching business, this is the ideal group for you. Based on the premise that growing yourself is crucial to business success, this group will focus on business and personal growth as well as coaching skill development. The group will help you clarify your unique offering, attract clients, break through limiting beliefs, and gain confidence by recognizing and expanding your existing skills. This group meets by phone three Thursdays a month 8:30-9:30 a.m. Cost and commitment: \$200 a month for a minimum of three months with a one-time \$25 materials fee for *Success with Grace: Grow a Profitable and Fulfilling Coaching Business*, a 97-page practice-building workbook

### **Get Clients Now!™**

#### **Kickoff Seminar**

**Two Mondays, Mar 8 and 15, 2010**

11:00 AM-12:30 PM Pacific (2:00-3:30 PM Eastern, 7-8:30 PM GMT on Mar 8, 6:00-7:30 PM GMT on Mar 15)\*

#### **Group Sessions**

**Four Mondays, Mar 22 and 29, Apr 5 and 12, 2010**

11-11:45 AM PDT (2-2:45 PM EDT, 6-6:45 PM GMT)\*

**AND**

**One Thursday, Apr 15, 2010**

11-11:45 AM PDT (2-2:45 PM EDT, 7-7:45 PM BST)

Depending on registration, group sessions may be extended to 60 minutes each, or an alternate group may be scheduled on the same dates at 12:00 PM Pacific (3:00 PM Eastern).

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