



Summer 2012

When you know what is frightening you, you take back the power you invested in fear... Fear multiplies in anonymity; it shuns having a name. When you can name your fear, your fear begins to shrink."

John O'Donohue 'Anam Cara'

One of my first memories of being terrified was being in an aeroplane at night when I was about eight years old, flying through a lightning storm. The plane lurched and rolled, and every few moments it plunged several feet and my stomach heaved. The internal lights of the plane were dimmed and everyone around me appeared to be asleep. It was the first time I remember thinking I might die.

What interests me most about this early memory is that I didn't want to wake up my family to tell them I was scared. I had learned at a young age to keep my fear to myself. I have no doubt that if I had nudged my Mum or Dad they would have comforted and reassured me, but it just didn't occur to me to disturb them. I wasn't only frightened but I felt alone.

Everyday I watch people with cancer do what I did, keep their fear to themselves. When I ask why, some say, 'Well if I say I am scared, I'd be giving in, letting the cancer get the better of me. So I just pretend I'm not scared, put on a brave face.'

'Does that work?' I ask.

'Not really. I'm just alone then with my fears, especially at night when I can't be busy. I also feel silly having the fears, like I shouldn't have them. I even hate myself for not just enjoying life. Everyone tells me I am lucky to have my life, and to just get on with it.'

'Why not tell your partner, or your friend, or someone else that you are scared?' I ask.

The reply usually goes something like, 'Well, that will just make them scared, and then I'd have to comfort them. It's best just to keep it to myself, even if it feels lonely.'

'Don't you think they might pretending too?' I ask.

Fear becomes a wedge between people, a barrier to intimacy and connection.

In mid-May ten Callanish retreat alumni spent a week on retreat exploring their relationship with 'The Unknown,' and this past weekend we held a day retreat for a group of young adults to explore their fears.

I have seen many people at Callanish take hold of their fear, by sharing it in the circle. There is no doubt that it helps us to name what we are most afraid of to people who will listen without judgment. We learn that fear is universal, that everyone is afraid of something. It seems to distill down to two main fears: fear of dying, and fear of being ourselves.



Janie Brown
Executive Director

Life seemed perfect. Nothing could stop us from our never-ending love. We planned on getting married, having children, and growing old in our matching rocking chairs! This changed dramatically when cancer entered our lives.

All of a sudden we were not sure how long our story would last. Fear, anger, sadness, frustration and confusion was felt by ourselves and our loving friends and family around us. My Lisa was a positive woman with endless determination, strength and a great will to fight for her life. Just when you thought things were as bad as they could be, it got worse. I watched for the first time, the love of my life desperately needing help. She was in a place that I did not know how to help her out of.

We were told about the Callanish Society and it changed our lives. This was exactly what Lisa needed, a community of people focusing on nourishing the body, mind, spirit and heart. It is a non-judgmental place of support, loving-kindness, and active compassionate listening. A place where people did understand. A place you did not have to be strong. A place to be loved.

Lisa started visiting the amazing ladies at the Callanish Society in Vancouver and also participated in two life-altering retreats. I cannot put into words what this means to me. You gave much needed life to the person I love the most in the world. You did what I could not. Lisa regained her spirit and fought cancer again. I know her life was extended because of Callanish and I am forever grateful.

The loving support of Callanish has been extended to myself and Lisa's family to this day, long after her passing. Our gratitude is endless for all the cancer patients and families that you help with your selfless guidance and loving work. With love and admiration, Steve.



Steve Atkins & Lisa Johnson

While working in the Callanish kitchen last month, I again witnessed the magic of people coming together to get to the heart of living. All who come are seekers, wanting to know what is important in this life.

During the week of retreat we all, in our own way, but very much together, travel deeper into the joy and sorrow evoked by sharing the experiences of our lives.

The fact that there is pain is unavoidable. There is no answer as to 'why' bad things happen to good people. We speak and hear tragic stories of loss; loss of health and future plans, of relationships and loved ones, of innocence and trust. But when we create a circle to hold the pain and tears, we learn that we can bear it, collectively and individually. We can help each other learn to love ourselves.

My role on retreat is that of volunteer dishwasher. I have done this seven times over the past seven years. It is one of the best weeks of my year. I am always awed by the courage of people led to the far borders of comfort and safety by the diagnosis of cancer. When faced with the possibility of death, it becomes clear what is important in living; who and what matter; what is necessary to do and say.

In my worklife I am a palliative care and family doctor. My time at Callanish has let me see the 'people' behind the illnesses, without the protective barrier of 'me/us and them' – 'doctor and patient.' In fact, before Callanish, I wasn't even aware of how much separation I had created, through training and fear, between my patients and myself. I have learned that it is actually safe to care deeply, even to love, whether I am washing dishes or being a doctor, even if I don't feel I can help someone and even if they are going to die. At root we are not different from one another- healthy or ill, happy or sad, healer or patient, dishwasher, cook or therapist.

I was grateful to have the opportunity to share the experience of Callanish with four palliative care doctors in training early this year. They came to spend a day at the City Centre and to taste some of the elements of Callanish; good food, space, art, honest communication, a chance to speak their truth, and a chance to be moved by the stories of the participants.

Callanish is a healing community, woven together through the tears, laughter and love of many people. I am proud to be a part of it.



Claire Talbot

I Am Held Here

by Shannon Jonassen

I am held here
by chimichangas
turkey salad and
hazelnut double chocolate chip cookies

I am held here
by hundreds of colours,
images,
feathers,
pipe cleaners and
gentle laughter

I am held here
by fingers oh so tender
on my brow,
my cheeks,
my arms,
my legs and feet—
holding my heart as I breathe

(I am from
Marlene and Larry,
Edna May and Ross,
Jensine and Jonas.
I am from where
the Red meets the Assiniboine,
from snow and wind,
and where it hurts to breathe.
I am from blazing sun and big skies
and the electricity in the air
before a storm)

But now . . .

I am held here
by the courage
of new soul friends,
sharing their hearts,
fears, wisdom and
their precious little girls
in the circle and around the fire

I am held here
by strong and gentle hands
taking mine
as I venture into dark, dark places—
leading me out again
back into the light,
whole and home

Thank You to Kitty Heller



Kitty Heller

We are deeply honoured to have received a substantial donation from Kitty Heller who died of cancer on January 20th, 2011. The legacy of a memorial donation like this reverberates through the lives of many people who have benefited already, and who will benefit in the future, from the programs at Callanish. Although we never met Kitty, the stories of her large and fully engaged life have travelled to us through the many friends who dearly loved her. She was a lawyer and advocate for workplace human rights and developed a vast reputation for

fairness, outspokenness and tenacity. She applied these great qualities to helping her face her death with great openness, humour and dignity. We all wish we could have said, 'Thank you' to Kitty in person.



Shannon Jonassen
Retreat Participant

Thank You to Judy Stanfield

Judy had been threatening to “retire” as a Callanish volunteer for the last couple of years, but we were having none of it! We couldn’t imagine Callanish functioning without Judy. She started with us back in 1996 and at that time came on every retreat to help in the kitchen. Several days before each retreat Judy baked dozens of the infamous Callanish cookies, made six different kinds of salad dressings, and organized all the dry goods and spices we would need for a week on retreat. She and her husband Harley always donated a substantial portion of the cost of her baking for each retreat, as well as hundreds and hundreds of hours over the years. It was only this past year, after sixteen years, we finally agreed that Judy could retire!



Judy Stanfield

Judy is one of the most generous, warm-hearted, selfless people we know. Nothing was ever too much! Our endless requests were always greeted with “No problem!”

Thank you Judy for all you have done for Callanish all these years. It really has been such an incredible gift. The hundreds of cookie-eaters also say an enormous, “Thank you.”

Therapeutic Yoga at Callanish

by Danielle Schroeder

Typically when people first hear the word ‘yoga’ they immediately picture someone young, very flexible, and doing some crazy gymnastics-like yoga pose. This view often leaves people feeling intimidated and like they “can’t do yoga.” Sadly, this has been a common misunderstanding about yoga ever since it came to the West. It became popular purely as a form of exercise which demanded a certain degree of physical strength and flexibility.



Danielle Schroeder

However, at its ancient roots (dating back over 5,000 years in India), yoga was designed as a discipline appropriate for everyone which combined physical postures/exercises with breathing and meditation practices tailored to each person. Its purpose was to help restore health, a sense of balance, and heightened self-understanding at all levels - physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

I am grateful that the therapeutic yoga classes and individual sessions I began offering at Callanish-in-the-city and also on our weeklong retreats, are able to align with this more traditional and original approach to yoga.

In particular, the classes are small and intimate which allows me to adjust the practice to meet the unique needs of each person who comes, and thereby make the experience accessible to everyone. In our sessions I blend breath-work, gentle stretching and strengthening, restorative yoga postures (supported with blankets, pillows, and other props), hands-on healing, and guided meditation techniques. This gentle approach makes it suitable for those who are recovering from cancer, or living with it, and is profoundly effective for bringing the body, mind, and heart into balance and reducing stress.

Therapeutic Yoga can be a deeply healing experience. It provides the opportunity to step away from the busyness of the outside world and connect to the deeper wisdom and strength that resides within us. I am very honoured to be able to offer yoga, as a tool for healing at Callanish.

Our weekly yoga classes for past retreat participants are held most Thursdays from 11-12:30pm. Check our calendar at www.callanish.org

Janie Brown cont.

Some people are more afraid of being rejected by others than of death, or more afraid of loving than of being alone. Others are more afraid of the suffering and pain of dying, than of death itself. It takes courage to speak our fears aloud. In those recent circles not one person spoke of a fear that was not shared by at least one other person.

There were nods of agreement when someone shared a fear of losing hopes and dreams, or the fear of not having the time or the stamina to resolve family relationships that hurt. We heard about the fear of being happy, of risking change, the fear of speaking up, and of disappointment, anger and deep sorrow.

Teasing apart our fear and naming exactly what we are scared of frees us up to live in spite of what lies ahead. Fear that is named loses some of its power over us. We begin to see how we make up stories about the future, usually based on our past experiences, and how we allow our imaginations to get the better of us. We learn that most of our fear is perceived, not real. It lives in our minds. Rather than envision a future filled with delight and surprise, we tend to predict loss and heartache. And even when cancer does dictate a future of loss, nothing demands that it also deny the possibility for uplifting moments too. Suddenly in the midst of the everyday challenges of cancer, there are unexpected, unbidden moments when the heart suddenly opens and happiness rushes in. We can’t forget those.

Sharing our fears with the people we care about helps us to feel less isolated and lonely. We begin to learn that by risking our vulnerability, it makes us stronger to face real threats when they are upon us. We begin to trust our ability to meet whatever life brings us, and reminds us that we do truly need one another.

Choosing to Live While Dying

by Sue Harradine

For almost three years now my mind has been filled to overflowing with thoughts of life, death and all things in between. The capacity of the mind is amazing. There is always room for more thoughts and feelings. In my mind I have died countless times and yet I continue to live. I think I am just beginning to learn how to live each day and to try not to spend so much time worrying about dying. This is not an easy feat when faced with a life threatening illness but I think it is well worth the effort to try to achieve it. I still get angry when I think about the possibility of losing my life before I turn 50, but then I turn it around in my mind and remember to be grateful to have had 40 plus years when so many are given so much less. I may not think it's fair or just, but it just is. I don't want to continue to waste my life worrying about dying. I want to live each day to the best of my ability. This is all really new to me and it's going to take time to change my thoughts, but it is also exciting to open my mind and my eyes to the endless possibilities that may be waiting.



Sue Harradine & Kona

Grains of Wisdom: The Callanish Cookbook was inspired by our nutritionist and cook Kathy Fell and is full of great ideas for healthy and delicious meals. It also features photographs and quotes from many of our retreats. Proceeds from the sale of the cookbook will help support Callanish retreats and programs. Please contact our office if you would like to purchase a copy.

Open-Faced Sandwiches with Avocado/Red Pepper

6 rice cakes
2 cloves minced garlic
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup red pepper (diced)
1/2 cup onion (diced)
1/2 cup tomato (seeded & diced)
1 cup mushrooms quartered or smaller depending on the size
1 tsp dried or 1 tablespoon fresh basil
2 avocado (mashed)
1 Tbsp chopped parsley
1/2 cup shredded cheese (we use a coarse grated parmesan cheese)

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Lightly roast the red pepper and mushrooms for 8-10 minutes after tossing with 1 Tbsp. olive oil. Gently sauté garlic & onion in remaining oil. Combine tomato, parsley and basil with onion and red pepper mixtures.

Mash avocados with a *teaspoons or two of fresh lemon juice (optional)* then spread on the rice cakes.

Spoon a mound of the warm red pepper mixture on top and sprinkle with shredded cheese (optional), then place in oven for 5 minutes to heat or until the cheese is melted. Makes topping for 6 rice cakes.



Honouring a Participant

Joni Denroche came on a retreat in May 2009. We knew then that she was a force to reckon with! Joni has more determination, tenacity and goodwill than most of us put together. When two of her retreat friends died within the first year after retreat, Joni put her grief to work, to find a way to honour her friends Rita Wong and Marlene Siemens and give back to Callanish. In Whistler, with her two beautiful kids helping out, Joni held bake sales, as well as natural cosmetics and jewellery sales. She cross-country skied long distances despite recovering from surgery, and donated all the proceeds to support the Callanish scholarship program. Thanks Joni, for all you have done to honour your beloved retreat friends and to support other people with cancer to come on a retreat. You are an inspiration!



Joni Denroche

We Remember with Love

DORTE BENECKE-KNOPF
JANET DAHR
SUSAN EGAN
AGNES KWASNICKA
JAMES LITTLE
JACKIE LUNOT
GINGER RICHARDS
LISA SIMPSON
VIOLET VAN SHAIK

We send our love and thoughts to the family
and friends of these remarkable people.

Special Thanks to:

All of our anonymous and monthly donors who give with such generous and ongoing commitment

The family and friends of **Kirsten Andersen, Karen Barger, Susan Egan, Joanne Gormley, Lisa Johnson, Rod Kirkham, Agnes Kwasnicka, Ginger Richards, Michael Rosen, Marlene Siemens, Nicole Siemens, and Rita Wong** for their generous memorial donations

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Glenn Iles and the staff of The Brew Creek Centre for their ongoing love and support

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Eva Matsuzaki for writing such beautiful thank you cards

Allison Prinsen for designing our 'Callanish Writes' book covers

Bill Sutherland for taking such good care of our garden and for also helping us with retreat prep

Daphne Roubini and the students of Ruby's Ukes for donating ukuleles and money to support retreats

Dan Helmer for his ongoing support in maintaining our website

Anne and Bill Durie for donating the use of their cabin at Lang Bay

Louie Henley for her food & flowers, concert tickets, art supplies and much more..

Suzanne Hong at Granville Island Florists for bringing beauty to our retreats through her gift of flowers

Chor Leoni for their generosity through the proceeds of their 'Healing Voices' CD

Aban Security for their generous support in monitoring our building alarm

Karen & Barry Coates of Fraser Meadow Organic Dairy for donating their fabulous yoghurt for retreat

The family and friends of **Danielle Wolfe and Daphne Lobb** for donations honouring their birthdays

Mike Cates for making and dropping off his fabulous baking

The Chopra Centre for donating yearly yoga passes

Casey Wolf for donating some beautiful fabric for the art room

The new baking team of **Sherri Silverman, Janet Silver and Susan Stine** for donating their time and the ingredients to bake the much loved and infamous Callanish cookies

Claire Talbot, Eva Matsuzaki & Sarah Sample for volunteering to wash dishes on retreat

George Helenius for donating a scooter for use at retreat

