

THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

Issue 44 December 2008

LISTENING TO MY CANCER

Cancer is not a punishment, nor an invader, nor an enemy, but rather serious systemic imbalance — physical and otherwise — expressed as nonstop blind cellular growth, growth gone wild, growth with no imperative other than that of continuing, regardless of the consequences. Cancer doesn't care if the oil runs out; so long as any remains, cancer will consume it, at whatever rate it can, automatically driving itself on and on, with no intelligence whatsoever behind the wheel.

We all have cancerous cells, but only in some of us does cancer take up residence, having successfully fended off our immune system.

Despite the incredible amount of information we have about cancer, we still do not know it very well. Billions have been spent on studying it, but very little has been spent on listening to it — and without listening to it, how can we *really* know it, truly get intimate with it?

We continue to study cancer from a distance, gathering and analyzing data, but rarely get very close to it, thereby missing the kind of information that can only be obtained when we as data-gatherers cultivate *intimacy* with our object of study. Viewing cancer from a distance can yield valuable information, but so too can viewing it from a more intimate perspective.

Cancer is not much more than cells gone awry, cells out of touch, cells bereft of natural communication, the lines cut, the messages garbled,

the march toward colonizing new territory operationally akin to an army that's blindly following a blind commander, intoxicated with imperialistic ambition and consumerist frenzy. Cancer is cellular chaos, cellular insanity — in killing its host, it kills itself, with no more intelligence than that of a mass of lemmings going straight over a cliff's edge. Nevertheless, it still has something to say.

We've had a much-publicized, very expensive war on cancer for quite some time, and we're not exactly winning. Standard procedures for dealing with cancer, regardless of their sophistication, often only make more trouble; for example, when our immune system gets battered and bombed — as a “side-effect” — by a particular treatment, we're made more susceptible to cancer occupying us in places other than our original cancer site. And so on. Not that standard procedures aren't sometimes called for, but we easily tend to overrely on them, frequently being too quick to opt for surgery or chemotherapy or various forms of radiation, not giving our body enough of a chance to heal itself — especially when we don't or won't view our cancer through a more integral or multidimensional perspective. We are inculcated with the notion that to deal with cancer we must busy ourselves attacking it, fighting it, zapping it, battling it, conquering it — in short, making war on it.

The trouble is, the war that we are making on cancer is itself carcinogenic, providing us with little more than a smattering of Pyrrhic victories.

Yes, an abundance of valuable research has been done regarding the biochemistry and mechanics and treatment of cancer, but very little of it has been done in the context of our innate wholeness. We keep looking for *the* cancer killer, *the* chemical protocol, *the* synthetic magic bullet — more war! — not realizing that what really is needed is an approach that is truly integral, including the very best of both conventional and nonconventional treatments, along with fitting psychospiritual work.

Over and over again, research has demonstrated that various plants (and plant combinations) have anti-cancer properties and capacities — so

why not put a lot more money and energy into really studying this, in conjunction with the psychoemotional and, yes, the spiritual dimensions of cancer? Why not get at the root of it? Haven't we already done enough pruning? Isn't it time for a radically practical approach to cancer?

It is time we dropped the war — along with our overuse of war metaphors — and started putting more energy into listening more closely to cancer, however difficult or challenging that might be. Viewing cancer as an enemy is not particularly helpful, for doing so keeps us too removed from cancer, immersed in fear-based adversarial stances, whether conventional or nonconventional. Cancer cells are cells that have lost their way. They are way, way out of balance. They have no center, other than that of the densest sort of mob mentality. They give growth a bad name. But we nonetheless could listen more closely, especially given that decades of pushing cancer away have not made it go away. Listen — what do you hear cancer saying?

I'm listening because I have prostate cancer.

A month or so ago on a clear sunny Friday afternoon, I heard the news, looking with my wife Diane and my urologist at the stark printout results of the prostate biopsy I'd had a week earlier, which stated that three out of the ten biopsy samples (obtained by punching ten holes through my rectal wall so as to reach my prostate) showed cancer. One of the samples suggested that the cancer might have extended beyond my prostate. The urologist quickly made his argument that surgery — cutting out my entire prostate — would be my best option. Yes, I'd be impotent and probably incontinent for the rest of my life, but his job, he brightly added, was to keep me alive as long as possible. Etcetera. We didn't stay much longer, already intuiting that surgery wasn't the way to go.

After a weekend of intensive research, I knew not only that surgery was out, but also that I did not want to have any radiation treatment. My intuition was loud and clear. More than a few cancer patients die not from their cancer, but from the treatment of their cancer. Not that

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I thought that radiation would necessarily kill me, but I sensed with increasing certainty that my prostate cancer could be treated naturally. So I waded and sifted through alternative approaches — and there are an abundance of them! — eventually deciding to take a mix of powerful herbs that had been shown in clinical trials to, at the very least, reduce prostate cancer. And soon I took this further, ingesting a broader, systemically sensible range of herbs and supplements while keeping to a diet that didn't support cancer. I also increased my fitness level and meditated more, resting in Being as much as possible.

And, most importantly, I listened to my cancer. It wasn't hard to decipher its message: Slow down, and not just for a few days or weeks! As much as possible, only put energy into the truly life-giving. Slow down, *now*.

This was easy to hear, but it was not easy to let in the reality of how this would impact my life, especially my work. I have, for a long time, worked very hard doing my psychotherapeutic and group work. It's work that I dearly love, but now I saw that I could not do nearly as much of it, realizing that the best use of my energies was in training others to do the kind of work I do — and even that may be up for question, as I go more deeply into my healing process.

So I will be cutting back on my groupwork, doing far less traveling, and will be cutting back even more on my individual sessions, maybe even eliminating them, except for those whom I am or will be training. Perhaps this will change once my cancer has receded into insignificance or even complete absence; or perhaps not. My intuition is that I probably will have cancerous tissue until I am consistently slowed down and settled into a way of working that fully serves my well-being.

Having 2009 be a sabbatical for me — with my work simply being a group a month — is immensely appealing to us, though not affordable for us. I will nonetheless continue to slow down, giving my healing the time and energy it needs. My writing is also calling to me; I've had very little time to write in the last few years, and am ready to change that.

We are also intending to create some CDs and DVDs about our work, if we can get the funding to do so.

In all this, Diane is right with me. I am immensely grateful to have such a deeply loving, supportive, and remarkably attuned partner. The presence of my cancer has shaken us profoundly, and at the same time has brought us even closer together. The corner I am turning is a corner that we are turning together, in vulnerable, life-affirming mutuality, opening ourselves to new directions.

I view the healing of my cancer in two primary and simultaneous ways: restorative and transmutational. It makes sense to me to attempt to restore the natural intelligence of cancerous cells; this means getting a sufficiently powerful mix of botanicals into their domain along with a clear stream of focused awareness and compassion. The effort to do this brings me into deepening alignment with my needed healing. As I internally “see” my cancer, I keep my gaze both focused and soft, both precise and spacious, energetically sensing and entering my cancer.

However much my cancer responds to this, it will also be met in a transmutational context, meaning that any cancer cells that cannot be restored to healthy functioning will simply be consumed by my white blood cells, so that their toxic elements are eliminated and their constituent nutrients become but fuel for new cells, healthy cells, cells that are thriving. Cell death, cell birth. Whatever portion of my cancer doesn’t respond, or respond fully enough, to restorative treatment, will get to provide, through its death, essential substances for healthy growth. This is simple practicality, needing no aggression to be optimally effective. No war.

My cancer won’t let me off the hook until I am consistently living in accord with its message. This is its gift to me, which I gratefully accept, as I continue dying into a deeper Life.

An opportunity to directly learn from a master integral psychotherapist and groupleader (1) unique, exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork/energywork skills; and (2) how to creatively and effectively integrate these in counseling work.

Masters Integral Psychotherapy Practicum

2009 USA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

You'll learn to not rely upon nor necessarily impose structure, but rather to let it naturally arise from your relationship and interaction with those you're counselling. Working this way weans us from the security — the eventually deadening security — of operating from behind a preset structure or methodology, leaving us in a position that requires an appropriately creative response from us. Such creativity keeps us fresh, open, and alert.

Throughout the training we will be working in great depth with body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Love, integrity, and presence will be the cornerstones of our practice.

WE WILL ONLY BE TAKING TWELVE PARTICIPANTS.

NOTE: The Practicum is not just for therapists who want to learn a more intuitive, integral, and bodywork-including approach to their practice, nor just for those who are wanting to work in the

counselling/psychotherapy field, but also for those who want to participate with kindred spirits in a year of exceptionally deep personal (and interpersonal and transpersonal) work, during which they will learn skills that will serve them in every area of their life.

Graduates of previous practicums have not only found themselves at home with new skills (sufficient enough to begin working as an integral counsellor), but have also done work of such depth — and not just a few times, but many times — during the practicum that they invariably emerge more grounded, open, intuitive, and confident about both themselves and their ability to effectively guide others.

Much of the depth and quality of the work done has to do with being with a group of individuals who are all deeply committed to their own healing and awakening. In such a setting, there's not only more than enough safety and trust, but also a rare intimacy, generated by sharing such deep work both as a participant and as a counsellor-to-be.

LOCATION & STRUCTURE:

The Practicum will take place over 5 four-day modules. Some of the modules will be held in Ashland, Oregon, and some in Boulder, Colorado.

Each module will include individual and group work, plus facilitation by participants of each other's work (with fitting feedback and guidance from Robert).

After the training concludes, participants who have attended it in its entirety will receive a diploma indicating that they have completed a one-year training in Masters Integral Psychotherapy with Robert Augustus Masters.

PREREQUISITE: Previous work with Robert.

TUITION: \$7000. A nonrefundable deposit of \$1000 is required. Half of the tuition is due at the start of the first module; the rest is due by the start of the third module (unless other arrangements have been made with us). Lodging and meals will be extra. Contact info@robertmasters.com to arrange payment.

SCHEDULE:

April 16-19, June 4-7, August 6-9, October 8-11, December 3-6..

There already is considerable interest in this latest Practicum. If you are interested, please contact Robert.

BREAKTHROUGH
A WEEKEND DEVOTED TO
DEEP HEALING & AWAKENING

January 17th-18th in Ashland, Oregon

Deep, efficient, highly effective work for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties, and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their liberation.

This group is limited to 12 participants only, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work. All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, intuitive mix of bodywork, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Structure will not be preset, but rather will spontaneously arise in accord with individual & group needs.

LOCATION & TIME: 171 Oak Street, Ashland, Oregon. The group will begin Saturday January 17th at 10:00am and end Sunday January 18th at approx. 6:00pm.

TUITION: \$550. A nonrefundable deposit of \$200 is required. Full tuition is due by December 29, 2008.

BREAKTHROUGH

Weekend groups in Sedona & Boulder

FEBRUARY/MARCH TBA

BREAKTHROUGH

A Residential Group in Sweden

May 8th-10th, 2009

Deeply integral, intuitively structured work that gets to the heart of the matter with optimal speed and effectiveness.

This group is limited to **14** participants only, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work. All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, intuitive mix of bodywork, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Structure will not be preset, but rather will spontaneously arise in accord with individual & group needs.

LOCATION: Idöborg Retreat Center, Sweden (on an island approximately one hour from Stockholm). See <http://www.idoborg.se/index.asp>.

TUITION: CAD \$750 (SEK 4750) A deposit of CAD \$375 (SEK 2375) is required, nonrefundable after February 1, 2009. Full payment is due by March 1, 2009.

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS: SEK 2000, payable to Yashar Adellian (contact him at yashar.adellian@gmail.com). Full payment is due by March 1, 2009.

A DEEPER LIFE

A 5-Day Residential Group in England

May 13th-17th, 2009

Deeply integral, intuitively structured work that gets to the heart of the matter with optimal speed and effectiveness.

This group is limited to **16** participants only, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work. All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, intuitive mix of bodywork, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Structure will not be preset, but rather will spontaneously arise in accord with individual & group needs.

LOCATION: Duncton Mill, England: <http://www.dunctonmill.co.uk>.

Duncton Mill is a conference, meeting and retreat centre situated in the heart of the South of England, nestled at the foot of the glorious South Downs. The peace and stunning beauty of the setting creates a backdrop in which it is easy to relax and rejuvenate — a perfect place for deep work!

The Guardian (May 12th 2007) listed Duncton Mill first in the top ten worldwide best healthy retreats.

Surrounded by an organic farm, peaceful lakes and wooded hills, and situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty, Duncton Mill is blessed with an incredible range of indigenous wildlife. And it is just over an hour from south London and Heathrow.

TUITION: CAD\$1275, which is approx. £675. A nonrefundable deposit of CAD\$500 is required. Full payment is due February 1, 2009.

FOOD & LODGING: CAD\$660 (or approx. £350) for accommodation and all meals. Special dietary needs will be taken care of. Meals will basically be delicious vegetarian plus fish options. Full payment is due February 1, 2009.

ONLINE COMMUNITY

There are now two online communities centered around my work and writings. I encourage you to join both, whether your inclination is simply to drop in and check out the discussions or to add your voice to what's going on. In either case, you are welcome to join!

FACEBOOK has a group for people who have worked with me and/or who are interested in my work/writings to connect and discuss my work/writing or anything related to it. Once a week I answer questions from group members, which are sent to me from the group administrator, Arthur Gillard. If you're not already a member of Facebook, it is easy to join at: <http://www.facebook.com>. Once you have joined, simply type "Robert Augustus Masters" in the Search box and then click to join the group.

GAIA, a social networking site (which is free to join), also has a Robert Augustus Masters discussion group, featuring the same intention and invitation (and weekly Q&A) as my Facebook group. The online culture of my Gaia group is vital and inviting, and its powerful forum software is perfectly suited for meeting, discussing, and sharing with others who are interested in authenticity, healing, transformation, and Awakening.

You don't need to be a member of Gaia to see the posts there — just go to http://pods.gaia.com/robert_augustus_masters.

But if you would like to participate in the discussions, you can join Gaia by going to: <http://www.gaia.com/apply>, or email Arthur Gillard (aqalicious@yahoo.com), the cultivator of the site, who will send you an invitation.

The format of my Gaia group makes it very easy to navigate through, with everything organized into 7 main categories: *Introduce Yourself; Ask Robert; Announcements & Feedback; Doing the Work; Robert's Writings; Other Influences, Teachings, Lessons, & Exemplars; and Potpourri for the Soul.*

Hope to hear from you, whether via Facebook or Gaia; feel free to jump in at any point. There are almost always a number of vital discussions going on in my Gaia group, among which you very likely will find some things that stir your interest.

For more information regarding groups and trainings, or to register for them, contact info@RobertMasters.com.

All cheques, deposit and otherwise, should be mailed to Robert Masters, 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.

Payments for groups (plus my books and Diane's CD) can also be made online at our Store page; simply go to www.RobertMasters.com and click on STORE.

To view previous newsletters, click on the NEWSLETTER button at www.RobertMasters.com.

To view Robert's blog, go to www.RobertMasters.com and click on the BLOG button.

2009 Work Schedule

January 8-11 Integral Psychotherapy Practicum: Ashland, Oregon

January 17-18 Breakthrough: Ashland, Oregon

February TBA Breakthrough: Sedona