

Talking Therapy

The Listening Service (TLS) Quarterly Newsletter
Issue 5 March 2011

Welcome to Issue 5 of Talking Therapy.

We have a brief review of international women's day as well as an interesting quote and fact for you. We also have a special article written by our Managing Director on the "Here and Now", which I'm sure you will agree is certainly something that we can all reflect upon and consider for our own lives.

It may have been a quieter quarter for TLS on the activities front but the calls continue to come in from across the country. Feedback from our clients has been very positive, including comments such as, "I was very upset and didn't know who to talk to and then I realised that it was your operational time so I called. Every time I call I feel good afterwards." And, "You've helped me a lot. I feel much calmer now. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Look out for details of research carried out by the Mental Health Foundation on black and minority ethnic **women's** experience of recovering from mental ill-health and our thoughts on the impact this may have in the mental health arena in Issue 6 of Talking Therapy. And finally, an early **Happy Mother's Day** to all the mothers and mothers-to-be out there!

TLS Executive Committee

International Women's Day

March 8th 2011 saw the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Whether a working woman, a homemaker, an educated or non-educated woman, a mother, a wife, or a daughter, every person will be greatly impacted by a woman on a daily basis.

Celebrations of this day come in many forms. For countries in the Soviet region this could be an occasion for men to express their appreciation for the

women in their life, yet in other regions of the world it has taken on more of a political theme.

At TLS we would like to wish you a belated Happy International Women's Day and we hope that, however you celebrated this special occasion, all women continue to be respected, appreciated and loved. Let's all celebrate women across the world in their economic, political and social achievements. More importantly, let's celebrate ourselves as women and the unique contribution we make to the world.

MWSF
Just Play!
Strictly female only environment
Basketball Indoor Football
Rules: Just turn up & play (ages 16+)
Cost: £3 per session
(included in MWSF Silver & Gold membership)
Venue: Preston Manor High School
Carlton Ave East, Wembley, HA9 8NA
Time: 10am to 12pm

The Listening Service is a free and confidential service for women across the UK.

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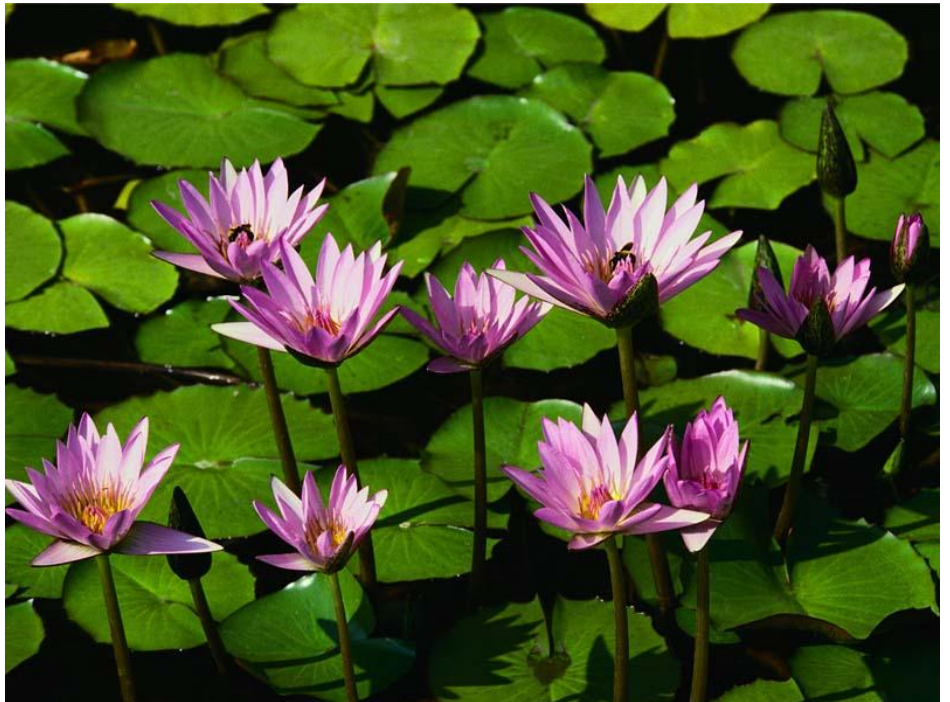
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My Reflections on the Here and Now

By Neelam Farzana

As I sat on my bed one chilly morning, absorbing the rays of the sun seeping through the window of my bedroom, my mind was in overdrive looking at the plan I had for the day to come. Although I had made a mental note of everything I was attempting to fit on my agenda, I felt unable to live up to the expectations I had set for myself. It made me wonder why I was putting myself through such hard work and it reminded me of the teaching from my faith – Islam. God says that we put ourselves through hardship. I then said to myself, “stop”, and it felt as if I put aside the hat that was carrying my thoughts in the form of a script, thereby allowing me to feel easy and free. I was now able to return back to the present moment, recognising and appreciating myself consciously, recognising the space and time that existed for me - an enjoyable and comfortable experience.

Lying down with my eyes closed, my imagination then took me to a place where I found myself on a hammock swaying side to side. “Relaxation is healing at a deeper level”, was the thought that came to the fore. Taking control of yourself is what you may aim for yet we end up running from task to task, however the relaxing thoughts reminded me to celebrate that over which I have no control rather than it becoming a stick with which to beat oneself. For a moment it sounded strange, however it helped and I felt the list for the day melted away, adding to my feeling of calmness and peace. My energy levels rose rapidly, allowing me to positively complete my tasks one by one, without the need to focus on the “what I have to do” list – a mechanical mind set constantly in gear that can lead to increasing stress, therefore limiting and demotivating oneself.



Turning the tide of my focus towards me, recognising my limitations and submitting to the demands of time helped me recapture my natural rhythm, vitality and resilience. Reconnection to my well-being

provided me with the ability to feel free, grounded and not scattered. It was a beautiful experience. Unlike before, I now felt gathered. The acceptance of stepping back from the situation, reducing the level/pressure of self-expectations, helped me honour myself and the role I was playing in life. I felt strong and solid, like being an entity, consciously recognising my body and my breath. The clarity with which I was now viewing my intentions and actions gave me tremendous delight. Visualising the distance between myself and the losses, worries, concerns, dreams etc in my life helped me bounce back, allowing me to disconnect from their influence on me and continuing with building a stronger connection within myself. This was empowering as I was realising once again the importance of clearing one's self from negative thoughts, moving on and taking charge of the self.

Here and Now, i.e. living in the moment, seemed right in the middle of two polar ends. The two ends being Past and Present (our grief, concerns, worries etc). The middle being the balance – Here and Now.

I felt I was blessed as an able body and was in a better position than a lot of people suffering throughout the world. I recalled my mother's words to look at those who don't have that which you do. This memory became the source of adding value to my solidity and contention, recognising the link between living in the moment and a healthy mindset.

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QUOTE OF THE QUARTER:

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear."

Ambrose Redmoon

"This is the key – excellent!" I thought. Attitudes, beliefs, habits and perceptions create our mindset. It shapes the way we think, feel and act. So here I see the power in having a positive attitude with acceptance and submission – "the mindset of submitting". I see it as Submission to the will of God, letting go of the desire to control, submitting to The Absolute Source of Power (God), living in harmony within, thus enabling one to become powerful. I recalled an article I once read where it was explained that our attitude towards life is the main driver in our lives. It said 10% is what happens to us and 90% is our attitude that makes us the way we are.

This whole process was a joyful experience. I remember reading a piece by Carl Rogers (an influential Psychologist in American history) saying that we cannot move away from what we are until we totally and thoroughly accept what we are, then change seems to come about almost unnoticed. I also felt acceptance of those areas that were beyond my reach, controlling my concerns and appreciating my limitations. Recognising self-limitations and acceptance of them seems to me to be the part of the process of living in the Now and if anything is meant to happen it will, which I see as the will of God. A prime example of this is my love and devotion of studying Imam Ghazali, a Muslim scholar from the 11th Century (5th Islamic Century). Due to my lifestyle, I was unable to follow my dream. However, my son who is born, bred and educated here in UK and was almost totally unaware of Imam Ghazali's way of being, developed that devotion and love too without me knowing. He started attending a circle where he was able to fulfil this interest. He attends this circle regularly, after a hectic day at work, making a journey of four hours, and enjoys it. For reasons unknown to me, I never questioned his longing until one day he introduced me to his tutor in a gathering. Silent at first, I eventually mentioned to the tutor my longing to learn about the great Imam, I mentioned my inability to do so in my life and the desire that my son had, to which the tutor replied that it was my silent prayer being answered. This left me with a warm, delightful and wondering feeling.

Later on, one evening while at the circle, my son texted me the following that he had learned of Ghazali:

"If you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, remains possible."

Receiving such a message from my son was of immense delight, as well as the inspirational message itself. It also gave me another dimension of looking into the "Here and Now". I felt that the message was saying that we must never lose hope – when things seem impossible, easing off and letting go helps, enabling us to use our energy and efforts on the tasks that need our attention there and then, living in the Here and Now, utilising the time and resources to the maximum, therefore resulting in our best performance and thus maximising our potential. This could then lead to self actualisation and not wallowing in our grief and worries, thereby helping us move on in life.

Leaving our limitations to be sorted out by nature/God and moving on leaves the possibilities in the hand of the Ultimate Power, The Higher Being, for the best outcome.

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Email info@thelisteningservice.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel – for example, caffeine and sugar can have an immediate effect. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health.

Source: Mental Health Foundation

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