

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

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*Nada Lou*

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“They cut my back with scissors nana. They shouldn’t have done that!” This is what my grandson Dwight said when he woke up after life-saving surgery at the age of 6. I responded that they had to do that to make him healthy again. He insisted almost in anger, “They shouldn’t have done that.” I heard his felt sense—this is not something that should have been done to his body. I agreed, “No, this should have not been done to you.” He dozed off to more sleep.

This happened 12 years ago. He had had chickenpox, which lead into viral complications that caused a meningitis-like infection.

Dwight and I were and are still very close. I was in his life daily since he was one hour old—I babysat most of the week, often keeping him overnight, and together with John, his grandfather, went on summer holidays away from home. His chickenpox came suddenly during a trip with his parents, and by the time they arrived home, we tried to keep his high temperature under control.

In my Focusing life that was the time when the Focusing Discussion list was fully engaged in a topic about the benefits of “Tapping” (EFT). I tried to tap lightly with my two fingers between the eyebrows on his forehead. It helped; he fell asleep, and the temperature subsided slightly along with the help of medication. By the next morning, he started feeling a stiffness around his neck, and we knew he had to be taken to a doctor, who when he saw him, sent him directly to Children’s Hospital. We did not know why he was so hurriedly sent to hospital and so quickly admitted without any waiting. He was immediately quarantined, being viewed as highly contagious. His mother, with his six-month old baby brother and me, called his father and grandfather to come quickly.

Our fear watching our previously healthy and very active boy become so sick and immobile was overwhelming. I felt a sudden shock and deep crying inside, hoping that doctors and nurses around us could help. Could I even Focus?? Hardly. Could I pray? Yes, but it felt more like a desperate acknowledgment of helplessness than a prayer of strong faith.

Within hours Dwight was prepared for a very delicate and possibly life threatening operation. The x-rays showed that he had infectious pus on his spine. His father and I stayed in hospital, while the rest of the family went home. His breastfeeding mother and baby needed to be protected from being exposed to contagious conditions.

Sitting in the waiting room with my son (Dwight’s father), it seemed as if the operation lasted eternally. I tried to stay positive and support my son in his panic and horror. But thoughts of the worst outcome continued invading us both. I fought the ideas that were creeping in on me about the doctor coming out of the operating room and saying something like “We lost him.” My hand went gently to my jumping stomach accepting the sense

of overwhelming fear. Acknowledging the appropriateness of the fearful situation, some deeper calm entered inside of me. I did not have any idea of the outcome, I did not know the answers, there was no promise of anything, but the tranquil peace became the main feeling. It was as if something was taken away from me and replaced by calm. My prayers became more soothing. I started to feel the presence of something bigger than myself taking care of all of us—Dwight and all who were taking active role in caring for him. We were doing the best that we could at that very moment. I asked for help and allowed the higher power to do ‘Its’ share.

We discovered subsequently that the doctor who operated on Dwight was a top Canadian spinal surgeon, who happened to be in Montreal. When the doctor finally came out of the operating room, he was very self-possessed and understanding about our stressful moments, and he took his valuable time to explain everything in detail and answer any questions we needed to know. He told us that he had good news after the operation. The pus filled pouch that could have caused meningitis had actually settled beside the spine in a self-contained pocket, and had not broken into spinal cord. Therefore the infection was contained and did not enter any further into Dwight’s body. The pouch was surgically removed. Dwight had about 16 stitches in the middle of his little back.

With the sense of some relief for us, Dwight was rolled into the intensive care unit for the night. His father and I decided to look into the best ways to take turns accompanying him, for what—for sure—was going to be a prolonged stay in the hospital. He was immediately put on strong antibiotics, but the search for the right kind of antibiotic was a small setback at the beginning of his healing process.

Recuperation in the hospital took a few weeks. At the beginning he was immobile, on painkillers, and on high dosages of antibiotics. His fever had to be controlled by medication and his recuperation moved slowly. We took daily and overnight shifts of being with him.

During that time I began to notice a difference in my inner state of life. It was a gift to me that I was able and free to be with him and assist him in his healing process. He would ask sometimes “nana tap”—meaning to give him pain relief by gentle tapping between his eyebrows. He would ask me to scratch his nose or face, because he was not able to do that, and also afraid to move his arms. It took him long time to trust that he could actually dare to move at all. As he was falling asleep, I would put my hand lightly on where the cut on his back was and just keep it there. I prayed that his healing could be helped by God, and that it could come through my hand deeply into his body and consciousness. I knew, in that way, that he could receive my love and God’s love. The calm peace that I received earlier was continuously present to me. Somehow I knew what to do and how to be with him.

As the days went on Dwight began to be more alert. Before he became sick, like most kids then, he was tuned into the then popular movie “Star Wars”. One day, as he wanted some help from me, I thought he might be ready to start moving a bit so, I reminded him about how Obi-Wan Kenobi encouraged Luke Skywalker to “use the Force, Luke”. With all his energy and courage, Dwight began to move his arms first, and later his legs and neck.

Dwight was under constant observation day and night by nurses. During one of my night shifts, when I was still worried and needing reassurance, a most unusual coincidence

happened. The night nurse came to take care of Dwight and said to me, “I am Maria. Do you remember me?” I didn’t in the dark room.

She said, “I am Vani’s daughter.” This statement felt as though an angel had come to take care of both Dwight and me. To give you the full sense of significance—Vani, an Italian car mechanic, is the owner of a local garage who took care of my cars ever since I moved to Canada in 1969. He was always very helpful, gave me a lot of advice about what to look for when I bought new cars, was always ready to tow me out of snow banks, enlightened my ignorance around the mechanical problems and more. I could trust Vani like my family. When my son, Dwight’s father, became old enough to drive, Vani found good secondhand cars and charged a minimal amount for repairs and flat tires. Vani’s daughter, now grown up, became a nurse and was working part time in Children’s Hospital and happened to be on duty that night. The coincidence of her presence at that particular night took me deep into my own psyche with surprise and gratitude.

This is when the huge shift happened inside me. Words will be difficult to carry the experience, but I will try to convey the change that brought about such a permanent impact on me.

Suddenly all the events of this situation became perceivable and observable to me—all at once! All of the coincidences became palpable . . . present, all at the same time: The extraordinary doctor specialist who happened to be on duty when Dwight needed operation, the way the right kind of antibiotic was chosen, the nurse who felt like an angel, my availability to take significant amount of time to be with him, the home situation with baby needing to be protected from infection, the “use the force, Luke” that was appropriately transliterated to Dwight, his grandfather’s encouragement to me that being in hospital with Dwight was the only right place for me to be at this time, the prior closeness between Dwight and me provided security for him to let his body slowly heal itself with support of my being there, his father spending hours with him, his mother finding time away from baby to take her important turns.

At once, I just had this manifestation of knowledge that I am not alone in this, and that these intricate interactions of events was not accidental. Something bigger than me was coordinating the events and situations. Right people (including me), right medicine, right circumstances, all created a situation in which Dwight was taken care of and being healed.

I called this insight “The Bigger Picture”. I was not alone in it, but without me, it would have been very different. I had played an important part in it. The words that came were, “I am part and participant in a Bigger Picture.” I could physically and mentally grasp what was going on.

This insight really changed my life significantly. As life progressed after this event, life brought with it other complicated situations. Initially I struggled alone to act appropriately. But then the embodied experience of the sense of “The Bigger Picture” emerges. I am given again the gift of experiencing, seeing, grasping, comprehending interacted and interwoven elements of the whole event. It is an experience of unseparated multiplicity of

the whole—that I can touch and see pieces of—and the way they are woven together. It may be a different event, but the sense of ‘the whole’ is unmistakable.

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