

NO MORE FORCE: A CRY TO BE HEARD

Kathy Roy

Almost ten years ago, I wrote down a quote from the book *Eternal Echoes* by John O'Donohue. The quote intrigued me and set me in search of a way to live the truth the statement pointed towards. The quote said: "When you come into the rhythm of your nature, things happen of themselves." It wasn't until I found Wholebody Focusing that I discovered how this could be true, that life could unfold, on its own, without me pushing it.

It slowly unraveled; the conditioned response I had to push myself to my absolute limit and to my place of exhaustion. I didn't even know I was pushing, the action was so unconscious. It has taken over three years for the patterning to completely unwind and let me go, but I finally feel free of it. I am now able to give myself permission to go with the flow and embrace my natural rhythm.

The unraveling began as I was standing in my kitchen one day, getting ready to prepare supper and I simply could not make myself do it. My whole body was screaming at me to stop and listen to it. I felt like a robot, going through the motions of opening the fridge door and doing what I should be doing to prepare supper. All I could hear were the words, "I don't want to!" The voice was so loud, I couldn't help but stop.

I came to a standing position and closed my fridge. I took a moment to find my feet and connect to the support of the floor and the ground. I paused and I made space for this voice that was so loud. This moment was the beginning of a three year journey of listening and making space for a deeply ingrained pattern to release, and this first encounter was very significant. Something deep in my being needed to be heard, it had been pushed aside for long enough and it now had my full attention. I believe the pattern began to reveal itself when it did because it knew I was developing the resources I needed to be with it through the practice of Wholebody Focusing.

As I came to grounded presence in my kitchen that day, tears began to flow down my cheeks. These were tears of compassion toward myself. My body began to show me how I have been my own drill sergeant in life, making demands on myself that I didn't want to carry through, but had pushed myself to do anyway. I was struck by how often I force myself to do things that I don't want to do. All these small violations toward Self had built up to be a huge dam blocking off the flow of life within. I had been struggling with a migraine all day, and when I quietly turned inward to make space for the migraine to be there, what I heard was a voice screaming, "I don't want to!" This was a voice of someone in great distress and great rebellion. This voice was screaming and yelling, through the pain of my migraine because it wanted me to listen to it. This was not a whinny voice. This was a voice desperate for someone to pay attention and hear what it had to say.

I was astounded as I spent time with this voice and allowed it to speak. It was adamantly saying “no more violations toward Self”. This was self with a capital S; the Self at the core of who I am, my very essence. There were many little violations I made towards myself in a day, this voice was saying. It wanted to change that and didn’t want to do anything that was not authentically coming from the deeper connection to my larger Self. It did not want to be pushed to cook supper with a migraine; it did not want to work at all in that moment. It was exhausted and did not want to go on like this. The voice of my inner body wisdom shifted to my adrenal glands. I could feel that they were exhausted from being constantly pushed to do more and more and more.

My adrenals were showing me that every time I push myself to do something in the moment that I do not want to do, I am committing a violation toward Self. This nagging voice that had been popping up all day saying ‘I don’t want to’, was not the voice of resistance that I thought it was; it was the voice of justice. It was the voice that was screaming at me to stop pushing myself around because it finds it abusive. As I listened and gave my presence to this part that was feeling abused and pushed around, I understood what it was trying to help me see; this is not a life-giving approach to being.

The voice that caught my attention was not saying ‘I don’t want to’ out of stubbornness, like I first thought. This was a voice that was pleading with me to discover compassion toward Self. It was a part of my being making a declaration to stop the boot-camp approach to life, to stop pushing and ignoring the parts of myself that needed tenderness and time to rest and reconnect with the flow of life.

Over the next three years, the pattern began to emerge more and more in my Whole-body Focusing sessions. I discovered that there were parts of myself that knew how to work in a harmonious way, without the pushing and the striving energy. As the conditioned response to push forward began to let go, I discovered more freedom to listen to the inner-directed movements of my body as I worked. I began to allow myself to take naps, stretch, and pause throughout my day and to really check-in with myself. I discovered that since I became self-employed, I was a much harder boss on myself than any other employer I had ever worked with. Underneath the sergeant directing my inner boot-camp, I discovered an overwhelming fear that I would never discover satisfaction or fulfillment at the level of my soul if I did not push myself to move forward constantly. The fear was driving my behavior, not the love of my work, like I wanted. As I continued to listen and allow the various parts of myself that were caught in the net of this conditioned response of pushing and striving to be heard, I began to soften.

I have now found a place inside that delights in tenderness and compassion toward Self. It is beginning to trust that there is a combination of soft strength that carries me toward fulfilling my dreams. I am discovering I don’t have to try so hard, but I do need to listen to the guidance that comes through my body wisdom so I see the next life-forward movement as it appears. I am discovering a more relaxing and trusting approach to life. I am discovering flow as I listen inwardly to the aspects within me that need my conscious awareness and nurturing.

Through listening in a Wholebody Focusing way to a recurring pattern of pain in my left shoulder, I discovered that this shoulder held all my tension and my panic around a belief that I don't know what to do. There was a tremendous fear that I felt as searing, hot pain stuck in the tissue of the front and back of my left shoulder. This pain felt that it needed to know all of the answers, and it needed to know what to say in advance of even being asked a question. This part was scared of being caught unaware, and it was holding itself tight with resistance. As I allowed the pain to be there, exactly like it was, and gave it permission to feel itself fully, it began to become aware that I don't have to know all the answers. Actually, I don't need to know any of the answers. I just need to show up in the moment and allow information to pass through me. If I am connected within myself and connected to the universal field of energy, then I am also connected to the universal field of knowing, and information is then free to come to me. I become a receiver of information. Answers appear when I need them, there is nothing to figure out, nothing to stay ahead of, nothing to fear. When I relax, I connect. My shoulder was showing me that when I tense up, I cut myself off from the flow of life and the answers and solutions available to me.

As I continued to allow my body to make space for the stiffness and soreness in my shoulder, the message came that to flow with life was to play. I began to experience the felt sense that life is about playing and it is about experimenting, and there is nothing to get right about living life. There is no right and there is no wrong way to live my life. There is only doing what emerges as the natural next step that *feels* right in the moment. As I continued to listen to the inward movements of my body through Wholebody Focusing sessions, I began to feel a sensation, like divine grace, wrapping around me and telling me that I can do nothing wrong. There is no right way to live in each moment; there is only the contraction and expansion of Life as it passes through me, and as these waves of Life pass through me, they mobilize and create action. The blessed assurance let me know there is nothing to get right, and when I allowed myself to fully take that message in, my body relaxed. Life is light and I have made it heavy by resisting and thinking there is something I am missing and pushing harder and harder for a breakthrough. Pushing has only created separation and tension within me. I now understand that I do not need to push at all; I simply need to flow and life will happen. Life itself will live through me. The good and the bad may happen, but as I relax into each moment, I know exactly what to do with the good and the bad because in the end, they are simply experiences.

The pattern of pushing and straining has unraveled slowly, and as it has, it has revealed a new pattern of being for me. It is a pattern of meandering and following the slower pace of my soul that is connected to Life in ways my mind alone cannot fathom. I trust the mystery of life more with each passing day. I am awed by how experiences I would have labeled good or bad, right or wrong, have now simply become experiences, and the need to judge them as one way or another is fading. I am finding the rhythm of my nature, and as I find this, I discover that I am closer to the divine presence in each moment than I ever thought possible.

In the last Focusing session I had around this pattern, I knew that something major had shifted forever. I began the session with a sense that there was a battery pack in the center of my chest. This battery pack was calm and insulated and almost unemotional. As I continued to be with it, I felt a sense of calmness and something inside wondered if some-

thing was wrong because calmness was foreign. I began to feel tiny twinges in my belly and as I gave those twinges space to be there, I heard, through my felt sense: “You don’t know what peace is.” And then it began to show me.

Inner peace is not about feeling the polar opposites of emotions; peace is about finding the neutral calm within. This neutral calm felt so foreign in my belly, yet as this area was activated, it began to reveal that calmness is not about being void of feeling; it is simply that I am not caught up in the feelings. I observe the feelings from this neutral and calm place and continue to be connected to peace. As I stayed with the sensations in my belly, I was touched to the depths of my being with an inner knowing that emotion isn’t what makes me come alive; presence is. This place deep within, showed me that I have been so used to being caught up in emotion that inner calm felt foreign, yet it was telling me that this calm place of non-duality was not lifeless; it was where ALL life is. Something deep in my belly began to wake up and come more alive in response to this awareness and the left and right sides of my body became activated. Left side felt bewildered and right side held space for left side to be bewildered. Then a slow and steady pulse came up through my abdomen and right ear and the words that came with the sensation were, “there is no rushing in space, you are made of neutral space.” My stomach began to gurgle and my head felt fuzzy and then what began to emerge was:

“You can’t push space.”

“You just be You.”

From my left side, the question came: “But who am I? Without all the emotion, who am I?”

The response from within was: “You are clarity, without all the emotion and the pushing, you are clarity and you are light. Stepping out of the fog of emotion, you are stepping into new life.”

My left arm was bewildered and a question emerged from it: “What do I do?”

The rest of my body responded: “You live! You notice without attaching to it.”

My left arm was still bewildered and it asked: “But how do you care for things if you’re not attached?”

The rest of my body responded: “With lightness. There is more room because everything is so light. You can smile on everything because it is so light. Your work is not a reflection of who you are. You are Okay.”

I felt a gentle touch on my abdomen, like a breeze blowing through a window. It felt like lightness and it was an assurance that I am whole, there is nothing missing and it conveyed to me that there is no hurry, do your work lightly, caring does not have to be heavy.

My whole being felt embraced by a softness that was cool and refreshing and the gentle assurance that felt like an Echo from the Eternal “YOU have never been rejected.”

When this session came to an end, I knew that the pattern that had ruled my life for years had come to an end. I felt set free and understood that the fear of rejection was the core issue that drove me so hard, for years, pushing me beyond my limits to get it right.

Today, I know how to connect to that calmness within. This place of non-dual neutrality that is light and spacious is becoming more and more accessible. My journey to stop pushing myself and to try harder has not been a simple one, but it has brought me closer to understanding what it means to come into the rhythm of my nature and listen to the Eternal Echoes of Life ripple through me, showing me the next life forward movement. I feel like I walk through life with more grace and ease now that calmness has found a home within me.

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