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I met Kent Tompkins serendipitously. I was planning a surprise party for my mother's 80th birthday party, but was disgruntled at the prices that resorts want for party rooms, lodging and food. I figured the best way around the expense was by landing a private home where my family could sleep, where we could have the party, and where a caterer could bring the food. Oh, and a nice view would work, too.

Looking skyward, I said, "Okay, God. I need that house. Thank you."

The very next day I received an email from Kent. He belongs to the same internet collective as I do where people share information about various things. Kent was letting the group know that he was making his house available for yoga retreats, workshops, family reunions, etc. My grin filled up the room. I read further. Not only was the price reasonable, but the location of the house was in my mother's favorite spot in Colorado.

It was a no brainer. "Thank you, God." I said again.

Weeks later I drove to the house to check it out. Kent and I began to talk beyond the logistics of where to set up tables and the best spot for the buffet line. I learned that he was a licensed professional counselor and hypnotherapist. He also lived on Navajo and White Mountain Apache lands for many years, and studied ceremonial healing with elders in the Navajo and Southern Cheyenne Indian tribes. All the while, he documented sacred sites through a camera lens. I learned these things as he walked me down a path to a space he had cleared for a teepee where he would eventually share teachings around fire and add this natural setting to his healing arts practice.

I told Kent about this book. He nodded and looked deeply into my eyes.

"My mother died of cancer in 1977. I decided that if I really wanted to learn about healing, I had to learn about how to heal cancer."

Our conversation took off from there. A few weeks later, I conducted a formal interview with him.

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“Ever since I was a child, I saw energy and could sense things,” Tompkins began. “There wasn’t any reinforcement about how to work with it, but there was a voice inside of me that I trusted. It was especially grounded whenever I was out in nature, so I was in nature every chance I could get.

“It wasn’t until I stepped foot on the Navajo reservation and was invited into ceremonies that things began to gel for me. That’s when I understood the context of what I had perceived as a child.”

When Tompkins’ mother got diagnosed, he had not yet learned the way of the Navajo. But he did help his mother work with a doctor out of California named Carl Simonton (Simonton Cancer Center, <http://www.simontoncenter.com/>).

“Dr. Simonton is a cutting-edge guy who came up with cancer personality types. My mother fit it to the letter. Before she got colon cancer, she was filled with helplessness and hopelessness. She was also very heavy. I journeyed with her for 18 months before she died, but through working with Dr. Simonton, she learned a lot about why the cancer showed up. So did I. In the end, she took full ownership of choosing cancer, and found ways to abate it for a period of time.”

According to Tompkins, cancer can result from thought forms that an individual adopts at a very early age. These thought forms get compartmentalized in the body and block specific energetic pathways.

He explained it further.

“Everything in the universe is created from the same divine spark, including humans. Everything operates at a certain frequency. Atoms vibrate at a certain frequency and various part of the atom vibrate at different frequencies. Each human being has a different vibration and frequency, too, based on what they hold in their thoughts. Thought forms direct energy, so if the person holds a great deal of shame or guilt, for example, those thought forms will stifle the flow of energy.

“Conversely, imagine love as an integrating force, which it is. Imagine love as that moment in time, or that state of being, in which harmony, beauty and divine intelligence merge. In this living, breathing state of being, energy flows unencumbered throughout our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. These conditions

activate the parasympathetic nervous system which then boosts the immune system. Then endorphins kick in and the body's natural morphine elevates mood, heals, and restores wellness.”

Tomkins didn't stop at the physical benefits of being in the consciousness of love.

“In this state of being, we have enhanced intuitive abilities and the fight or flight response is diminished. Consequently, there's a greater potential for continually creating an atmosphere of self healing—both physical and emotional.

“When we allow ourselves to be intuitively led to that which is right for us, right now, one moment is always morphing into the next—right now. We lose our concept of linear time and the attachment to specific outcomes that our ego perceives as significant. This signals that we are entering a state of continual healing and wellness.

“Living a whole and spiritual life is one that's unpredictable to the ego and often confusing to the brain. Yet, in this place of intuitive awareness, we are connected to the true nature of our soul.”

If this sounds like an ambitious adventure and one that requires a map or some other form of guidance, it is. Still, every journey starts with the first step, and Tompkins believes the journey of self healing begins by addressing negative thought forms.

“My work is to assist clients to embrace thought forms that aren't serving them. Maybe they got them from their parents, from religion, from teachers. It doesn't matter. What matters is that they start to see negative thought patterns that they took for granted, not realizing that these thoughts created adverse energy shifts in their body, mind and soul. Once they see the thoughts, they can unravel them and create new ones that are more in line with who they really are. When that happens, people almost immediately feel an energy shift in their body and mind. That creates a different frequency which delivers energy into those areas that were closed off before. In this manner, clients are shifting energy within themselves, applying various laws of physics, and becoming more accountable for their wellness.

“Healing cancer has to do with opening up energy flows into the areas that were closed off before.”

Tompkins says shame is commonly what blocks the energy flow.

“When a parent reprimands a small child for doing what’s natural for small children, the child tends to focus on believing something is wrong with him rather than returning to that intuitive state of natural curiosity, learning and love. When a child is repeatedly told, either verbally or nonverbally, that his behavior is wrong, the potential is set for his accepting the negative thought forms and he possibly begins to believe to a varying degree that it’s not okay to be who he really is. That’s when ‘simply being’ is replaced with shame or guilt.

“This belief system sifts down to the subconscious mind and very often the child attempts to heal the parent, significant other or the family dynamic that delivered the disintegrated message, rather than heal self. Eventually, the subconscious beliefs to a marked degree, determine the individual’s way of life and can manifest as disease.

“Disease can be viewed as self-sabotaging behavior, the decrease of natural curiosity, or any negative thought form that deconstructs the human’s natural constitution of wellness. And when there’s more disintegration than integration, when the stressors tax the body and mind, things get very unbalanced. There are so many more stressors now than ever before. Frequencies get skewed and energy gets blocked. That’s one way to look at how cancer comes about. But it’s a big topic.”

So big, in fact, that when I asked Tompkins about why some people get cancer and others don’t—even though we’re all exposed to a barrage of stressors—he admitted that it’s a mystery.

“The obvious answer is that those who are most out of balance are most susceptible. But research doesn’t warrant that. Then you throw in environmental toxins, the changes in the quality of the food we eat, the radio waves and all the electronic gadgets—there are so many variables. I am still gaining the wisdom to understand the bigger picture.

“If we could have the insight into each person’s soul to see what their design really is, why the person came here at this time and chose to experience life this way, it would reveal so much. That’s what I’m most curious about. I believe if we can experience a *knowing* of ourselves rather than spending time fighting against something—embrace all aspects of ourselves, whether it’s cancer or a torn meniscus—if we could really and truly arrive at *knowing* what’s behind it, we could stop all the

subconscious negative influences and see the soul's story. That's when the core truth is revealed. That's when we are on vacation as it were, living with integrity!"

Tompkins then brought the conversation back to what he believes is at the heart of what heals.

"Love, as the integrating force, is like a liquid nectar—honey—that gets crystallized when these disintegrating messages are dominant. But in truth, love is all there is. Everything else is a misdirected energy. So you can see how valuable it is to empower self-discovery and to honor childhood innocence not only in children but also within each other and within our communities.

"When I work with people, I observe them gaining awareness about where those pockets of energy are blocked. When they change the frequency, then the crystallized structure turns back into nectar and they are back on the road to living in their power. Intuitive energy flows again. They understand themselves as spiritual beings without having to pay homage to misguided thought forms anymore."

Accessing the healing power of love and that *knowing* he speaks of starts simply with a desire to be more aware. Becoming truly aware entails diligence and discipline that we may not have previously employed.

"By the time cancer strikes the body, there's probably been five years of warning signs that have presented themselves to the individual. It may be subtle at first like a faint wisp of wind saying, 'You're hanging with the wrong people,' or 'You'd better get into the right work.'

"Life is all about self discovery which requires awareness, but we can ease into it slowly. We can start to notice if we're living our right timing, being in the right work, engaging in the right relationships, and honor our intuition. When we aren't doing those things, we aren't in our power. We're giving it away. Illness is a symbol from the body that's trying to wake us up. It gets louder and louder and eventually we get sick. Cancer is one of the loudest symbols—it's our body screaming at us to live with more integrity and accountability.

"In our culture, tending to ourselves when we're healthy and well is not as customary as within the Chinese, Native American or East Indian cultures. Our culture as a rule does not celebrate and pray for wellness to continue and reinforce what's going

right. Instead, we ignore the warning signs as long as we can. We wait until we're sick before we pay attention. We have a hard time changing until we get cut off at the knees.”

The good news is that, even after ignoring the signs for years on end, we can heal either with the help of others or by accessing the God-given power within.

“People can absolutely heal themselves,” Tompkins said. “It happens all the time, but how many people actually think it's possible? It takes enormous courage and integrity to live within the mystery, without seemingly clear answers or direction. Yet it is precisely within this mystery where surrender to Spirit occurs, and our higher selves bond with the nourishment and guidance we need. To the brain, this process is very foreign.

“Believing in yourself is the first step. Accept your right to live as a free agent. Understand you are obligated to no one. Say yes when you mean yes, and no when you mean no. Give of yourself and be of service, absolutely. But create a balance of honesty about where to place your allegiance. Live and share out of joy, not fear.

“Visit your own intuition. Sit with it. Get a quieter mind. It takes practice, but it will never let you down. Your brain will try to pull you away, but once you arrive at a *knowing* of something and eventually who you really are, you'll be okay.

“Ask yourself, ‘Who do I work for? Who's my boss?’ You need to find the divine link with something—not necessarily another human being, although teachers are great. But good teachers always tell you to question everything they say; they test you and say you have to find it within yourself.”

There are models and teachers out there, Tomkins told me, but we typically find them in unorthodox ways that break with convention or tradition. That alone can lead to inner doubt and outer criticism.

Tompkins then told me the story of one of his best teachers, a Navajo elder.

“I knocked on his door everyday for at last a year wanting to work with him. Instead, he'd tell me to move a pile of dirt from one place in his yard to another, or to load up the kids and take them somewhere. I moved tires from here to there, took building supplies up to his summer camp above Black Mesa deep in the Navajo rez. He had me do chores for an entire year.

“There were times that I want to quit but my Navajo friends urged me to stick with it. Finally, he knocked on my door late one night and said, ‘Are you ready?’ I said yes.

“This is a guy who died in battle in the Korean War, had an out-of-body experience, woke up in the hospital and became a healer from that day forward. For six years as a neighbor, night and day, every day of the week, I witnessed him do stuff that westerners would call miracles. Difficult cases that would require an operating room for most doctors. He used a buffalo horn, a pocket knife, fire, and water. He never turned anyone away. He told me that to truly be of service and allow the One Creator to flow through, he had to put all judgment aside. In essence, the one that knows nothing, knows everything! He never charged money, only asked for donations. He and his wife went on to adopt 12 kids

For reasons we may never understand, Tompkins’ teacher and eventual comrade was able to access and practice the art of healing others after his near-death experience. But Tompkins says we don’t have to go to that extreme to tap into our own source of healing. It does help, though, to find a mentor who can assist with the process. And it is a process.

“Get off the beaten track and believe that you amount to something. Then, look for a good, open-minded, spiritually-oriented therapist, counselor, guide, or teacher. Trust your intuition. Seek a like-minded person. Study how they live, how they go about things. Teachers can be hard to find, so you need to set a strong intention. Affirm to yourself that you are in the process of finding the right healer. Affirm that you are walking down the path, and it is unfolding.

“When you find a possible mentor, ask for 15 minutes. If, after that, it doesn’t feel right, ask for three referrals and leave. Keep moving. It’s like a treasure hunt. You might get a sign after looking under the first rock, but you might turn over 12 rocks and find nothing. Doesn’t matter. Keep moving. It’s all about being dedicated to the treasure hunt.

“We’re going to see a quickening of all this. We’re demystifying things about how difficult it is to heal one’s self. More people are using spiritual approaches to healing. These people are recognizing the power of themselves as an integrated whole. They are experiencing how shifting thought forms has a direct impact on how the body

responds. My clients are able to arrive at a knowing that there are no limits, except those that they impose on themselves, or those that they have yet to uncover. It leaves little room for denial, blaming of others, and that lure of falling asleep spiritually.

“Some people give up because they feel foolish or defeated. But I know that if there is a desire in your heart to be well, then there will be a teacher or healer for you. Desires don’t exist deeply in your heart unless the answer and ultimate manifestation of those desires exists. So, step up. Have courage. And dedicate yourself to wellness.”

Tompkins’ conviction is reinforced by his belief that we are supported in ways beyond our normal understanding.

“Humans are gifted with free will. With that, we make choices about whether or not to seek help when our bodies give us signals that things aren’t right—or to deny it. We have free will to be closed to the mystery of life, or to be open and learn something new. We are granted the opportunity to wake up and grow over and over again.

“We can ask for help from the invisible and our journey can then kick into turbo gear. But, you have to be open to receive the gifts. If you put your hand out and ask for help then you are dignifying that you are receptive to change. If your hand is closed, however, no one has the right to pry it open and insist that you take what they have to offer. What is your intention? How ready are you to open your hand and risk changing?

“The invisible assistants are here to help. Jesus is one of my bosses and I enjoy a wonderful relationship with St. Francis, but neither would think of interfering with my free will. And yet they will be there in a nanosecond with unlimited grace if they see I am running myself into a ditch. These non-physical assistants, and teachers, honor us so much that they allow us to go to cancerous stages. They simply won’t interfere. That’s the respect they maintain for the free will that humans have in this school called life. Still, they’re waiting for us to ask for help and when we do—with an open hand and heart—it comes pouring in.

“We are never alone. We have been led; we are being led; and we will be led.”

As inspiring as that is, Tompkins also acknowledges that the mix of free will, intention, negative thought forms, cultural shortsightedness and the loving assistance from non-physical calls up as much mystery as it does possibility.

“If we can surrender to the mystery, release our attachment to outcomes and hence arrive at *knowing* ourselves and the creator, then we’re on the path,” he said with marvel in his voice.

“Humans are inherently complete, yet due to blind spots, we perceive ourselves as incomplete, so we’re constantly trying to bring ourselves back into balance. That’s how we grow. Be patient, keep searching, keep moving. And after you begin to realize the power that flows through you, be humble. Accepting one’s power with humility and maintaining this presence is the goal. The healing power is the divine spark flowing through you. Let it vibrate in every cell in your body and say, ‘Thank you.’”

~ Leigh Fortson