

# TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic • 100 Old Billerica Rd., Bedford, MA 01730

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## CULTIVATING AWARENESS IN TIMES OF STRESS

by  
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Even though we think of the holiday season as a time of good cheer and a time to connect with family and friends, it has its own stresses and challenges. For many, it brings to mind past memories of people and times that are no longer a part of our lives. For others, the meaning of the season has been lost. The pressures and demands can feel overwhelming, throwing a shadow on the positive feelings that one is supposed to feel.

Patricia Donegan writes in the *Haiku Mind* that a fine haiku presents a “crystalline moment of heightened awareness in simple imagery, traditionally using a *kigo* or season word from nature.” For example, a haiku by Shiki Masaoka:

*Cutting a pear  
sweet drops drip  
from the knife*

Such a moment is a deep reminder for us to pause and to be present in the details of the everyday. It reminds us to open to the ordinary moments of our lives, moments that the author calls the “haiku mind,” (Donegan, Patricia, *Haiku Mind*, Shambhala Publications, 2008). She goes on to say that haiku moments, seemingly simple poems, cause us to pause, if only for a moment.

The pause can lead us to more pauses in our “daily life when we slow down and take in a few breaths...relax and see beyond judgment of good or bad, things as they are: the pear in sunlight.” When we relax our mind, we can feel a sense of openheartedness and peace. In this way haiku becomes a way to plant the seeds of peace in ourselves and in the world.

*pausing  
halfway up the stairs—  
white chrysanthemums*

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

Pausing is a brief moment, a mindful pause, when we stop and pay attention to what is right before us. For a fleeting moment we pause and see the sunlight through the window, a bird land on a branch or the fading light through a curtain.

Pausing allows us to let go of our anxieties and stresses. It gives us a moment, a chance, to connect with the present moment. This moment is really all that we have, this precious moment.

*the spirit, the truth  
of silent prayer—  
just the moon on the road*

Kikusha-Ni

Donegan writes that the German Christian mystic Meister Eckhart said that if the only prayer we used in our life was “thank you,” that would be enough. In this haiku, the moon





represents the truth of sacredness and silent prayer, and it is the symbol of all enlightenment, all means to awaken us to the present moment.

Finding ways to pause during the holiday season not only helps to deal with the stresses of the season but can bring into focus the beauty of the season. In the rush, take time to pause. Take a few deep breaths, feel your feet on the floor. Listen to music. Read a poem.

#### Gift

Czeslaw Milosz

A day so happy.  
Fog lifts early, I worked in the garden.  
Hummingbirds were stopping over  
honeysuckle flowers.  
There was no one on earth I wanted to  
possess.  
I knew no one worth my envying him.  
What evil I had suffered, I forgot.  
To think that once I was the same man  
did not embarrass me.  
In my body I felt no pain.  
When straightening up, I saw the blue  
sea and sails.

*Best Wishes for a Peaceful  
Holiday Season and New Year  
from  
Barbara, Debbie, Judi, Andrea  
and Jenna*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are sorry to announce that Dr. Peter Muz, our dermatologist, will no longer be coming to the Clinic or the Nursing Center. As of the First of January, he will be joining the practice of:

Adult and Pediatric Dermatology  
86 Baker Avenue Ext.  
Concord, MA 01742  
978-371-7010

He will continue to see people at his new office on Baker Avenue Extension after the first of the year. Unfortunately, the clinic will be looking for a new Dermatologist.

At this time of the year, health insurances have open enrollment that allows people to change their health insurance. Many people may change their insurance coverage or insurance company during this open enrollment period. If you have changed, or plan to change your health insurance, be sure to come to the Clinic with your new insurance card so we can make a copy and change your Vial of Life.

*Happy  
Holidays*

