

“Love and Compassion as Spiritual DNA”

March 5, 2023

Rev. Ann Eichhorn and Linda Hawes Clever, M.D.



Readings

From *Anam Cara, a book of Celtic Wisdom*

John O'Donohue

The soul needs love as urgently as the body needs air. All the possibilities of your human destiny are asleep in your soul. You are here to realize and honor these possibilities. When love comes into your life, unrecognized dimensions of your destiny awaken and blossom and grow. Possibility is the secret heart of time.

Time minds possibility and makes sure that nothing is lost or forgotten. That which seems to pass away on the surface of time is in fact transfigured and housed in the tabernacle of memory. Possibility is the secret heart of creativity.

Love is the nature of the soul. Love is our deepest nature, and consciously or unconsciously, each of us searches for love.

First Corinthians 13:4-8a

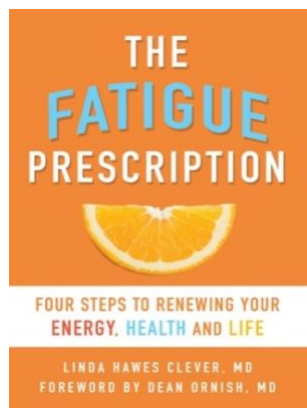
Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

Note: What follows are notes from Ann and from Linda that they shared with Sandra Weil who then compiled and edited them.

The New Testament text and the John O'Donohue quote were chosen to exemplify the need for love in our lives. Love's presence is known to us in our connection to God (Creator, Divine) and to each other. During this Lenten season and in our Saturday morning series we will be talking about "Spiritual DNA" as, with the help of scientists, poets, physicians, and psychologists, we begin to recognize and understand the importance of these connections a little more. This week in Stone Soup someone said that in the O'Donohue quote the word "possibilities" is used five times. As a nation and as a world, we are coming out of an almost three-year period of fear, anxiety, social isolation, serious illness, and death, unlike anything we have experienced before. We have begun to venture forth, entering a new time in which there are indeed new possibilities. One of our songs from Kevin and Scott this morning spoke about walking the line between faith and fear, and that's where many of us find ourselves now.

This week honors women and the work they do, and it's also the 25th anniversary of the non-profit organization RENEW, which brought its founder Dr. Linda Clever to San Francisco yesterday. I was delighted that Linda said "yes" to my request that she come here and share some of her work with us. Linda is a dear, long-time friend and colleague. She and her doctor husband Jamie and Bill and I have been a "sharing group" for over fifty years. That group started out as a six-week series, and we still meet together twice a month.

Linda is the founding chair of the Department of Occupational Health at California Pacific Medical Center and former editor of the Western Journal of Medicine. She received undergraduate and medical degrees from Stanford, and she is a member of the prestigious National Academy of Medicine. She is Board certified in internal and occupational medicine. She founded RENEW twenty-five years ago. Linda helps health care professionals and groups consider the health of their workplaces and of their lives. She helps them analyze challenges and develop plans that bring energy and resilience and perhaps new ways of being present in the workplace and people's private lives. She wrote the book *The Fatigue Prescription*. From her book flyer:



The Fatigue Prescription:
*Four Steps to Renewing Your Energy,
Health and Life*

**Go from Tired and Wired to
Active and Healthy**

by Linda Hawes Clever, MD

Your book is so chock full of information. It's easy to understand, it's easy to assimilate and it's easy to do in everyday life. The Fatigue Prescription puts it all together so we can organize ourselves and our thoughts. I carry it in my purse and I've read it three times.

~ Lynniss Woods-Mullins, CEO & Founder of PraiseWorks Health and Wellness

Dr. Clever describes the circumstances that led to her near-meltdown and explains practical ways to refresh, renew, and begin creating healthy and fulfilling lives. She outlines signs of trouble and lists the five practices of people who are at the top of their game. Dr. Clever shows how to deal with the competing demands that diminish your vitality and sap your energy. She shows how taking care of yourself is not selfish; *it is self-preservation*. If you want to regain your purpose and joy and have guilt-free time for your family, friends and yourself, *The Fatigue Prescription* is the book for you. Reading it and using its guides, you will find ways to shape your body, soul, emotions, brain and relationships into a whole, healthy life.

Linda's book is available at Book Passage in Corte Madera, Book Depot in Mill Valley, and at other independent bookstores, as well as on Amazon (Kindle and Audible Audiobook also available there).

Following are some highlights/main points from what Linda shared with us in her talk.

Linda described five characteristics of “fit” people:

1. They have strong relationships.
2. They have a religious or spiritual life – a sense that the world is a wondrous place.
3. They take care of themselves.
4. They like their work.
5. They have a basic conviction that they can play the hand that’s dealt them.

She spoke about some of the consequences we have suffered through the Covid times. We have increased awareness of:

- our fragility
- social justice needs
- the rapidity of change
- the divisions among us

and we may be more aware that we have the need:

- for purpose
- to belong
- for legacy
- to believe in the future
- for civic engagement

We may have observed that in our world there is more impunity (the exercise of power without accountability (e.g., “the law is for suckers”)), that we and others are low on patience, on leisure, on civility, and on kindness.

Linda then spoke about the “Rx to the deficits we have,” especially in civility:

- listen to understand and not to reply
- pause ... and decide if what you are about to say or do will harm or help

She continued:

Because of the pressures on us all, and because of the *negative bias* of our brains from time immemorial, we must *search for the positive*. This includes searching for, being open to, and *feeling AWE*. For example, noticing the miracle of the fact that babies having fingernails (!) and remembering that we are made of stardust. When we are in Nature, the blood flow of our brains actually moves from the old-time reptilian amygdala (the center of anxiety and anger) to the fronto-parietal area of our brains, where executive functions and problem-solving reside.

In a search for the positive, I spent time with our 13-year old grandson Alex, and we took turns writing down *good things*. These are some of the fifty or so items we mentioned:

- The family dogs: Levi—part poodle with an anxiety disorder, and Pepper—part chihuahua with an anger management problem
- Naps
- Snacks

- Rainbows
- Glass windows
- Hygiene
- Good food
- Popcorn
- Horror movies (that wasn't on my list)

Linda was very moved by the song "Love Me Like I Am," sung after her talk by Rai Jobe, and she wanted to share the lyrics with you:

Love Me Like I Am

I am a little unstable
 Loose wires always getting tangled now
 I am a little bit difficult
 I can be a little self-critical now
 I am a little unable
 To put all my cards on the table now
 But somehow You're still with me

Chorus:

It's amazing that You can
 Love me like I am
 And even when I can't
 You still love me as I am
 Oh, I don't know how You do it
 And I know I put You through it
 Yeah, it's amazing that You can
 Love me like I
 Love me like I

Am, ooh
 You love me like I
 Am, ooh
 You love me like I
 Am!

I am a little uneven
 In need of a little more healing now
 Yes, I am
 And I feel a little unfixable
 You're nothing short of a miracle now
 'Cause somehow You're still with me

Chorus

Finally, Linda shared this poem by Danusha Laméris:

Small Kindnesses

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs
to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"
when someone sneezes, a leftover
from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying.
And sometimes, when you spill lemons
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you
pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other.
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.
We have so little of each other, now. So far
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,
have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."

Here is the link to RENEW's website if you would like to visit: www.renewnow.org.

Here is Linda's email address, should you care to get in touch with her: lhclever.renew@gmail.com.

Dr. Clever is known for her keynote speeches, seminars and workshops for hospitals and clinics, non-profit organizations, universities, corporations, and other groups of hard-working devoted people. If you would like more information about RENEW or ways that you, Dr. Clever, and your organization can work together, please contact program manager Elisha Danmeier at: edanmeier.renew@gmail.com or 510-541-6002.

