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by Eileen Lawlor

The early post-war years were lean financially for the Lawlor family, yet my parents found ways to send me to dancing school... at my insistence of course! I was 3 years old when I was a little Dutch girl in my first recital.

Dance and I were immediately ONE. I loved it, and worked very hard at it. Between local amateur theatre productions and studying one week every summer in New York City, I was a professional caliber dancer by the age of sixteen. The problem was that I still lived in Virginia.

I packed a bag one day in the summer going into my junior year of college, and under the guise of visiting a girlfriend in Philadelphia, rode straight into "the city." In essence a runaway, I was intent on doing what I had set my mind to do.

Mom and Dad were furious...HORRIFIED...but how could they have really been so surprised? After all, I had trained so hard for this eventuality. After much negotiating, they finally agreed to let me skip college and stay in New York.



Optimism, youth and an iron determination carried me through the grueling life of a professional dancer and actress.



As with so many new arrivals, my first professional dance job was in the corp de ballet at Radio City Music Hall. Contrary to popular perception, it was not at all glamorous! The job was

grueling: four to five shows daily, plus rehearsals in between. Somehow optimism, youth, and an iron determination carried me through.

Seven months later, and not quite twenty years old, I had my first Broadway call back. There I was standing in a non-equity (meaning non-union) line-up of dancers when Richard Rogers strode up onto stage and pulled me out of the group. At that moment, all I had worked for and wanted so desperately all my life came true. I danced on Broadway for nearly a year, performing in Show Boat at Lincoln Center.

For the next fifteen years I was a dancer and an actress on Broadway and in television commercials. I was even interviewed by Johnny Carson during his hay day on the Tonight Show. Of course there were other "odds and ends" jobs along the way. And always there were classes...classes...and more classes...



Once sensitized to the suffering and social injustices in the wider world, I sought a more meaningful life and realized my true calling: to be of help to others.



Meanwhile out of my Greenwich Village apartment window and down the block in Washington Square Park, something even more exciting was happening: the late 60's and early 70's! The anti-war and anti-establishment protesters, colorfully arrayed in body paint, tie dye, and Indian head bands, rallied in my neighborhood park. In the thick of it all, there I was - flower child by day, performer by night. What a wonderfully confusing kaleidoscope of realities!

Like so many other early boomers I was becoming sensitized to the suffering and social injustices in the wider world. In fits and starts, the rigid 50's attitudes regarding race, gender, right and wrong, were rapidly changing. On every Greenwich Village street corner the calls to action and activism were growing louder and louder.

During all of this, I began asking myself, "Is entertaining people really a meaningful enough purpose to my life? But if I'm not a dancer/actress, then what am I?" This line of questioning sent me careening headlong into my first very painful identity crisis.

Almost by accident, if there really are such things, I blindly stumbled my way into therapy with a dance-movement therapist. In those next several years, I realized what my true calling was -

TO BE OF HELP TO OTHERS.

Learning How to Help Others

For the next twenty years, I worked and studied to become a skilled action-oriented therapist. As a dance and art therapist, clinical social worker, public speaker, and facilitator of workshops, rituals and ceremonies, my life-long deep and abiding connection to the arts has served me well.

Eventually, with credentials in place, I opened a private practice. There I greatly enjoyed the freedom of blending what I had come to feel was the best of Eastern and Western, traditional and non-traditional healing practices. All was going well, but the monster known as Managed Care was systematically becoming "all powerful" and inserting itself into more and more clinical treatment decisions.

At the request of my clients, I spent seven years trying my best to co-operate with the ever changing insurance-driven health care system. More and more my own ethics as a care provider were compromised. I eventually plummeted into a second powerful identity crisis. "If I am not a therapist, then what am I?" Even more fundamentally, "Who am I?"



Stillpoint Studio and Gardens

The universe responded to my pleading with ONE word... "WELLNESS...WELLNESS," that flashed over and over in my mind's eye in vivid cobalt blue. I also heard a whispered phrase, "Stillpoint Studio and Gardens."

I couldn't understand these messages at first, but I soon sensed and trusted I was being led by spirit.

In a tremendous leap of faith, born no doubt of a combination of inspiration and desperation, I closed my practice and moved myself to a little wooden cottage on a ridge in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts.

Here I find the arts flourishing, the beautiful meadows and mountains utterly enchanting, and small towns and villages each with their own personality and character. The transition to country living has allowed me to discover how it feels to live in harmony with nature and myself. Once an isolated city dweller, I now feel more fully connected to the larger world around me. Stillpoint Studio and Gardens is forever manifesting into sacred space.

As the gardener and guardian of Stillpoint, I live within the ongoing cycle of the four seasons...birth, life, death and rebirth...a continual process of healing and renewal.



*Living in harmony with
nature connects me
to the larger world.
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As I walk with my much loved cockapoo Teddy Bear, I am constantly struck by the beauty and spirit that surrounds me. Compelled to capture these sacred moments and share them with others, I have begun to use my camera. I love composting, recycling, and trips to the dump (which in a rural area is a social event.)

In 1996, I began working in a most unique place, the world renowned health resort, Canyon Ranch. Here we collectively practiced Integrative Health and Wellness, the art of addressing body, mind, and spirit. As a Behavioral Health Therapist in the Health and Healing Department, I saw clients individually, gave lectures, and led workshops.

From 2003 - 2008 I represented Canyon Ranch as a wellness lecturer on the Queen Mary II. Wherever I travel I always take my camera.