

Food for Thought

Greek Australian Women's Network

Quarterly Newsletter
Issue 3 – September 2006



Together,
Hellenic women
Inspire
Nurture and
Kindle
Thoughts of
Australian
Networking
Kinships

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Food For Thought Greek Australian Women's Network

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FROM THE PRESIDENT/FOUNDER

Welcome to the third edition of the FFTN newsletter devoted to the health and well-being. Thanks for your ongoing feedback and contributions which we treasure and act upon.

The topic that I have chosen to talk about today is to do with **Positive Self Esteem**. I believe positive self-esteem is very important for our general health and wellness as human beings. Research suggests that, positive self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness; on the other hand low self-esteem is more likely to lead to depression.

When I was studying to be a teacher I was fascinated by the word "self-esteem" and its importance to children's learning. As a teacher I always tried to enhance my children's self-esteem as it was through this positive reinforcement that they wanted to learn more and be more successful. "



As a mother I have made every effort to raise my children to possess a healthy self esteem. As a HR professional working now in the health and well-being area I discover every day that this magic word "self-esteem" has a lot to do with the way people project themselves, perform, succeed in relationships and life in general.

- Is success a prerequisite for a healthy self esteem?
- Does a healthy self esteem bring success or are they interrelated?
- What about misfortunes, negative experiences, disasters? What role do they play whether we have a high or a low self esteem?

We know that many people have changed their lives and approach after a compelling negative experience. These questions and thoughts have preoccupied many experts and there is debate in the psychological journals and among health professionals. There are no clear cut answers however they are all interrelated.

Can we improve self esteem?

The ancient Greeks claimed that it was a virtue to "Know Thy Self". Self awareness is the beginning to doing something about it.

The most important key to the permanent enhancement of self-esteem is the practice of positive self-talk. – Denis Waitley

Self worth cannot be verified by others. You are worthy because you say it is so. If you depend on others for your value it is other-worth. – Wayne Dyer.

The Food For Thought Network has several members, (counselors, coaches, NLP practitioners and other alternative type professionals) who can help you to improve your self esteem. That was one of the reasons the Network was set up for. Drop me a line at info@fftn.org.au so I can put you in touch with the appropriate professionals.

Take care till next time,

Varvara Ioannou

President Food for Thought Network

info@fftn.org.au

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the spring edition of the FFTN newsletter. I am so glad that winter is over and spring is here. Having lived in Brisbane for five years I have really struggled with the cold since my return a few years ago. I am so looking forward to the warmer weather and the longer sunlit days ahead.

If you caught a bug or two over the winter, Nevenka and Vesna's article on page 7 is a must read as it outlines key strategies for avoiding illness. Read how your emotions and beliefs impact your health and well-being.

On how to improve your emotional well-being and that of your loved ones read Kalli Pulos' "The Four Agreements" (page four).

Speaking of spring, Katherine Papaioanou, our resident naturopath, has provided us with some useful tips (page 10) on spring cleaning our bodies (not our houses!), what foods to help us do this and what foods to avoid.

I have prepared a short article on my favourite plant, Garlic (page 8). It is such a versatile plant and great both medicinally as well as for cooking. I also share my most favourite garlic recipe (very simple, yet so tasty!).

We have two amazing stories about the transformation of two our readers' lives as a result of experiencing health problems. They are both inspirational stories and highlight how facing adversity head on can lead to us to a more authentic way of living and working. Read about Elizabeth's amazing journey on page 6 and Anna's on page 9.

The third function for the year (held on August 11) was dedicated to building resilience for better health, happiness and performance. Marie Spiroulas reports on the night and the talk given by Stuart Taylor (on page 11).

For those of you out there who missed out this time but have something to say on any of our themes please do not hesitate to email me on editor@fftn.org.au. We love receiving your feedback and articles so drop me an email anytime.

Stay healthy!!

Yia sas.

Maria Zissimos

DISCLAIMER

Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual and not necessarily of FFTN members or its committee.

We require that by submitting an article for an edition, you are giving us permission to use the article in future editions of the newsletter or magazine editions, giving full credit to its author(s). However we do not guarantee that all articles will be published.

CONTRIBUTIONS

If you wish to send an article to be included in the next edition of the newsletter, please email the editor at editor@fftn.org.au by 10th November 2006. Also please feel free to email us your suggestions for topics that you would like us to consider for future FFTN functions and/or newsletter editions.

SPONSORS

We are in the process of collating a business register and we are keen to hear from members who would like to sponsor our newsletter. We will include advertising space in every edition to thank our sponsors.

THE FOUR AGREEMENTS - By Kalli Pulos

When first asked about writing an article related to improving health, happiness and performance for this issue of the FFTN newsletter, I thought: 'Where to start? What to include?' Then I recalled a tiny book, the essence of which has remained with me, and which I now use as part of my group workshops, as well as in my work with individuals.

Don Miguel Ruiz's 'The Four Agreements' is for many a life-changing book, the ideas of which come from the ancient Toltec wisdom of the native people of Southern Mexico. The Toltec were 'people of knowledge' - scientists and artists who created a society to explore and conserve the traditional spiritual knowledge and practices of their ancestors.

Though brought up to follow his family's Toltec ways, Ruiz decided to pursue a conventional education, which led him to qualify and practice for several years as a surgeon.

Following a car crash, Don Miguel reverted to his Toltec roots during the late 1970's, first studying and learning in depth the Toltec ways, and then teaching, lecturing and writing during the 1980's and 90's, when he wrote 'The Four Agreements' (published in 1997).

Don Miguel Ruiz survived a serious heart attack in 2002, since then his teachings have been largely channeled through seminars and classes run by his followers, notably his sons Don Jose Luis and Don Miguel Ruiz Junior. The simplicity and elegance of this philosophical pioneer's thinking remains a source of great enlightenment and aspiration.

The simple ideas of 'The Four Agreements' provide an inspirational code for life, a personal development model, and a template for personal development, behaviour, communications and relationships.

Don Miguel Ruiz summarises 'The Four Agreements':

1. BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

2. DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

3. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.

Keep these agreements with yourself for a day, then two, then perhaps a week, and note the impact on your life, colleagues, family, friends, and most importantly, yourself!

Kalli is an executive coach, presenter and facilitator who loves to see people be 'fully alive', empowered and inspired in their professional and personal lives. She delights in working with individuals, teams and organisations to make sustainable changes to achieve what they intend; to align achievement of business objectives with personal success and fulfillment; and to build mastery.

You can contact Kalli on 0402 463157, or kallip@iprimus.com.au.

A "SEA CHANGE" WITHOUT THE SEA

By Elizabeth Pavlidis

FROM THE EDITOR:

I would like to personally thank Elizabeth for sharing her very personal life changing story with us about how her health challenges resulted in a major lifestyle change with a positive outcome.

She has been very generous with her time in responding to my queries about how she dealt with many of her challenges and I hope that she will inspire you as she has with me to review whether your current career is the right one for you or whether you need to make some adjustments (major or minor)

I truly believe all people and things – negative, positive and the 'somewhere in between' enter our lives for a reason. Although the journey at times can be stressful and difficult and the destination (whether we know it or not) overwhelming, it is important to embrace these experiences, either at the time or in hindsight so that we appreciate their contribution to our growth as human beings.

In today's society stress-related psychological and physiological health problems are common. For most of us, it's a challenge to manage work, family, financial, domestic and social commitments, much less find a little time for ourselves!

Something has to GIVE.

As a Personal Assistant for the last 18 years I'd finally reached the highly coveted position of PA to the Office of the CEO in a major corporation. I wanted it, the money was great. I knew I could do it and I made a point to ignore the fact that the only women who were able to hold this position for any length of time in the past were either much older with no partner, young children or life outside work – their life was their work. I'd perfected the art of putting others needs ahead of my own, my children's, my husband's, friends and family and now my new high profile boss. The fact that I had already been suffering from stress-related chronic back pain and dysfunction for the last 6 years was not going to keep me down!

Well guess what? It did. Each of us respond differently to long-term sustained stress and my weak point was obviously my back. I finally suffered a ruptured disc in my lumbar spine and in order to alleviate the excruciating pain my only option was back surgery.

Recovery was slow, both mentally and physically, I had plenty of time to think and think I did - there had to be more to life than this. For me it was time to reassess my work-life balance and I realised I could no longer continue as I had been – push finally came to shove. The untimely death of two young cousins in their late twenties within a short space of time of each other was the last devastating blow and my final ominous message confirming my realisation that life really is too short.

I turned my back (literally!) on the corporate world and its sedentary and stress-filled lifestyle. I was finally free from the 'golden hand-cuffs'. Financially I knew it was going to be difficult as my husband was already investing most of his time and our money in starting his own business, however we were already enjoying some of the benefits of the shift in priorities with me not having to shove my children out the door every morning at 6.30am!

Part of my recovery involved regular massage treatments. The benefits of these treatments led to my growing interest in finding natural healing and preventative therapies and I developed a passion for the benefits that massage can provide for the mind, body and soul, aiding physiological, psychological and mechanical functions of the body.

After much soul-searching I finally had that (as Oprah would say) "light bulb moment". I enrolled in an introductory massage course at the Melbourne Institute of Massage Therapy (MIMT). I loved it! For me it now all seemed clear. What better way to balance my work-life than to work for myself, around my family commitments, on my terms, doing something that I loved and believed in? I already understood first-hand how chronic stress and pain could dramatically and negatively affect one's quality of life and without compromising my deep seated giving nature, I could now help others.

A "SEA CHANGE" WITHOUT THE SEA (Cont...)

By Elizabeth Pavlidis

I went on to enrol in the Certificate IV in Massage therapy at MIMT as a full-time student. After the first week I realised I had probably bitten off more than I could chew. The course was one year of intense study, and relentless examinations in anatomy, physiology and practical massage techniques. At my age I never contemplated going back to school, let alone at this pace and with a family.

I had many doubts, especially just before each exam but my growing fascination in what I was learning kept me going and determined. Encouraged by my success at graduation and compliments from my new clients on my new healing 'gift', I continued my studies for another year, graduating with my Diploma of Remedial Massage and Certificate in Oriental Massage. I'd done it! My career 'sea change' was complete!



I can in no way say it was easy. There were tantrums and resentments towards those around me, as many of my negative behaviours, habits and insecurities that had led me to this turning point kept raising their ugly heads. With my focus finally on me, there were definitely a few noses out of joint at home, however as their adaptation, support and encouragement grew I gritted my teeth and pressed on.

It has been hard enough changing the perception I had of myself but I've also had to deal with the change in perception that others had of me. My parents (who still live in the small country town where I grew up) and In-Laws laughed nervously when I first announced my intentions. The disappointment and doubt in their voices was obvious. The utopia they had imagined and enjoyed bragging about for their daughter or daughter-in-law of a "desk job with air conditioning" was shattered.

The good Greek girl was going to be touching the bodies of strangers and most shockingly the bodies of men other than her husband! What would people say? When I tell friends and relatives that knew me in my previous life what I do now, their reactions vary from "Wow, that's great, I need a massage!", to "Oh my, why would you want to do that?" and even the disappointingly seedy attitude of "Ooh, nudge-nudge, wink-wink".

The parents have finally come around and are now proud of my achievements, friends are still getting used to the idea of me touching them while they are partially naked and I've finally managed to shake off everybody else's luggage I've been carrying around for most of my life – no wonder my back hurt! I've finally been able to think – **GET OVER IT!**

I have been massaging now for the last two and a half years, enjoy every minute of it and look forward to further studies with a scope to expand my qualifications and health-giving skills, especially in the area of women's health.

Elizabeth Pavlidis

Remedial Masseur

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Simple Sure-fire Strategies to Defend Yourself Against Any Illness!

By Nevenka and Vesna Grubacevic

Have you ever wondered why some people get a cold each and every year, while other people never do? Are you prone to illnesses, allergies or other conditions? Do you lack the energy to do the things you want in life? Would you like to raise your defenses against illness so that you can live a longer and healthier life and fully enjoy every moment with your family and friends?

Why boost your immune system?

The key to raising your defenses against illness and disease is to boost your immune system. The immune system protects our body from illness, allergies and other conditions. It has the ability to fight foreign invaders that enter our body, provided that we support it. A strong immune system is our guarantee to a longer, healthier and more fulfilled life.

Here are 5 simple sure-fire strategies that you can implement immediately to increase your immune system.

1. Watch your emotions and beliefs!

You may have heard of the saying "If you want to see what your thoughts were like yesterday, look at your body today. If you want to see what your body will look like tomorrow, look at your thoughts today!" The difference between people who get a cold each year and those that don't is that the former have a belief that they get a cold each year and you may even hear them say that. Also, research by the American Medical Association has proven that unresolved negative emotions can create illness and health issues. For example, unresolved anger has been linked to heart attack and heart disease, while unresolved sadness has been linked to a low immune system and depression. The key to greater energy and better health then is to resolve any unresolved negative emotions and limiting beliefs that are now preventing you from having the health and energy you desire.

2. Eradicate free radicals

Avoid harmful chemicals, including preservatives in processed foods, smoking, excessive drinking, pollution, pesticides, harmful chemicals in personal care and make up products. These harmful chemicals create free radicals which damage cells, affect the natural communication between the cells and weaken the immune system. In addition, smoking, excessive drinking and pollution rob the body of vital nutrition. Instead, read product labels carefully and choose immune system friendly products which help to strengthen its defenses against illness.

3. Drink alkaline water

Healthy adult bodies comprise around 70% water, while the adult brain is about 90% water. Water is important because it hydrates the body, brings nutrients to the organs that are most in need, detoxifies the body and eliminates toxins and waste through the kidneys and liver. Ordinary tap water can be acidic and can cause oxidation which can result in harmful chemical reactions and can cause the skin to wrinkle, the cells and body to age and be prone to illness. Alkaline water improves hydration, reduces acidity and free radicals in the blood, improves the regeneration of cells and boosts the immune system.



4. Eat raw whole foods



Increase your consumption of raw whole foods (e.g. fresh vegetable juices, fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts and good oils such as olive oil) to boost your immune system. These foods are full of natural nutrients that turn food into energy, provide the body with most needed nutrients to strengthen the immune system and to fight infections and invaders. Eating healthy raw fresh food helps the digestive system by absorbing important nutrients which strengthens the immune system.

Simple Sure-fire Strategies to Defend Yourself Against Any Illness! (Cont...)

By Nevenka and Vesna Grubacevic

5. Enjoy your exercise

Cardiovascular exercise (e.g. walking, aerobics, skipping, running) leads to better circulation, the delivery of oxygen to the right organs and increases lymphatic fluids in the body. Increasing the lymphatic fluids in the body strengthens the immune system by eliminating toxins and metabolic debris out of the body. Research has also shown that anytime we have a pleasant experience it increases our immune system, while an unpleasant experience can reduce our immune system. So by enjoying exercise, without stress, anxiety or worry, we are also having a positive impact on our health and overall well-being.

By implementing these simple sure-fire strategies you can quickly and effectively boost your immune system and defend yourself against any illness!



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Nevenka Grubacevic is a Clinical Nutrition, Health and Longevity Consultant[®], has over 30 years experience in the food industry, has successfully run her own restaurant for 10 years and has a diploma in Food & Environmental Allergies & Clinical Nutrition. Vesna Grubacevic is a Performance Transformation Expert[™] with Q^t, a certified NLP Trainer, holds a BEc, has over 17 years' experience and a proven track record of empowering individuals, professionals and business owners to create an abundance of health, wealth and happiness in their lives. Nevenka and Vesna are passionate about educating individuals about their health and run regular workshops as well as offer personalized consultations. For more information on how you can FREE yourself from stress, slow down your ageing, create an abundance of health, a powerhouse of energy and extend your longevity, email Vesna today at vesna@qttransformation.com or call her on (03) 9653-9288.

The Power of Garlic

By Maria Zissimos



I have always loved cooking with garlic and would often hear about its powerful medicinal properties from my mum. Apart from its superb flavour it does wonders for our immune system. It helps fight bacterial, fungal and viral infections. It has specific antibacterial properties and assists in fighting chest infections. It also reduces inflammation and is beneficial to the heart and circulatory system. It can lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and can significantly reduce the stickiness of blood - hence reduce heart attacks, strokes and thrombosis.

I prefer using fresh locally grown organic garlic and even though it is more expensive I find that its taste is far superior from the commercial imported variety. You can buy the organic variety at the Victoria market for about \$20.00 a kilo, which sounds a lot, but remember you only need a bit or even better grow it in the garden. I use garlic in so much of my cooking - soups, stews, casseroles, meats, salads, dressings; however I also like to bake it on its own.



One of my favourite recipes is **Garlic Potato Mash**. It is a very healthy alternative to the usual potato mash as there is no butter or milk and it tastes great as well.

Simply boil some potatoes (the Sebago or Nicolas variety are great) until soft and strain in a colander. Then put the potatoes through a mouli and add good quality olive oil (I use some from my father-in-laws village in the Peloponnese) and some baked garlic with a touch of sea salt. Mix until smooth and serve while warm. Delicious!

My Sickness has Changed the Direction of My Life By Anna Kaloudis

I have always been healthy and with a strong constitution, but all this changed about eight years ago when my health started deteriorating. I was diagnosed with **fibromyalgia**. Suffering from constant pain all over my body, stiff and swollen joints, depression, chronic fatigue, disturbed sleep, irritable bowel syndrome, vertigo, light bothered eyes and a host of other problems, all associated with fibromyalgia.

Eight months on medication left me worse off and desperate for answers. I had to find out what was happening to me and why, and how I could help myself. I read all the articles and books I could find, related to my condition, and discovered that there is no cure, so I turned to alternative medicine.

I tried Qi Gong Healing and exercises, Therapeutic Touch, vitamins, herbs and remedies, meditation, relaxation, yoga, naturopathy, you name it, I tried it. All these did help me to a certain extend and made my life bearable, but I was financially drained and with still a lot to battle with.

Then a friend introduced me to the "BodyTalk System". An energy medicine healing system that looks at the body as a whole entity, meaning taking care of all aspects of a person, the physical, the emotional and the spiritual, as they are all interrelated. I was able to release emotions from past events and traumas that had not been processed and were stored in my body, creating physical problems.

Negative beliefs were dissolved, bringing back sleep and order in my system. Inherited weaknesses are now under control. During the BodyTalk sessions it came up that a few of my organs and endocrines were not talking to each other, so communication was re-established. Once the links were repaired, balance occurred, and the body was able to heal itself. I started getting better and better and most importantly, without drugs, with no side effects, and no healing crisis. I was so enthusiastic. I had to learn this wonderful healing modality and I did.

Now I am a fully qualified BodyTalk practitioner, helping others with their physical, emotional and spiritual problems, bringing balance and communication to their systems. My greatest satisfaction is listening to my clients telling me the difference BodyTalk made to their lives. They say that everything comes to us for a reason. I know this applies to me too.

***Anna Kaloudis is a Certified BodyTalk Practitioner and can be contacted on:
annakaloudis@hotmail.com***

For more information on the Bodytalk system: <http://www.bodytalksystem.com>

Themes for Future FFTN functions

The FFTN committee will shortly be reviewing topics to cover in future events. So put your thinking caps on and tell us what themes you would like featured in future FFTN functions and newsletters and why. Also let us know whether you would be interested in participating on the night (either as a speaker or in an event management role).

Please email us your suggestions for topic and/or whether you can help out with future functions by emailing the editor on editor@fftn.org.au or Varvara on info@fftn.org.au.

SPRING CLEANING**By Katherine Papaioannou (BHSc - Naturopath)**

Spring cleaning, we all spring clean our houses, but do we ever spring clean our body. Well summer is on its way and what a better time to do a cleanse. Cleansing the body can be done in many ways, either eating healthier, leaving out of our diet foods that may dampen our system or even taking supplements.

One of the best ways to cleanse our body is through diet. If we don't cleanse our body then we could suffer from, headaches, fatigue, pains, coughs, gastrointestinal problems or a weakened immune system. Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is a great way to cleanse the body. Various vegetables and fruit have various beneficial properties.



The following is a suggested list of fruit and vegetables that can help with cleansing the body; lemons, watermelon, limes, grapefruit, mangos, papayas, dates, figs, melons,

grapes, kiwi, blueberries, apples, pears, oranges, bananas, pineapple, peaches, avocados, okra, pumpkin, green beans, beets, celery, lettuce, zucchini, sweet potato, carrots, tomatoes, fresh corn, mushrooms, cabbage, peas, soybeans, tofu, artichoke, asparagus, bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower, chicory, leeks, parsley and spinach.



Other food that is cleansing to the body are;

Barley, buckwheat, corn, brown rice, rye, amaranth, millet, wild rice, quinoa, lentil beans, aduki beans, mung beans, soy cheese, soy milk, goat milk, goat cheese, turkey, fish, chicken, lamb, and green tea.

Examples of beneficial properties you find in fruit and vegetables are as follows;

Apples promote the elimination of fluid from the body and are rich in iron and calcium. Avocado's are very alkaline, contain very little sugar and are rich in iron, magnesium, zinc and vitamin C. Broccoli helps with muscular development, rich in chlorophyll, iron, calcium, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin E.



Carrots are a great anti-oxidant and general cleanser, excellent for healthy skin and hair, rich in iron, calcium, magnesium, sodium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Celery is very alkaline forming food, rich in potassium, iron, calcium, magnesium, vitamin A and vitamin C.

The following list is foods we should avoid or minimize;

Beef, pork, cured meats, refined foods, canned foods, sugar, salt, saturated fats, coffee, alcohol, chocolate, wheat, white flour, pastries, pasta, cheese, homogenized milk, ice cream, beer, soft drinks, white rice, potatoes, frozen foods, packaged foods.

A cleanse can be done in a few days or even a few weeks. We must also remember to drink plenty of water so we don't become dehydrated. If you suffer from any illnesses please ask your doctor if you can go on a cleanse.

Katherine is a fully qualified naturopath. She received her degree in May 2000. Once she received her degree she went to live in Greece and the UK and worked there as a naturopath. She has been back here in Melbourne for just over a year and is working in a health food store in the city and consulting at a pharmacy in Glenroy.

To contact Katherine please email her on: katherine1@dodo.com.au.

RESILIENCE SEMINAR By Marie Spiroulas

On Friday the 11th August a group of approximately forty people were privileged to listen to an informative talk given by Stuart Taylor the director of the Resilience Institute of Australia. The topic of discussion was titled "Building resilience for health, happiness and performance".

Demonstrating that positive emotion is an important part of building resilience, we began the session massaging each others backs. Immediately the feel in the room was positively transformed.

Resilience was defined as a learned capacity to:

- Overcome obstacles of the past
- Bounce back from major setbacks
- Steer through daily challenge
- Reaching out to others and our full potential.

Stuart then explained the concept of the death spiral. The death spiral begins with a state of confusion, followed by cognitive dysfunction, withdrawal, physical vulnerability, distress and finally depression. Substituting negativity for arousal (positive stress), flow and control was recommended.

Five disciplines for resilience were summarised as follows:

- (1) **Stress Mastery:**
Being able to shift out of negative stress to positive stress and eventually zero stress.
- (2) **Physical vitality:**
Nutrition, exercise, energy, strength and endurance.
- (3) **Emotional Competence:**
Starts with self awareness, replacing negative emotion with a positive emotion.
- (4) **Cognitive discipline-mindful:**
Optimistic and accurate thinking. Watching, disputing and mastering thoughts.
- (5) **Spirit in action:**
The meaningful life.

By applying the principles discussed in the seminar, we may then simply begin to envisage a more fulfilled and enriched life. I truly hope we all can at least try to attain such a positive state of being, as we owe it to ourselves and our loved ones.

Wishing you all success

Marie Spiroulas.