

Newsletter

The Gathering - A Celebration of Tao and Defiant Women Everywhere

Spring 2010

CELEBRATE THE UNIQUENESS OF YOU

*Today you are You, that is truer than true.
There is no one alive who is Youer than You.
-Dr. Seuss*

The Chinese philosophy of Tao teaches us the principle of "Te": the virtue of being the best we can be: celebrating our uniqueness without comparing ourselves to, or imitating, others.

That's a difficult assignment in our culture where media bombards us with photos of women who are younger/thinner/more athletic/more beautiful/wealthier/apparently happier than we are. How can we possibly compete with them?

We can't. And that's just the point. We don't have to and we shouldn't even try.

I'm not suggesting that we can't look at others and see them as role models – if the model fits us, that is.

Recently I was in a supermarket and noticed an energetic, tall and slim, younger woman standing in front of me. It's entirely possible that I might have bemoaned my "fate" of being old, a bit heavier than I'd like, short (and getting shorter every day) and weary from a full day's activities. Had I compared myself to her – taking into account only her youth and svelte figure - I would certainly have come out on the short end.

What I did notice, however, was her vibrancy. That was something lacking in me that day. And that was a trait I could easily incorporate into my essence. While I realized I can never be young again, nor was I ever tall and slim, I knew I am fortunate to have a body which works well and has given me years and years of fine living. In giving myself credit for what I do have, and then recognizing what was lacking that day (a kick of vibrancy), I recognized my uniqueness and felt oh, so good about myself.

Think about your strengths. Acknowledge and celebrate all within you that is good, strong, and wise.

It is quite amazing that this is a chore for many of us; we've been "trained" to maximize our weaknesses while minimizing our assets. Its skewed thinking like this that keeps us from believing in ourselves and all of our possibilities.

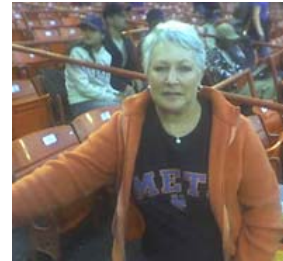
Believing in ourselves requires a positive mindset, a willingness to stop comparing ourselves to others, and the ability to acknowledge our skills and be tolerant of our weaknesses.

Each of us is unique with our own special talents and abilities. Once we to recognize that we can tap into our best selves and be all we are meant to be. That's when we truly live the principle of Te.



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[April 2008](#)
[March 2008](#)
[February 2008](#)
[January 2008](#)

[December 2007](#)
[November 2007](#)
[October 2007](#)
[September 2007](#)
[August 2007](#)
[July 2007](#)
[June 2007](#)
[May 2007](#)
[April 2007](#)
[March 2007](#)
[February 2007](#)

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[November 2006](#)
[October 2006](#)
[September 2006](#)
[August 2006](#)
[July 2006](#)
[June 2006](#)

After posting *The Gathering*, I received this comment from Maryann S:
Maximize our weaknesses and minimize our assets! OMG! I never thought of it that way. As a daughter, granddaughter, niece, friend, student, teacher, mother, etc. etc. I was always taught to concentrate on things that I needed to strengthen and improve upon. I was never encouraged to celebrate that at which I excelled. Funny, though, I seem to always encourage my children and grandchildren to continue to pursue that at which they excel and also to try new things.....I think that the encouragement to pursue their talents is what encourages them to try other things.....I think that maybe my parents philosophy was: that which will not kill you will make you strong.....I say: that which is what you are good at will inspire you to approach the unfamiliar with a positive 'can do attitude.

**Recently I asked you to respond to this question:
If you could write your biography using only six words, what would you write?**

Here are some of your responses:

From Jessica G:

- 1) trying
- 2) growing
- 3) learning
- 4) nurturing
- 5) caring
- 6) sustaining

Rexanne B sent:

Wow! This is great, isn't it?

And then she added:

The best part is that when you hit those times where you may say it sarcastically you add six more words: "How can I grow from this?"



And here's Eileen J:

Always changing,
Ever growing,
Allowing love.

Diane R contributed:

"Wife, mother, grandmother, nurse--deliriously happy!!

Maureen H sent:

"Passionate. Loves beauty, animals, music, learning."

With about 600 more words, I could begin to scratch the surface... (perhaps my 6 words should be: "loves more things than can count" ;-)

From Tillie G:

"I expect to celebrate my 90th"

Note from CJ: Tillie is my former mother-in-law and we are all looking forward to celebrating her 90th birthday this coming July!

Barb R has this bio:

I did it my way...olé!

Patricia D's contribution is:

"Making others laugh in any situation."

May R has this to share:

Considering everything, It's been pretty good.

And Maria M. sent this:

Radiating joy, beauty, laughter, love, peace.

Barbara B says:

Happy beach bum with a cocktail J

I received this from Kelly K:

Mother, artist, wife
Dreamer, happy life

Maryann S recently sent this:

Live large, love unconditionally, laugh, nature.

To these I'd like to add my own:

Figuring out why I am here.

Many thanks to all of you who responded. It's been great fun receiving and reading your six word bios, and such a delight to be able to share them with all of the other Tao and defiant women reading this newsletter.

CJ

SPRING WISDOM

**"We are so accustomed to disguising ourselves to others that,
in the end, we become disguised to ourselves."**

-Francois de La Rochefoucauld

HERE'S A VERY SPECIAL INVITATION FOR YOU:

Bloom in Italy:

Barbara Scala and Bloom On –Line info@bloomonline.com has a very special retreat planned: coming up - April 10-17, 2010

Join Barb for her spring retreat in breathtaking Tuscany!



Imagine an 800 year old picturesque farmhouse ("[Ebbio](#)") in a magical place surrounded by an evergreen forest that's inviting, rustic and beautiful. (Think Under The Tuscan Sun!). Now imagine time to savor a stroll through the woods, the smell of fragrant air, the delightful company of wonderful women and all the other magnificent sites and flavors of Tuscany.

With an emphasis on living a balanced, happy, and fulfilled lifestyle (sounds ideal!), we'll start each day with yoga and a breakfast chat about the "seeds" you can plant to sprout your dreams and grow your life.

Bloom with la dolce vita!

If you are interested and would like more information, email Barb at info@bloomonline.com or call 203-521-1129. Ciao!

TAO AND DEFIANT NEWS

Tao-Girl now has a Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tao-Girl/181110531132?ref=ts>

and is on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/taogirl>

Working with the girls is certainly getting me to keep up with technology!

As for my upcoming schedule:

Please go to the travels page of this website for detailed information.

http://taogirl.com/woman_home/travels.htm

Saturday, April 10, 9:00 AM

Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts

delivering the keynote speech at their annual Thank You to the Volunteers Day.

And, in the afternoon I'll be giving a workshop on Tao and dynamic – how to mentor girls to be Tao-Girls.

Wednesday, April 14, 2010 time TBA

Girls Incorporated of Southwestern CT, Waterbury, CT

I will facilitate a writing workshop for girls ages 6 - 11

Friday, April 16, 2010

Womencetera Memphis Conference, Memphis, TN

CJ will speak and present a panel at this full-day conference.

Time and place TBA

Friday, April 23 - Sunday, April 25, 2010

Girl Scouts of Eastern MA Diversity Initiative

Mid-season conference for the diversity volunteers

CJ will speak and present workshops, sharing her Tao-Girl program for the volunteers to bring to their girls.

Time and place TBA

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Contacts and Compacts, Danbury, CT

sponsored by Promotions in Motion

www.promotionsinmotion.net/events/contactscopy.php

CJ will be there along with Donna Ferber www.donnaferber.com

autographing copies of their books

Time and place TBA

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 11:30am - 2:30pm

From Here to Serenity, Southbury, CT <http://fromheretoserenityct.net/>

Come celebrate May Day with CJ at a workshop for Tao and defiant women.

250 Main Street South, Southbury, CT

For reservations call: (203) 560-9653

Friday, June 25, 2010, 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Girl Scouts of Eastern MA

Gold Award Dinner

Time and place TBA

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Contacts and Compacts, Danbury, CT

sponsored by Promotions in Motion

www.promotionsinmotion.net/events/contactscompacts.php

CJ will be speaking at this lunchtime event

Time and place TBA

IN THE WORKS:

High School Inc, Hartford, CT – working with the girls in their after school program

Dates TBA

High Hopes Program, Hartford, CT

Dates TBA

Madison, NJ – Sages Pages Book Store – working with parents and teaching professionals as we all help our teen and pre-teen girls find confidence and self-esteem

Dates TBA

Madison, NJ – working with the Madison Alliance Against Substance Abuse

Dates TBA

I hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of The Gathering, and look forward to receiving your comments along with your own stories and news (which will only be published with your approval).

As for the next Gathering, well it will come out in the summer, with Tao and defiant updates to continue when I have news to share with you all.

CJ