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roadSIGNS Newsletter

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Greetings!

The leaves are down, so much so that this morning I could not find the stairs leading from the deck to the side yard and had to pick my way cautiously through the piles. I love the scent of autumn - earthy and wholesome. And yes, I suspect a leaf raking extravaganza is on the way.

The hallmark event of October was our week long trip to Paris, a city I have longed to visit and which did not disappoint. And although it was not planned, the trip became one of significant learning for yours truly. All this to say I learned more about savoring life and a lot about self-compassion, this month's topic.

Welcome to **Self-Compassion!**

Enjoy the read!

Betty

For the fall of 2015, we are taking a sabbatical from retreat work and Our Labyrinth Walk in September while Betty completes her certificate in Applied Positive Psychology. We will be back with ME FIRST, our annual Intentions and Vision Day and more in 2016.

We will be continuing HEALTHY LIVING CAFE in collaboration with the QUIRKY CARROT. **As of this month we are returning to Tuesdays for our events** - 3rd Tuesday of each month (November 2015 to June 2016) excluding December.

On November 17th, our next speaker will be Betty Healey who will be sharing some of her learning from the Positive Psychology program she is engaged in. The title of the talk is "Exercising Your Happiness Muscle".

Find out more and register [HERE](#)

The next Labyrinth Walk will be held Saturday, December 19th, 2015.

For details go [HERE](#)

Our annual Intentions and Vision Day is scheduled for January 23rd, 2016. This is a popular event so you will want to sign up early. For details go [HERE](#)

In This Issue

[This month's Sign](#)

[Your aSIGNment](#)

[Travel Tips](#)

[Someone in Your Corner](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

This month's roadSIGN



"Dans L'oeil du Flâneur",
photo by Jim Healey, Paris, France, 2015

November Newsletter

Flâner - to stroll, to wander with no destination in mind
Flâneur - one who strolls

Robert Collins Dictionary

SELF-COMPASSION

It was off to Paris for Jim and I on October 1st, a trip we had planned to celebrate our 65th birthdays and yes, a bucket list item for me. It was a much anticipated event, one that was fueled by our many friends who had already visited and the love they had for this city. There was just one fly in the ointment - I was experiencing significant pain and swelling in my left knee. This problem had appeared suddenly three weeks prior to the trip and simply refused to go away.

Paris is a city for walkers. The Seine, The Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame and... the list goes on. And then there is La Grande Epicerie de Paris, a grocery store extraordinaire and the many cafés, pâtisseries, and various delectable delights. There is much to delight the person who enjoys being outdoors and loves beautiful architecture and the many gardens sprinkled throughout the city. Oh my!

My challenge - walk anyway! And so I learned two things: the art of being a 'flâneuse' and a lot of self-compassion.

Flâner

The term 'flâner' came to me in an article posted by my dear friend Delayne entitled, "The Flâneur Discovers Paris, a Step at a Time." To be a flâneur/flânuese is to stroll with no fixed destination in mind, taking in the sights and sounds of the city, noticing the chestnuts clinging to their branches, discovering the hidden gardens unknown to the tourist, appreciating the fall leaves and late blooming flowers, and pausing regularly to just breathe in the air. One of my best memories is sitting on a bench at La Trocadéro and looking across the river at the Eiffel Tower. There was a small carousel directly in front of us and I can still hear the laughter of the children riding the up and down ponies. Sitting like this is not in my usual repertoire.

My walking challenge became an act of savouring. I was no longer able to march at my normal pace; I was forced by circumstances to slow down, literally take one step at a time and to breathe in the environment of Paris. Each day was a new adventure as we wandered the streets between Montmartre and the Seine, finding our way to the various points of interest and making new discoveries along the way. I began to appreciate how much I miss when I go for a walk at my usual pace.

Reflecting back to last month's e-newsletter, where I discussed the importance of savouring and being in the moment, it seems to me that the Universe gifted me this experience. I had the opportunity to not only see Paris, I began to experience it. What a lesson!

Self-Compassion

Being the person that I am, this incident/my 'handicap', thrust me solidly into the arms of my self-critic. You can imagine what she had to say to me. Here's just a taste:

- How could you be so stupid to let this happen
- You don't take care of yourself
- You pushed yourself too hard with the gardening this summer
- Now your trip is going to be ruined
- And more YECH!

Yes I am an astute student of my own work and I did take all those comments and flip them into more uplifting thoughts. And I needed something more.

One of the highlights of my journey to date with Positive Psychology has been a look at self-compassion. Honestly, I have never explored this as a concept; I have been too focused on self-esteem and self-confidence.

Kristen Neff, *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*, states that as human beings, it is our nature to want happiness not suffering. She emphasizes that it is our birthright to expect compassion and has dedicated her career to researching this theme.

'Self-compassion is a powerful way to achieve emotional well-being and contentment in our lives.'

Where do you begin? What does a practice of self-compassion look like?

Neff suggests the following three steps as being vital to a self-compassion practice:

- **Be Kind to Yourself**
Have you ever noticed that you are much kinder and compassionate with others than you are with yourself? Here's the opportunity - start treating yourself with the same level of kindness that you offer everyone else in your life. Be gentle and understanding with yourself rather than being the harsh critic and judge.
- **Recognize the Common Humanity that binds us all**
Relationships are important; that feeling of being connected with others in experiencing life. Invest in your relationships and be a part of your community. Share your stories to create that moment of deeper connection.
- **Mindfulness**
Be open to the reality of the moment and be present to what is. Hold your daily experiences in a way that is balanced. Don't ignore your pain, fear or hurts - acknowledge them and shake hands with them. And, don't exaggerate them simply examine them and learn to respond versus react to them. Shine the light on what you want to experience every day and be in gratitude.

Final Word

My Paris experience helped me to practice these three steps of self-compassion. I was simply kind to me; I was present to the pain I experienced without exaggerating it. I saw the magnificence of what was around me and gave that my attention. I allowed Jim to support me and lift me up every step of the way. I learned to stroll and to savour.

As a result, Paris is an experience I shall always remember. I learned a few lessons, lessons which I believe translate well into the life I now choose for me. I encourage you to learn the art of 'flâner' and to begin the practice of self-compassion.

Your asSIGNment

- Take a look at your critical self-talk. Have a conversation with yourself and ask

- Take a look at your critical self-talk. Have a conversation with your critic and ask her/him what evidence she has to support her comments.
- Consider the last time you offered kind words to a friend, colleague or family member. Now offer those same words to yourself. Repeat them several times so that they begin to sink in.

Travel Tip

Go for a stroll. Be present to what surrounds you. Notice, savour, breathe. What if you did this more regularly? How would this influence your life?

Conscious Communication Coaching

Conscious communication is mindfulness. Our coaching clients are experiencing amazing results in their life as they learn to be clear about what they want and to take action in doing and being.

roadSIGNS is dedicated to offering coaching packages and retreat programs based on the principles of Conscious Communication and designed to assist you in living the life of your choice.

Here is what two of our coaching circle participants shared with us recently:

... the nuggets of wisdom that have revealed themselves throughout our short and powerful six weeks (of coaching) will continue to unveil themselves to me and lead to new questions and discoveries.

...The coaching sessions in FROM CRITIC TO COACH have helped me discover how to return to pure energy, to experience the true meaning and purpose of the game I call Life.

Give yourself the gift of coaching. [Contact us](#) to arrange a coaching consultation and explore the options.

Lumina Learning Systems

Learn about your personal preferences and your core qualities/strengths through the Lumina Spark Portrait. This comprehensive psychosocial assessment leads you gently down the path of self-discovery through a unique portrait of who you are and how you

show up in different life situations. It is a great starting point in developing your awareness and learning strategies for being resilient.

**I have always wanted to learn to mother myself first
but I did not know how to do it.
Lumina has given me the tools to understand
what it is I need to do for myself and how to engage my strengths.
It has opened the door to being coached through my top qualities/strengths.
Monica**

Check out the website, www.roadsigns.ca for more information and/or contact betty@roadSIGNS.ca .

Events:

For details regarding any of our upcoming events in 2015 [visit our website](#)

ME FIRST Self-Study Program

The ME FIRST Self-Study Program offers a structured approach for your ME FIRST experience. This 10 module self-study program replicates the ME FIRST Retreat experience allowing you to complete it at your own pace

For more details go [HERE](#)

Healthy Living Cafe - Tuesday November 17th,2015

The title of this month's Healthy Living Cafe is "Exercising your Happiness Muscle". Join Betty Healey for a discussion regarding the many factors that influence happiness and well-being. Walk away with some concrete ideas for enhancing your health through happiness.

Betty Healey is a teacher, coach and facilitator. She is currently completing a Certificate in Applied Positive Psychology.

At the HLC you can also indulge in some coffee or tea and a Quirky Carrot sweet treat which is included in the price of admission.

For more details and to register go [HERE](#)

Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk

Join us for the next Labyrinth Walk on Saturday December 19th, 2015.

For more details go [HERE](#)

Intention and Vision Day

Join us for our annual Intentions and Vision Day which is scheduled for January 23rd, 2016. This is a popular event so you will want to sign up early.

For more details go [HERE](#)

Your comments and suggestions on this newsletter are greatly appreciated. Forward this e-mail to a friend or colleague who you think would appreciate the message. A simple way is to use the "forward e-mail" button below my signature.

If you would like to sign up for my monthly e-mail, please follow this link

<http://www.roadsigns.ca/newsletters.html>

Sincerely,

Betty Healey
roadSIGNS