

## Moving Through Grief (Or According With Impermanence)

By ROSELEE BLOOSTON, MONTCLAIR, NJ

Long before my teacher accreditation, I had planned to give the required presentation to a hypothetical audience of writers. T'ai Chi Chih does wonders for creativity, and I am, after all, a writer. But the night before, I couldn't shake the sense that there were others I needed to address. I lay in bed, mentally revising what I would tell this audience, a group I had been a member of for almost two years: the bereaved.

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Three years earlier, I had walked into a TCC class assuming it was the martial art form. The distinctly non-martial movements soothed me, and it felt right. I incorporated the practice into my life, thinking, "I'm preparing for something." A year later (as my husband lay dying in a Dubai hospital), I made my plane reservations, waited for my son to come home for that dreaded trip, packed my bags and did my practice. After facing the stark reality of the foreign I.C.U., and the doctors' insistence that I pray, I stood in my husband's apartment, terrified, and did my practice.

By the time I got to Light at the Top of the Head, Light at the Temple, a remarkable thing happened. I opened my hands above my head and a bolt of energy – benign lightening, if you will – shot through me. I was shocked and quite literally grounded. I have never experienced anything like it before or since. In fact, I'd never "gotten" this movement, but the moment was profoundly powerful and has stayed with me. I needed energy; I did my practice, and I received what I needed.

During the next months, crushed by sadness, I did my practice. Through overwhelming anxiety, I did my practice. I focused on the *tan t'ien* and regained my equilibrium. When the world turned cold, I moved with softness and found connection. The daily practice of TCC gave me back my strength, allowed me to let pain ebb and flow, to move through my grief. Though the death of my husband was a personal tragedy, my life would continue. I had learned to accord with impermanence.

And so I told my presentation audience, "When you don't know how to go on, let go. When loss robs you of your identity, put your attention on the soles of your feet, shift your weight and flow from the center. *Chi* will carry you forward, and you will remember who and what you are: a human being, able to experience sorrow and joy, and above all, a still Vital Force."

## Pretending No More

By CLEO ROEMELE, YORK, PA

Prior to attending teacher accreditation last fall I used to believe that, when doing T'ai Chi Chih, I was pretending to know what I was doing. Some might even say I was conducting a careless practice where my intention was more focused on moving perfectly rather than allowing the *Chi* to flow on its own. Through my many teachers over the years at intensives and private instruction (you all know who you are and I thank you from the bottom of my heart), I've since come to appreciate Justin's words: "It's not called TCC perfect, but TCC practice."

Even with that deeper understanding, I struggled with whether or not attend this year's teacher conference because there wasn't much opportunity for me to instruct this year. The guidance of a close friend and fellow instructor helped me to see that it's not how many students we have but the fact we're continuing our commitment to the TCC community at large.

I've often wondered whether or not I was worthy of certain things – perhaps that's the reason why I continue to put other duties in front of ones more important to my well-being. You know, the never-ending tasks like dishes, laundry, work assignments, email. Instead of spending quality time rejuvenating the soul. Why is it that we so willingly give into our *vashanas* and continually reunite with those habitual pathways that impede our growth and/or temporary peace? The answer is probably unique to each of us, but my goal is to strive toward acceptance and simply allow a moment without judgment or fear.



I am indeed looking forward to spending time with fellow TCC enthusiasts in the serene landscape of Nebraska. Whenever more than two of us congregate, magical happenings occur and I, for one, don't want to miss a thing. Look me up. I'll be somewhere close to the front asking lots of questions in order to learn and grow in the awe-inspiring *Chi*.