

# Preparing for the Rain

*By Carolyn Reynolds*

Always remember this: It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

How many of the things that you mean to do for yourself do you put off because for the moment you are not in a crisis of some sort? We do tend to ourselves during a crisis such as the aftermath of a car accident, an unexpected medical diagnosis, the latest round of flu, or simply the realization that the person in the mirror seemingly aged 10 years overnight. You know that little funnyism, "Gee, if I'd known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself." Chances are good that you really will live well into your 80's or 90's. Everyday you are creating the person you will become. What did you put into the mix today?

You can do something very meaningful everyday and it needn't take long and it costs no money. Choose a time and choose a space. Make it a ritual. Worried about the others in your family? They will greatly respect your time and space and be proud of the care you are taking for yourself. You will be teaching them to care for themselves by example, the most powerful way to teach. Explain your plans and elicit their input. Do they have any ideas on how the family might help you with your plan? Some little one may offer to do a chore or waylay the telephone for you. And one day they may wish to join you in making their own space and time.

Begin by stretching and flexing and twisting the body. Squats will keep the legs strong and balancing on one foot will keep the vestibular system healthy to prevent falls. Lots of healing goes on in just this process. The lymph system works to clean the blood when muscles are stretched and flexed because it has no pumping system of its own. Posture is improved, back pain is eliminated, and the body is strengthened. If you are not sure just what to do, find a hatha yoga class for instruction of good alignment and safety.

Next, lie down on your back and survey the body. Let your attention move from the toes to the top of the head and back down, not missing any part. Be aware of all sensations and impressions. If a place is tight or uncomfortable, as you breathe out imagine you are breathing into that place and consciously relax it. Be aware of what that part of your body does for you. Give it your attention. Energy follows attention.

Now sit in a comfortable position and breathe in fully starting from the diaphragm. Make the breath steady and even, without jerks or pauses. The diaphragm moves in toward the heart at the end of the out breath, emptying the lungs completely. Make this breathing technique vigorous but not to the point of becoming light-headed.

Allow the breathing to slow to a comfortable pace. It remains steady and even, in breath rounding to out breath and out breath to in breath with the out breath twice as long as the in breath. This is your time to take a vacation from thinking, planning, worrying, etc. Be in the silence.

This journey can be taken in as little as three minutes to as long as you would like. But if you will do this once or twice each day, you will be amazed. And you will be ready when the rains come.