

Living in the Rhythm of the Year

The Wellness attitude is one of seeking possibilities. In my discussions with Lathrop residents I am looking for the solid paths people are taking toward safe and satisfying aging. There are no secrets, just better basic choices. And for me, the path I find myself turning down in my search for vitality and momentum is the path of rhythm. It's not just my background as a drummer, or as a dancer that leads me here, but as one who has looked for the patterns that are expressed in living systems. For certain, these life rhythms are layered, but I think it's worth the time to tease them apart.

My Friday Friends know my deepest commitment is to the basic rhythm of in and out, that is, the pulse of the breath. Our breath is the click track upon which we layer all the other rhythms of our life. Paying clear attention to our breath, doing exercises for deepening and extending, practicing linking our breath to movement- all these commitments to the breath are inarguably commitments to a fuller life. We can ride that continual in and out of the breath to let tensions fall away and to allow busy minds to quiet. Our attention on this essential rhythm is attention on the engine that pushes and pulls us into the next moment

There are of course endless cycling rhythms that we live within, being directed by and directing them as we may. We see the work of the life body in the realm of plants, as they reach out toward the light of day and draw their energy back into the roots at night. Attending to our sleep rhythms is a key part of attending to our own healthy life force (stay tuned in the New Year for a presentation on supporting better sleep). The compelling cycles of elimination too must not be ignored, and their link to the other bodily rhythms of intake and exercise help keep the clockwork of our bodies ticking along. We all know how scheduling regular daily and weekly activities help us keep momentum moving forward. The promise of seeing familiar faces at an event or checking an item off the calendar can work like weighted spring on a clock, lifting us from a moment of pause to the next moment of engagement.

And finally, as the dark moment of the winter solstice descends, I think of the breathing cycle of the season, as the earth draws in its breath and we ride our own energy and attention inward. This is a rhythm woven into our life force, and each year we have a chance to embrace it and allow it to nourish us. As our vital forces ebbs with that of the Earth, our hearts and intentions prepare for the outbreak of the return to the light. How will you ride that rhythm into what's possible in the New Year?

On behalf of Lucie, Cheryl, Andrea, Jane, Janet, Diane, Kaycee, Robin, Paige, Tatyana, Felicia and Alison, I send you thanks from the Wellness Team for everyone's contributions to the Employee Appreciation Fund and wish you all sweet moments of peace as the cycle turns again.

Rob Olmsted