

# FALL 2015

## THE NEEDED ART OF DESTRESSING



*"The enormity of life's tasks weigh and press on the day... they demand and insist on a constancy of attention that is relentless."*

Cheryl Sanders-Sardello.

At some levels modern life resembles a roller coaster stuck on acceleration. With the daily noise and constant stimulus of phone calls, emails, texts, updating and downloading info, posting, texting, and tweeting, not to mention relational and work place complexities, many of us find ourselves in a general state of stress. A scattered exhaustion and distracted breathlessness that lure us to finish off the day mindlessly numb in front of the latest flickering Netflix series. How often do we need to be reminded each day to simply breathe or calm down?

Finding ways to live, thrive and adapt to this sped up life requires one to enter proactively into the learning curve of caring for oneself and discovering the art of de-stressing (decompressing, defragging, grounding and centering). More and more, my counseling office functions as a safe refuge to breathe and be known, while the load of stress that is being carried day in and day out gets unpacked and named, sorted out and de-cluttered.

The advice of the ancient poet/musician feels like needed healing medicine: "Step out of traffic! Take a long loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything" (The Message, Psalm 46:10). What would it look like in our modern stressed out commuting routines to pull off into a rest area for a needed mental health moment, to recalibrate, breathe deeply and be still, letting go gently of trying to control and manage everything? This kind of stillness leads to an invitation to pay

attention to beauty, birds, and clouds (which are ultimately glimpses of God).

In Curt Thompson's book *Anatomy of the Soul*, the author states that focused attention exercises, such as contemplative prayer and mindfulness practices, form a key component to the neuroplastic triad\*\* that enhance the flexible growth and healing activation of the mind/brain. So it looks very much like the old poet comes to us as a modern therapist with advice that we need to hear. It also fits in seamlessly with the sweet words of Jesus aimed again at our over-burdened souls:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (The Message, Matthew 11: 28-30)*

I love the suggestion that getting close to spirit and spiritual things, and exploring the possibility of relating to God, might bring one into a sustainable lifestyle of lightness and freedom. I also love how the counselling process can assist clients in learning how to de-stress and find these sustaining rhythms of living more lightly in our sped up world.

**Brent Unrau**

**Contract Counsellor, CCA**

\*\*By the way, if you are wondering what the other two parts of the neuroplastic triad are, they are *aerobic activity* (ideally 5 times a week for at least 45 minutes at a time) and *novel learning experiences* that expand your level of creativity on a meaningful level.



Heres has been teaching for 34 years in elementary and high schools in Alberta, Manitoba and BC. For 5 years he was principal of a growing elementary school. He obtained his MA in Counselling in 2007 and is a Registered Clinical Counsellor with the BCACC.

Experiences in the field of education enable him to counsel in a wide range of areas. These include work-related stress and burn out among professionals, parenting and family issues, alienation, isolation, bullying and rivalry, anxiety and depression.

Ongoing training and experience has positioned him to provide counsel in anger management, and life transition issues. He has participated in the conflict mediation process in schools and churches.

Heres' counselling approach is informed by a biblical worldview. Through grace based individual or group counselling, clients can experience renewed minds, and transformed relationships with God, neighbor and self.

Heres treasures his growing family. Making music, gardening, hiking, cycling, canoeing, playing chess and traveling are his favorite activities.

## **Membership and Donation Drive**

Our annual membership and donation drive is held each year in the fall. We rely on the financial support from individuals and churches as it enables us to offer help to people and provide a sliding fee scale, based on income level. We appreciate all donations large or small. If you would like to make a donation, please contact our office.

## **From the Chairman of the CCCA Board**

On my last birthday my wife gave me a card that stated: "We're not old, we've just been young for a long time!" When someone tells me they just turned 80, I jokingly tell them, "Really? You don't look a day over 79 and ½!" Age is a matter of the heart. If you don't feel old, and don't act old, are you still old? I can truthfully say to people, "You're only as old as your heart is!"

Well, this year Cascade Christian Counselling Association (CCCA) turns 35! We were officially incorporated under the Societies' Act of British Columbia as Cascade Christian Counselling Association in October of 1980. Dr. Harry Van Belle, who had been operating a counselling service since 1976, became our first Executive Director. In 1982 Dr. Dick Farenhorst became our Executive Director, and continued until he retired in September 2012. Since then we have been served for short periods of time by Elaine Binnema and Penny Armstrong. At present we continue to offer counselling services by means of a number of contract counsellors serving out of our offices in Surrey and Abbotsford. Under the direction of our Board, and the management of our Office Staff, this is working out very well for Cascade Christian Counselling Association.

So, are we old now then? Are we perhaps approaching middle age? Or are we still a young agency eagerly moving forward to serve God's people in the area of Christian counselling? If we measure age by the heart, then we can say with confidence, speaking for our counsellors, our staff, and our Board that our heart is still very much in it. We still feel young! We thank God for the years of service that are behind us, and we look forward with confidence to continuing that service for many more years to come. May God bless us as we move into the wonderful future he has planned for us!

**Board Chair, CCCA  
Rev. Rudy W. Ouwehand**