



## *Change Is not the Only Constant in Life*

*by Ma Deva Lokita*

A friend sent me a text message on the morning of his beloved's first chemotherapy infusion. "The strangest feeling," he wrote, "is to know that from today on everything is going to change." It made me think about change. In particular, what *hasn't* changed since my life got turned upside down?

As I sat by the sea recently, watching the waves and the white clouds flow together as one blue spaciousness, it came to me that whenever and wherever I sit by the sea, it is the same: the water, the sand, the waves, the sky, the horizon. Whether I am sad, lonely, joyous, somewhere in-between, whether I am on Stinson Beach in California, or Playa Montezuma in Costa Rica, or in Hörnum, Germany – it is the same. The sea does not care about me; it continues in its own rhythm of life.

A lot has changed for me in the past year, internally and externally. The turmoil and trauma of the main events brought me face-to-face with mortality, true surrender, and total let-go in ways that were inconceivable to me before it all happened. Here is the story.

In October 2014 I had a biopsy on a small growth in my left breast. I was terrified, as my mother had died of breast cancer in 2007. The findings were benign, but the tumor kept growing. Several months passed, and I endured several more biopsies. In July 2015 I had the entire tumor removed. It was triple negative metaplastic breast cancer, a very rare and aggressive form, stage 3, chemo-resistant: shock.

At the time, Steve, my husband of 17 years, and I were living mostly in Costa Rica. I returned to California for a second opinion a week after the diagnosis. The diagnosis was confirmed, and several scans and tests showed that the cancer had not spread, so I began chemotherapy on August 20. Steve stayed in Costa Rica to pack up our stuff and get ready to leave for a few months to be by my side, together with Coco, our beautiful Doberman dog.

I decided to have the full allopathic cancer treatment because of the rarity and invasiveness of the cancer. It was growing very fast, was extremely painful and severely life-threatening – I was not in a mood for experimenting with coffee enemas, juicing, or visiting healers in distant countries. And

I knew it was going to be hell. To soften it, and to support a healing, sacred environment during each of my chemotherapy sessions, I listened to Osho, discourse upon discourse. I had chosen the Uruguay series since I was there in Punta del Este back in the late 1980s and remember vividly the depth and profound silence of those discourses. I let the chemo medicine run into my veins like a healing elixir of all the qualities of those days.

Finally, a few days after my first infusion, Steve and Coco arrived. It was good to be together with my family. And it was confronting, because the reality of cancer had suddenly changed the well-established balance of our lives and of our way of relating with each other. Suddenly I was making the main decisions; I decided to receive the treatment in Marin County, rather than in Mexico or Costa Rica. It was difficult to settle into this new dynamic, but we managed. Some part of both of us stayed the same. The love we shared for each other was greater than all that.

Then Harbin Hot Springs burned down. We had taught hundreds of Tantra workshops at Harbin, lived nearby, and Steve had been a Harbinite for almost 30 years. It was absolutely devastating to have many friends lose everything they outwardly had, to lose our heart home where we had met, meditated, loved, taught, played in the warm waters. It was a let-go of hitherto unknown proportions.

With that and the cancer treatment, those were tough days. The only thing that kept me going was – I don't really know; something. A thread of life was running through me. A feeling of acceptance, of letting go and trusting. A knowing that somehow everything was going to be okay.





Steve and I settled into a daily routine. He went to yoga every day, and we hung out with the friends at whose house we were staying. I rested and was generally exhausted. We often drove out to the Bolinas beach, and Steve took Coco for daily walks. On Monday nights we attended the Dharma Talk at Spirit Rock Meditation Center.

Then one Monday afternoon, after my fourth intense chemotherapy treatment, Steve and our friend were in the garden with Coco. I was tired, sitting in a lawn chair, taking in with my very being these two beautiful men and the gorgeous brown dog. Steve looked so happy and vibrant, and the colors of everything were clear and strong. When it was time for him to drive down to Fairfax, Steve gave me a hug goodbye. We always made it a point to properly hug and say goodbye before one of us left to someplace without the other. One never knows; it might be the last time.

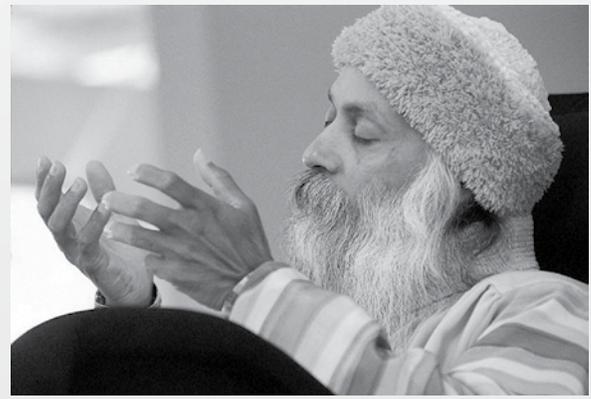
And this time, it was.

Steve and Coco went for their walk on a Fairfax hiking path. There they were ambushed and shot by three young people who wanted to steal our car. Steve died; Coco survived.

The police were finally able to contact me at 3:30 am after tracking me down through a location reference in my blog. Here I was: bald, grey-faced, at 3:30 am with five police officers and my two friends at their dining room table. "We have some unfortunate news, Mrs. Carter." I remember shouting at them, "Are you f\*\*\*\* kidding me? Is this a nasty episode of *Hidden Camera* or what?" But no, it was not. Steve was dead; murdered in cold blood five minutes away from home.

The next few days passed in a complete blur. I know I did everything I had to do – tell Steve's children and his brothers, sit with Steve's body in

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## SURRENDER IS ONCE AND FOREVER

The people who are not living a life of let-go are choosers, because they are going against nature, against Existence; they have to choose. The ego is a chooser. When you are completely free of ego, of self, when you are simply freedom, you see it happening that the fight is disappearing and let-go is taking its place. You are nothing more than a watcher. If you choose it, then it is not let-go. How can it be let-go if you choose it?

It happened that one man came to Gautam Buddha, and he wanted to surrender himself unto Buddha's feet. Buddha looked at him and said, "You cannot surrender."

He said, "Why? Everybody else is allowed, and I am not allowed, what is my disqualification?"

Buddha laughed, and he said, "There is no question of disqualification. Just the nature of surrender is such that you cannot do it; it happens. If you do it, it is your doing; it is not surrender. And if you do it, you can take it back. It is never total; you are outside of it. It was your action, so you can decide any moment: no more surrender! But if it happens, then it takes all of you, the whole of you, leaving nothing behind that can ever do anything against it." [...]

Surrender is once and forever; let-go is once and forever, just as death is once and forever, because nothing is left that can change the course of things. All has been taken in. You are no longer there to have a second thought. [...]

Religion begins when you cross the boundary of doing and enter into the world of happening. Then let-go happens, because you see that this is the only way things work. If you go against it, you are miserable.

**Beyond Psychology, Chapter 22**

the mortuary, talk with the coroner's office and the district attorneys, organize the cremation and luncheon for our family and closest friends, hear the *whoosh* as the furnace started up, ward off the press, and above all stay alive. I received about 1,500 condolence emails, which remain unanswered to date. Coco was in a special veterinary hospital undergoing various surgeries, and I was not allowed to see her for several weeks.

All that, and life goes on. I had to continue chemotherapy. I remember telling my oncologist that I needed a break from chemo for a few weeks. She looked into my eyes – swollen, red, and yes, dead – and said, “Yes, we can do that, but will you really feel better in a few weeks, Lokita?” I sat with that and realized that no, I would not. How could I? Would I ever feel better?

So I continued with the treatment without taking a break. Crying, I sat in the chemo chair, listening to Osho for hours on end, wondering what the f\*\*\* I was doing this for. I wanted to die, too; and yet some part of me wanted to live. Trust in Existence; let go; the only thing we know is that we know nothing; there is only now. I had to somehow make the most of now, in the chemo chair.

One thing led to the next. The chemotherapy was ineffective, and the cancer grew back from the unclear margins left by the surgeon who performed the excisional biopsy. Mastectomy surgery and stronger experimental cancer treatment followed; the side effects nearly knocked me down, and all that was topped off by 25 sessions of radiation. It ended on April 20, 2016. There is no evidence of the disease

in my body now. I am alive, today. On May 9 I had to testify in court in the preliminary hearing for the murder of Steve, sitting across from the people accused of cold-bloodedly killing my beloved husband. I had to answer seemingly pointless questions. Above all, I had to not freak out. I was ready for a major Dynamic-style catharsis. Instead,

I transformed each of my words into a sharp dagger that I sent straight into the center of their beings. In the case of the female suspect, it was clear that my daggers hit – she cried bitterly the entire time. I even felt sorry for her. Yes, I truly did.

After resting for some months with my family in Germany and Denmark, I finally underwent long-overdue knee replacement surgery, which turned another seven weeks of my life into hell. There was pain, pain, pain, plus more court hearings, which revealed horrible details of Steve's death and the death of the woman they are accused of killing a few days earlier.

I am past all that now. Somehow life carried me from then to now. My knee is doing well. Over one year has passed since Steve died. I am alive. Coco is alive. I am about to travel back to California and hold a tribute for Steve, and then on to experience life revealing itself.

And while everything has changed drastically, there is an aspect of “me” that is the same. Something has not changed at all since – well, really since I became aware of it, when I was 14 years old. Just like the sea and the sand and the horizon. There is something constant, something indestructible.

Even as the tsunamis of life, emotions, and thoughts are throwing Lokita this way and that, there is something that is not tossed around, that remains deeply connected to the divine mystery, a complete surrender to life that is beyond deciding, beyond control...something that simply *is*. It is always there, and I can rest in it.

Call it my soul, my Being, call it consciousness, choiceless awareness, or emptiness. Whatever its name, it is present, like the sound of the waves breaking on the beach: steady, constant, alive, changing from wave to wave yet at a very fundamental level always the same.

They say that the only constant in life is change. I disagree. There is another constant in life: the vibration of our very Being, of who we truly are. It is there until our very last breath, and I suspect even beyond.

*Whatever is happening, just be a witness, don't be identified. You are not the body, you are not the mind, you are not the astral body. You are not the silence. You are only a witness. The witness is the very being of a Buddha. (One Seed Makes the Whole Earth Green, Chapter 3)* 🌱

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**ronald citroen**  
aka prembandhu  
phone 415•924•2746  
cell 415•302•4151  
48 Club View Drive  
Novato CA 94949  
mirworks@comcast.net