

# Vitamin B for Bliss

*“Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man (or woman) cannot live in health without them” ~ Mahalia Jackson*

Clinically speaking, B vitamins assist with cell metabolizing, generation of energy, and without them, our bodies can fall prey to all kinds of disease and debilitation. In the same way, Bliss could fill those needs for our minds, hearts and souls.

Welcome to my debut column of Vitamin B for Bliss! It is a monthly place in cyberspace where you can get your neuro-bio-emotional-nutritional fix. We will wax philosophical about all things blissful, in whatever form they show up.

How would you define Bliss? In my book, called *The Bliss Mistress Guide To Transforming The Ordinary Into The Extraordinary*, I describe it in this way :

**BLISS :** Walking on clouds, floating on air, all without benefit of invisible fishing wire or tightrope; a goose bumps experience that has you giggling with delight; a sense of *ahhhh* and awe simultaneously.

Practically speaking, bliss can look like time in nature, walking barefoot in the grass or feeling sand between your toes. You could experience it in the presence of loved ones who enrich your life. It could show up as satisfaction with a job well done. For some folks, it could be really stretching your comfort zones by sky-diving or bungee jumping. Not my idea of a good time, but I take a lot of emotional leaps.

Several years ago, an alter ego was born. I call her Bliss Mistress who arrived on the scene after being inspired by mythologist, philosopher, teacher and writer Joseph Campbell who offered this profound truth: “Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors where there were only walls. “Hmmm, I thought, following my bliss sounds pretty cool, but what if I could BE my own bliss, so it wasn’t something outside of me to seek?:” I began teaching a workshop called BYOB-Be Your Own Bliss to encourage people to ‘begin within.’ On my way into a workshop, one of the participants said “Oh, you’re the bliss master who will teach us to live our bliss.” When I got home, I was speaking with my friend Jaz who lived in San Francisco at the time. I related the woman’s comment and I could see his twinkling eyed response all the way cross country “No, not Bliss Master...Bliss Mistress.” That felt right as he added, “If you are going to call yourself that, you’d better be living it.” With the gauntlet tossed down, how could I resist? It is my desire each day to live my highest bliss and teach others to do the same.

So what does the day in the life of one who claims to live her bliss look like? It begins with time of gratitude for seeing a new day dawn, whether the sky is sunny or cloudy, stormy or serene. I give thanks that everything is working; at 54, some parts of me a wee

bit slower than others. I set intention each day to “have extraordinary experiences and connect with amazing people” and every day I do, sometimes at the supermarket, sometimes at work, other times at the gym. I generally do some writing, sometimes before the sun peeks its own head out from under the cover of night sky, because The Muse, who can't tell time, whispers in my ear with an idea she wants me to share. My experience has been that if I don't listen, she sweeps the idea away and like dream images, sometimes it falls back into the recesses of my mind where I might never recover it, so I dutifully sit up and type away. When I do listen, magic happens. My activities run the gamut from going to the gym called Planet Fitness for my ‘playout’...far much more fun than calling it a workout, to seeing clients at the drug and alcohol treatment program where I have worked since leaving a full time job that I held for 11 years at a psychiatric hospital, to teaching workshops and classes that invite people to live lives of passion and purpose, to time with friends and family. A few moments ago, part of my bliss was witnessing day melting into twilight sunset from my back deck and then a few sparkling fireworks dazzling the velvet darkness. I am reclining on a comfy futon sofa as my fingers are tip tap typing these words that flow unabated, the gentle hum of the AC on a much needed muggy night; grateful for its presence, the slight sleepiness that is beckoning me to succumb. That too is bliss.

On Sunday, I had such a sweet day with dear friends....first heard Peter Moses who has been in my life since 2001 and we have taught together (Happiness Is Just The Icing, Joy Is The Cake was my favorite workshop that we offered) speak at Circle of Miracles which is one of the interfaith communities where I attend services... It is a wonderful feeling to see someone I know and love do what they do best. In Peter's case it is speaking and singing about mindfully meandering through life, BE-ing in the moment. Much of his work and life is influenced by the writings of Eckhart Tolle. Then I was off to Philly for the Mt. Airy monthly drumming circle led by Ron Kravitz where even in the sweltering heat, we drummed up a storm (maybe we really did, since it is thundering, lightning and down pouring now :) I notice that drumming in community feels like a meditation that is both internal and external. I am more of an improv drummer where I can mimic rhythms when I hear them, but ask me to remember a particular pattern and what it's called....I'm lost. There were times when I closed my eyes and let the sound wash over me, like being smudged with vibration instead of sage or sweet-grass. Afterward I had precious time with my kindred spirit/soul friend Peggy Tileston who I miss since we haven't worked together in a year. I was in need of a fix with someone I ‘recognized’ the first time we met a dozen years ago. We sipped tea and caught up on the goings on in our lives. As we were walking out of the blessedly cool café, we ran into another creative friend named Emily Nussdorfer. Perched on the stairs of a school, sheltered by shade trees, we spoke about writing, death and dying, since a friend of Emily's had just died a week ago, marriage, since a friend of Peggy's had just gotten married this weekend, aging, relationships, were visited by a panting poodle named Bijou and his person, a woman named Minter. This too was bliss.

Now listening the sound of the rain on my roof and music issuing forth from speakers. A Kirtan singer named Snatam Kaur is singing one of my favorite chants called Aad Guray

Aad Guray Nameh  
Jugaad Guray Nameh  
Sat Guray NamehThat  
Siri Guru Dayvay Nameh  
Ad Guray Nameh

Meaning of Mantra: I bow to the Primal Wisdom.  
I bow to the Wisdom through the Ages.  
I bow to the True Wisdom.  
I bow to the great, unseen Wisdom  
That too is bliss.

My son's girlfriend's 2 year old son Collin is bliss-master extraordinaire as he peers into my room asks "Where's Adam-mom?" which is his name for me, goes into what we have come to call 'the invisible corner' where, once there, we play "Where's Collin?" until he decides to show himself. What drew him out this time was the temptation of his ball bouncing in the hallway, begging for him to come play. He comes running out and rolls it like aiming for bowling pins and giggles with delight. When I ask him the question "Who loves you?" he always answers "Ebbybody" which of course, translates to "Everybody." This little dude knows the ultimate truth and in his presence, I remember it too.