

D'Arcy Brüning-Haid: Therapist and Midwife to the Soul

By WENDY PETERS

SOME PEOPLE SPEND their whole lives trying to figure out what they want to be when they grow up, but not D'Arcy Brüning-Haid of The Soul's Journey, a private therapy practice in Winnipeg. Born into a family of therapists, there was never any question in D'Arcy's mind as she assisted her parents in therapeutic workshops that she was going to grow up to be a therapist too.

So when it came time for D'Arcy to pursue her own formal training, the *what* was a no-brainer, but the *where* was a bit of a conundrum. Traditional fare was largely what Canadian psychology departments were serving up at that time. But the traditional explanation for the human condition – heavy on body as machine and light on anything not easily quantifiable – did not jive with what D'Arcy observed nor with what she intuitively felt to be true. She needed to find a place to study which would honour her desire to go beyond traditional boundaries in her quest to discover what truly heals.

D'Arcy's search lead her to Boston, Massachusetts, which, at the time, was *the* place to be for anyone wanting to study the connection between mind and body. She enrolled in Lesley University and dove headlong into their curriculum of holistic counseling and psychology theories.

Sitting in the client's seat

In due course, D'Arcy graduated with an extended Masters in Counseling Psychology and she burst forth into the world, a therapist in her own right at last. She went on to intern at the Deaconess Mind Body Clinic, a centre that operated at the front lines of cancer and stress management. For a time, it was blue sky as far as the eye could see – a life she loved and work that fulfilled her desire to be a healing force in the world.

And yet...

Something was not quite right. More specifically, D'Arcy couldn't shake the feeling that something was missing. The more she tuned into this feeling, the more she came to suspect that her training, although rich in content and theory, was nevertheless incomplete. Her yearning for that deep understanding of

how people heal was not fully satisfied.

That would not do.

D'Arcy had not come this far to not go all the way, so she decided that it was time to try something different. She had explored healing every which way from the outside in as the therapist, but never really from



D'Arcy relaxing.

the perspective of inside out. It was time to get up close and personal. And that meant putting herself in a chair she had never sat in before – the client's seat.

Her intention to find a supportive therapist to walk with her on her own personal healing journey was met in the person of a *body psychotherapist* recommended by a trusted friend. It was challenging yet also exhilarating to be the client and experience firsthand how old disappointments, hurts, losses and fears are housed in the body – housed in *her* body. The process of releasing these was an even more powerful experience, one that left her feeling what others have described as that "incredible lightness of being."

With wonder and delight, D'Arcy witnessed how this newfound lightness wrought transformation in her life. With her understanding of the powerful link between the body and the mind now an embodied one, the pieces of the healing puzzle fell effortlessly into place in a deeply satisfying way. It became dazzlingly clear to D'Arcy that the experiences sent our way function as our teachers, helping us, ultimately, to expand our ability to love ourselves and others. Since there is nothing as compelling as

the truth of one's own experience, you can probably guess D'Arcy's next move. Five years of training and two years of supervised practice later, D'Arcy was certified by the International Centre for Bioenergetics as a Bioenergetic Therapist.

The soul's journey

D'Arcy eventually left Boston to return to Winnipeg. After several years of teaching and counseling at the University of Manitoba in their Access Programs, an ultimatum from the university to significantly increase her hours or give up her position altogether created the opening for D'Arcy to take a leap of faith and open her private practice full time. In 1998, *The Soul's Journey* came into being and she hasn't looked back.

Today, 12 years later, D'Arcy's practice is going strong, her therapeutic toolbox full to the brim with the modalities that best reflect her passion for helping people reclaim and liberate the disowned parts of themselves that have been weighing them down and holding them back.

In this way, D'Arcy functions as a midwife to the soul, helping people birth the part of themselves that has been wanting to emerge – be it the courage to change, the power to hold their ground or learning to trust the journey they are on. D'Arcy's guiding motto? "I won't take anyone anywhere I haven't gone myself."

How fitting.

In addition to Bioenergetic Analysis, D'Arcy is also trained in Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Hypnotherapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Gestalt Therapy. Explanations of these therapies are available on her website.

The stuff of dreams

I wound down my interview with D'Arcy by asking about the stuff of her current dreams. This was an easy question for her to answer as she's currently nurturing several projects with her considerable passion and energy.

Arguably the one closest to her heart is *Dance Your Prayers*, a monthly gathering of like-minded men and women who celebrate the breath of life through movement. *Dance Your Prayers* kicks off its fourth – and D'Arcy hopes best – season Sunday, October 3, 2010 from 4 to 6 pm at the Franco-Manitoban Centre. D'Arcy stresses that no dance experience is necessary.

Another project D'Arcy is excited about has been some time in the making. Four times a year, D'Arcy gets together with good friend and colleague, Janis Rosen, for a one-day spiritual retreat. Together, they explore a set of questions designed to help them clarify what the lessons of the last few months have been and what their intentions are for the months ahead.

In January 2011, D'Arcy and Janis will be opening up this transformational process to others. *Creating Your Dreams into Manifestation: A Spiritual Group and Retreat* is a spiritual journey that will unfold in three full-day workshops held two months apart. Regardless of what it is that you would like to bring into being – that dream you have of becoming a writer, your goal of bringing more joy into your life, perhaps a desire to clarify your life purpose – this is a process that will support you in the birthing process.

And in D'Arcy's spare time – which she surely must not have much of as she is also a wife and the mother of two young children – she is working on two books, one on the art of spiritual parenting, and the other on the process of healing, a sort of behind-the-scenes look into the world of therapy. As for when she expects the books to be finished, D'Arcy will say only that "they are coming soon to a theatre near you."

I'll be on the look-out. ♦

For Further Information

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