Myrtle Fillmore’s Healing

In Unity we talk a lot about Myrtle Fillmore’s healing; how Myrtle is the co-founder of Unity and how Myrtle’s healing gave rise to her and our ministry of Silent Unity. But how much do we know about Myrtle’s healing? Today we’re going to explore a little bit more and hopefully expand our understanding of how Myrtle’s experience can be used by us today. I am trying to use Myrtle’s words and they come mostly from Torch-Bearer to Light the Way by Neal Vahle and Healing Letters, collected by Frances Foulks.

Myrtle was born Mary Caroline Page August 6, 1845 in Ohio. She apparently picked the name Myrtle, said it was her true name and asked people to call her that. She was afflicted by tuberculosis at a fairly young age although a number of diseases were called tuberculosis then. Her father’s family had similar illnesses so it was impressed upon her that her frail condition was simply inherited. She was able to finish high school and at age 21, she completed a one year program at Oberlin College, “A Literary Program for Ladies” because women were not eligible for a four year program. It was enough to give her a teaching license in 1867 and she moved to Clinton, Missouri to take a teaching position. She served there for 13 years, with one year spent in Dennison, Texas, trying to recover her health. It was in Dennison that Myrtle Page met Charles Fillmore. Myrtle was 9 years his senior and Myrtle was 35 when they married in 1881 in Clinton. They moved around a bit but settled in Kansas City in 1885 with two young sons. Life was actually not going that well. Myrtle continued to have very poor health and they were experiencing significant financial difficulties.

In Myrtle’s words, “I had all the ills of mind and body that I could bear. Medicine and doctors ceased to give me relief and I was in despair...Along with tuberculosis trouble in my lungs, I had disorders through the abdominal walls. At times hemorrhoids made life miserable for me.” And so it came that in the spring of 1886, a Christian Science practitioner from Chicago was presenting a series of lectures in Kansas City. Myrtle writes, “It was at the solicitation of friends, already interested, that my husband and I attended the first class taught in this city. I must have been fully ready for the initial lessons, for it filled and satisfied all empty, hungry longings of my soul and heart. There is nothing in human language able to express the vastness of my possibilities, as they unrolled before me...The physical claims that had been considered such a serious nature faded away before the dawning of this new consciousness, and I found that my body temple had been literally
transformed through the renewing of my mind.” In another letter she wrote, “It was such a wonderful time for me when I awakened to the Truth that God is my Father and that I inherit from him only what with is Good. It seemed to loosen all the binding thoughts of the race belief in inherited weakness and I breathed so freely and joyously.” Remember she had been told since early childhood that she inherited her sickness from her father—her earthly father. What a transformational shift to claim an inheritance from a Spiritual Creator!

At this point you might wonder, what was Myrtle’s spiritual background? Her parents were fairly strict, orthodox Methodists. But from an early age, Myrtle rejected the judging, condemning God of her parents. She questioned how her loving mother could believe in a God that was less loving and a God willing to take life away. Where these thoughts in Myrtle come from? I leave that to your understanding. What is it in us that questions even before the evidence is presented to us?

So what did Myrtle do? How did this healing unfold? Myrtle wrote this to a friend, “It flashed upon me that I might talk to the life in every part of my body and have it do just what I wanted. I began to teach my body and got marvelous results. I told the life in my liver that it was not torpid or inert, but full of vigor and energy. I told the life in my stomach that it was not weak or inefficient, but energetic, strong and intelligent. I told the life in my abdomen that it was no longer infested with ignorant ideas of disease, put there by myself and by doctors, but that it was all aThrill with the sweet, pure wholesome energy of God. I told my limbs that they were active and strong. I told my eyes that they did not see of themselves but that they expressed the sight of Spirit, and that they were drawing on an unlimited source. I told them that they were young eyes, clear, bright eyes, because the light of God shone right through them. I told my heart that the pure love of Jesus Christ flowed in and out through its beatings and that all the world felt its joyous pulsation. I went to all the life centers in my body and spoke words of Truth to them—words of strength and power. I asked their forgiveness for the foolish, ignorant course that I had pursued in the past, when I condemned them and called them weak, inefficient and diseased. I did not become discouraged at their being slow to wake up, but kept right on, both silently and aloud, declaring the words of Truth, until the organs responded.”

The transformation began in Myrtle’s mind. One of Unity’s favorite scriptures is Romans 12:2 “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
In another letter Myrtle says, “I was once an emaciated little woman, upon whom relatives and doctors had placed the stamp “T.B.”. There were family problems too. We were a sickly lot, and came to the place where we were unable to provide for our children. In the midst of all this gloom, we kept looking for the way out, which we felt sure would be revealed. It was! The light of God revealed to us—the thought came to me first—that life was of God, that we were inseparably one with the Source and that we inherited from the divine and perfect Father. What that revelation did to me at first was not apparent to the senses. But it held my mind above negation, and I began to claim my birthright and to act as though I believed myself the child of God, filled with His life. I gained. Others saw that there was something new in me. They asked me to share it. I did.”

So there are three primary points that stand out for me in Myrtle’s healing process.

First, we must claim that our inheritance is divine, not earthly. Spirit trumps nature and nurture. We are more than our genetics; we are more than our family; we are more than our history. The power of the Divine within us is beyond our understanding and therefore, we limit ourselves when we put all of our focus on the limits we understand with our sense, material world consciousness. We must identify those thoughts we cling to which are the very barriers to that which we seek. The thoughts may not be apparent at first but if we remain open to the revelation and honest with our self-examination, we will identify the thoughts we need to transform. There is a Truth beyond the thoughts we are holding.

What is it we claim for our life? Is it a life of limits or a powerful expression of Spirit? Every day we get to examine our thoughts as demonstrated in our words and actions.

Second, we must honor our body. Myrtle was ordained a Christian Science minister by Emma Curtis Hopkins in 1890. Hopkins had split from Mary Baker Eddie over some theological differences. Yet as Myrtle and later Charles formulated their own theology, Myrtle found a significant difference between her approach and Christian Science. She says, “As we understand it, Christian Science pays no attention to the body and the care of it. We do give careful attention to the body and we seek to know all its needs and to supply
them regularly and lovingly.” Myrtle and Charles also never prohibited clients from seeking medical attention, even recommending it in some cases.

Myrtle and Charles emphasized the three-fold nature of human beings. Myrtle wrote, “This health law is threefold: spiritual, keeping a person assured of his God-given freedom from all anxiety, worry, fear, and lack; mental, giving him the intelligence that enables him to do that which promotes health and success; physical, forming those habits which keep him making the right use of his faculties, and powers, and the life energy and substance. …One who is determined that his physical life will show forth the peace and order of spiritual reality and divine intelligence is considerate of his body, and careful in his demands upon it.” Honoring the body is then both an activity of our mental attitudes and words and a physical activity of rest, exercise and nourishment. Of those three physical aspects, Myrtle sometimes went overboard with the diet and rarely mentioned exercise. Myrtle was influenced by a Dr. Hauser, from Chicago, who advocated a plant based diet. One correspondent observed that “Unity emphasized the power and complete control of the material or physical by the spiritual” and therefore dietary restrictions seemed very material focused. Myrtle responded, “Unity does emphasize control of the physical by the spiritual. But so many of the things we do, and expect to control, are not at all spiritual.” Sort of confusing.

However, our teachings emphasize a link between our attitude about our bodies and the physical experience of our bodies. Consider the words you say to your body. Are they nice? Are they honoring? Do you acknowledge there is a perfect Life force within each cell, capable of being manifest? Myrtle’s healing practice took several hours every day for more than two years. Her healing was at age 42 and after that, she gave birth to her third son. What are you willing to commit to in order to heal some area of your life or body?

The last aspect of Myrtle’s healing is the use of the tool of forgiveness. Myrtle recognized the lifetime of condemnation that she had practiced in regards to her body. In fact, judgment was a life-long challenge for Myrtle. She writes, “After demonstrating over my most serious beliefs easily, I was surprised, sometimes even amused, to see the persistency with which a disagreeable little trouble would bear me company. It grew more and more offensive to me as I grew more and more out of my other bondage…Sometimes it is a THOUGHT so trivial that we are quite apt to overlook it in our searching for causes. Now in my case, I had always reserved the RIGHT IN THE PRIVACY OF MY OWN MIND to judge if certain persons lives accorded well with their
professions. It is the hardest to overcome of all the errors I am trying to outgrow—to withhold judgment.

Myrtle knew that sometimes that which we have trouble forgiving gets buried in our thoughts. She said, “So long as we remember experiences that were unhappy, as we once saw them and still see them and speak of them, we will be unable to demonstrate joy and prosperity and health in our lives. These seemingly unkind things have made negative impression upon our souls. Whatever has been impressed upon our souls will work out in our bodies and affairs. We have the power to change our soul’s impressions, our subconscious, through the indwelling Christ Mind, and so change our bodies and their functioning and also the conditions around us. It gives us renewed strength and confidence to realize that every thought of Truth that enters our minds is taking up its abode in our subconsciousness and is working itself out in our flesh as harmony and radiant health. In Spirit and in Truth we are now and always every whit whole.”

Are we able to forgive ourselves for past errors in choices? Are we able to forgive ourselves for ways we have neglected or even abused our bodies; blamed our bodies for failing us? It may sound innocent enough to say, “Does this make my butt look big?” When is it not so innocent? Is there someone or some event we need to forgive? Can you feel in your body where you are holding this un-forgiveness? Is that your body’s fault? Open your heart to the healing light of Truth. Practice letting go of the judgment you hold against yourself or another. Practice seeing that nothing can diminish the pure Life of Spirit still within you, able to manifest in your life.

The focus today has been mainly on physical healing. This is where Myrtle began. But it’s not where she ended. She would later write in How To Let God Help You, “At that time healing seemed the most important thing in life to me. I loved seeing folks get well and happy. I do yet, but I have learned that the spiritual awakening and the daily development of Christ powers are more important. The soul must be awakened and brought to a realization of the Truth, and encouraged in the righteous use of all the God-given faculties and powers. The individual must be helped to unify his spirit, soul, and body in harmonious spiritual living here and now.”

Myrtle’s healing continues to be a pattern for our healing. We must claim our divine inheritance of health. We must honor our body in our words, our
thoughts and our actions. We must forgive ourselves and others as we create the harmonious environment that manifests in our lives. And lastly, we must be patient with ourselves. Myrtle and Charles both faced challenges, disappointment and setbacks. They were not perfect. There are inconsistencies in some of their statements and philosophy. Find what works for you. Let it unfold gently. Be at peace with your magnificent body!