Filling Your Cup: Creating and Holding Space

By Nirupama Madduri, M.D



When I moved to Los Angeles and purchased my home around eleven years ago, I needed to add a bathroom and closet to the primary bedroom. I worked with an architect and contractor chosen by my realtor at the time. The plans needed to be revised a few times, and I still did not actually have a final say in many of the details. The closet was disappointing, but I was grateful to have a place to hang my clothing. Over time, the closet was slowly falling apart, and eventually collapsed a few months ago. I battled with the idea of fixing the problem or getting a new closet. I called a closet design company and initially expressed wanting to maintain the current design as much as possible. After I had some time to think about it, I realized I did not like the closet as it was, and it was time to change it completely so it met my needs.

Autumn reminds me of the importance of holding space to welcome new beginnings and changes. We watch the leaves on the trees change colors and eventually drift to the ground, waiting to be collected and removed. The trees create space for new leaves and flowers to grow in the spring. The winter gives a chance for rest before the spring brings new life to the world around us. The trees hold space for these beautiful leaves and flowers to show us how important it is to keep space for beauty that comes to us.

In this process, I removed everything that was in my closet. We all use our closets to keep a variety of our possessions. Clothing is piled upon shoes which are piled upon belts which have handbags piled on them. In a home, the primary closet becomes the choice location for new purchases, items to hide, and everything we cannot accommodate in the main sections of our homes and lives. It is metaphorically where we hide the things to which we cling out of a sense of fear. We have those places in our minds, where we store heavy emotions, memories, and experiences. Our mental closets, if you will, can become overloaded.

When we hold on to things from our pasts which bring up emotions that are heavy, we are literally weighed down. When we are filled with these, our duties to our families, ourselves, and our patients are impacted. Our space is saturated, and when we keep trying to fill it, we fill every nook and cranny beyond its limit. There is no place for ourselves, and we stay in this holding pattern.

It is imperative to create space for ourselves to allow our stories to flow the way they should. This means different things to everyone. Some may choose to release a

person or a relationship. Others may donate many items that are not being used. Mental health clinicians can also give us a safe place to release emotional burdens, and create space this way. We then allow ourselves to receive what is desired or what we want. Or, we can just have a path to flow as expected. When we are not encumbered with unnecessary worries, our vision clears.

Nature always shows us how we should choose our next steps. Creating space to receive our gifts is a great lesson we can learn from the beautiful trees around us. They allow what isn't necessary to fall away. Then, they receive the abundance that presents as a renewal in the spring. We can also continue to grow into the space we hold for ourselves. We can receive the relationships and abundance of which we are worthy.