

My Journey with Sumi: Part 18

That Which Is Within

Sunday, October 13, 2019—12:30 pm—55°F (13°C)—Beautiful, a sunny and cool autumn day

Throughout our lives, Sumi, my daughter Parini, my son Jasen, and I have traveled to many nations. Individually, I have traveled to more places for international assignments for Ford and Chrysler and even a few as a consultant.

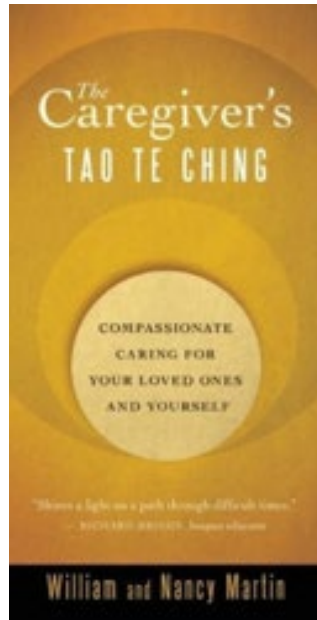
Even three years after Sumi's diagnosis, we traveled internationally. I traveled more often, though, due to consulting assignments. There were times when I used to make three or four international trips every year. Over more than four decades I have traveled to 29 countries, some more extensively than others.

I have been to six countries in the Americas: USA, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and the Bahamas. And 15 countries in Europe and North Africa: Germany, UK, France, Italy, Vatican City, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia. In Asia I've visited eight countries: India, Nepal, Thailand, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea.

All my traveling has come to a full stop now. In the last four years, I have traveled only twice, each for a short five days, away from home and Sumi.

When a kite flies in the sky it appears to the kite that it has a lot of freedom. But really, the kite is tethered with a string and is managed by its handler. The kite only has limited freedom. True freedom only comes when the kite is cut from its string and flies away carefree in the drifting wind without a predetermined destination.

On many occasions I miss the good-old-days and wish to travel carefree. But that is not so. As they say, when one door closes another opens. As a care partner to Sumi, a few new vistas have opened to me. The book, *The Caregiver's Tao Te Ching* by William and Nancy Martin, exemplifies my feelings.



From chapter 47:

“That Which Is Within

*We may feel cooped up by our care giving,
doomed to watch the world go by
outside our window.*

*Yet, we are given a window
that opens on the heart –
a vista few people ever see.*

*We don't travel to faraway places,
yet knowledge, understanding and wisdom
come to us right where we are.*

*It is not what is outside that satisfies,
but that which is within.*

There is no way to describe the vividness of life that unfolds between the caregiver and care receiver. There is no clearer view of our heart and mind. All our beliefs, hopes, and fears—even

those we felt we had put to rest long ago—emerge with new intensity. We feel tension, fear and uncertainty one moment and a breaking through into peace and confidence the next. We find that compassion is not a soft, delicate thing but that which brings clarity and courage.

We see total vulnerability in the one we are caring for. The tenderness, wisdom, and courage of her heart become visible as she struggles to control the flow of life and health. Here in this room, we discover more about ourselves and each other than many decades have revealed before. What a sweet, amazing vista we are given as caregivers.”