

Finding Rainbows

**A true story of strength and courage
The art of turning life's adversities into
opportunities**



"The Happy Hour" by Bill Brownridge

**A personal account guiding you to a successful hip
replacement**

**Written by Karen Barker
Illustrations by Gary Donald**

Forward

After undergoing 6 hip surgeries, sharing my journey will hopefully give you a frame of reference that will help ease the fear and cultivate a peaceful mind by being a guiding support for the months before, during and after your surgery.

My vision is that the recipient will have this booklet upon receiving their surgical date as a guide to prepare themselves, the home and how to gather an effective support team.

I remember in my early twenties reflecting on the physical pain I was experiencing. I knew from a depth inside of me, that I would not last long in this lifetime unless I could find some peace within. This epiphany, as some may call it, has guided me to the work and compassion I have today. I sought out meditation and visualization. The discipline of a daily practice keeps me focused.

For those of you that choose to receive my message, I hope that it will ease the journey ahead. Please use this as a guide in conjunction with any information the hospitals give you.

I offer you, with joy, a pictorial guide to a successful hip replacement.

Index

Pre Op

Time duration maybe 3 to 6 months

Page 5-10

Hospital

Page 11-17

Post Op

Time duration maybe 8 to 12 weeks

Page 18-26

Appendix

Page 27

Biographies

Page 29

Acknowledgements

Page 33

Index for Images

The images were birthed from personal experience and have their own inspiring story.

Pre Op

- 1) **"Groom your attitude"** I am in pain today, I will acknowledge the pain and excuse myself from vacuuming, taking out the garbage or walking that extra block. The time for pushing through the pain and beating oneself up is now over.
- 2) **"Beef up Your Blood or Biceps!"** (A new addition to pre op training literally)
- 3) **"Zupe up your Walker"**

Hospital

- 1) **"Shower it off!"** A liberating adventure.
- 2) **"Suited Up"** by physio/occupational therapists
- 3) **"Get Outside"**

Post Op

- 1) **"Food as Fuel"**
- 2) **"Feeling Overwhelmed is Natural. Allow yourself to receive"**
- 3) **"Can I drive...? Yet??"**

Pre Op

Waiting in line for a hip replacement can feel forever. You are in pain, that is a fact, so I found focusing my mind on Self-Care by creating and choosing a calm environment around me was vital.

Included are some necessary and potentially creative projects that can be done at home before the due date. Assembling a care team is essential and can help the time pass more quickly. Remember that the outcome is to make your life easier when you arrive home.

3 months before:

Surround yourself with positive people, thoughts and the good stuff. I would spend time in nature, listen to uplifting music, and have a regime of water therapy. If there are hot mineral springs in your area, go.

It is now a time for you to create space and gather strength, peace and balance for the journey ahead.

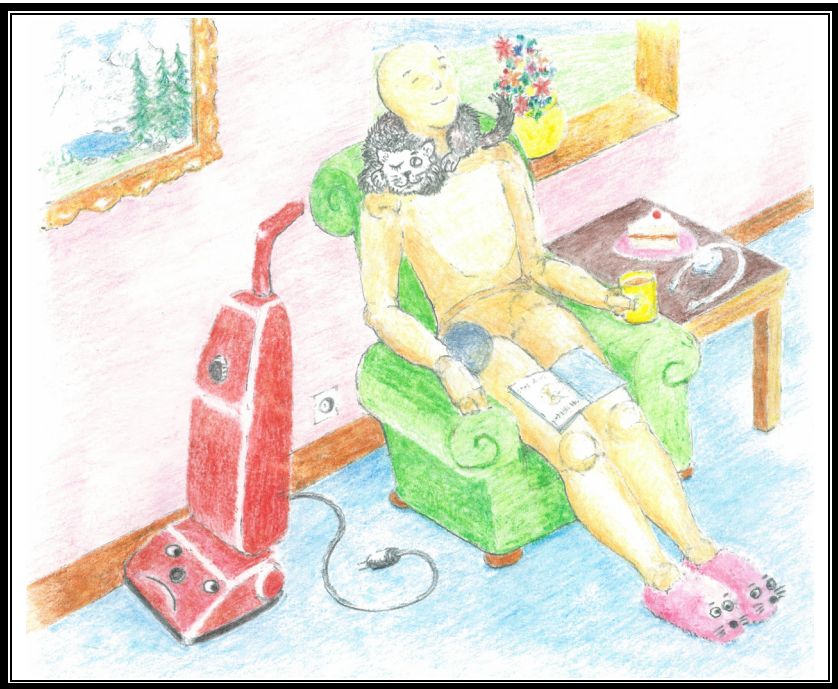


Image: Groom Your Attitude

See your family doctor to get blood work done to support what your body may need: Vita B, Vita D, Hemoglobin etc. then take action...

I struggled with Anemia, low iron, which challenged me to focus on my diet. I tried everything before I had to accept that red meat was the most effective for me.



Image: Beef up your Blood ...and Biceps

The word Biceps is included solely as alliteration.
Total body strength on all levels is the optimum goal:
body, mind and spirit.

Everyone may have different weight bearing restrictions on the operative leg. My last operation I had "no weight bearing" for 6 weeks, which demanded serious upper body strength. I can laugh now but calluses developed on my palms. I had an engineer buddy problem solve this one for me. He inserted rubber crutch pads on my walker to ease the pressure on my hands. Bravo!!

One Month before:

Rally your support system - reach out for help. My support team created an email document that was very successful. See Appendix.

In 1996, I was to get my first two hip replacements, one in May and then November. Reaching out for help was the biggest challenge I faced. With a marriage soon to be over, a 2 year old child, and the bread winner of the family I had my back up against the wall, it was the best lesson I learned.

Two weeks before:

S.O.S. Seek Out Solitude



Going within and gathering your inner resources of personal strength are so important. I found the chaos of life around me was akin to a hurricane. Imaging myself as the calm eye of the storm, at times, worked. The thought of escaping into the nearest cave like a Buddhist monk was very desirable. I consciously took time for myself cultivating the quiet, peaceful moments that fueled my spirit.

Family can tend to be nervous and demanding in their caring. Know that they are also dealing with some of their own fears closer to the date of your

surgery. The anxiety you maybe feeling may not be your own.

Home Preparation with Physical aids - shower, toilet, crutches, walker

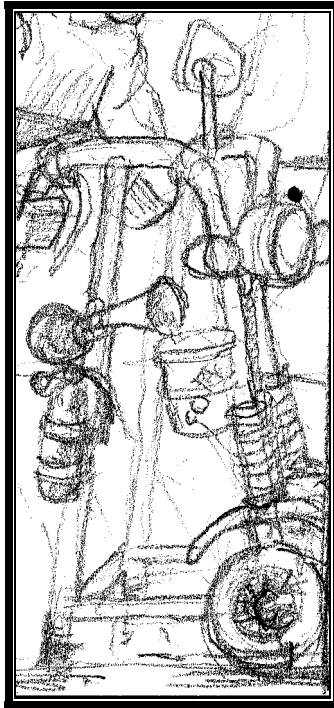


Image: "Zupe up" your walker.

It will be your new best friend when you arrive home. I felt it was an extension of me, similar to a personal appendage. I was gifted, from a 4 year old friend, a pink bicycle basket. I attached it to the front of my walker and it made me smile every time I laid eyes on it. It became a great topic of conversation.

Hospital

The importance of communicating clearly and positively is a must do. There will be pain in the recovery process but know that the pain experienced in the hospital is temporary. That acceptance will move mountains in the healing process. Consider the magic of positive thought and healthy choices. It will get you home sooner to your own bed, loved ones and favorite pet.

Admitting

Start blessing everything. Why not? It is documented that the Power of Prayer and Intention are effective. It will help keep you calm in the waiting stages which may seem like forever. Focus on your breathing. Greet everyone with a smile of kindness. Let it be of comfort to you that it is your lucky day.

Your pain is within. Focus on those around you, the view outside, the sun and you may experience reduced or no pain.

Operating Room

You have been taken to the floor where the magic happens. Remember to greet your surgical team with joy. You will meet them separately before you are taken in. They are human and may have had challenges already to their day.

I had asked the anesthetist to keep me awake before I greeted Dr. Cecil Rorabeck with my "Good Morning" smile.

Advice: You have nothing to lose by asking.



Hours after surgery

Flush It Out



Adopt the Mantra, when in doubt - drink water

You will be attached to various tubes for anti-
biotics, IV drip, the pain pump, catheter and an
oxygen tube in the nose. Unable to move or think
with any sort of clarity, you are now experiencing
what I call "surgery brain". What you can do is
drink water. So take advantage of the opportunity
the catheter presents; flushing out the toxicity
from the body without having to make your way to
the bathroom. **Note:** Your first trip there will be
memorable.

If you have a question ...**Ask** the question - **empower** yourself

Your care team while you're in the hospital is the staff: Nurses, those that bring you your food, cleaners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists to name a few ...Staff is under stress as well. You will be in some form of pain so practice being polite. Try complimenting each person it is the essence of gratitude.

If you feel disconnected from your body - It is Natural. You have had major surgery. It takes time for the reconnection to happen - be assured it will come in time.

Your feelings are real. Talk about them. There are social workers available if you need a listening ear.





Image: Get Outside

If the option to get outside is available to you, take advantage of the free wheelchair ride as soon as you are able. The fresh air and sunlight will help your state of mind and your potential of going home maybe sooner.

Food

Augment your diet with healthy fresh fruits and vegetables

One Rule of thumb is to "Eat healthy **colorful** food." In the Hospital are there organic options available? Have visitors bring in your favorite food. Honor your cravings. If it is for meat, go for it.



Image: Shower It Off

If there is a shower room to access, use it as soon as you can. I was wheeled in on a plastic purple wheelchair surrounded by rundle rock as a shower stall. Fantastic find after all these years.

The pain pump, catheter, IV, and oxygen are all anchors to the operation and hospital. I found freedom in disconnecting myself from what I term these milestones.

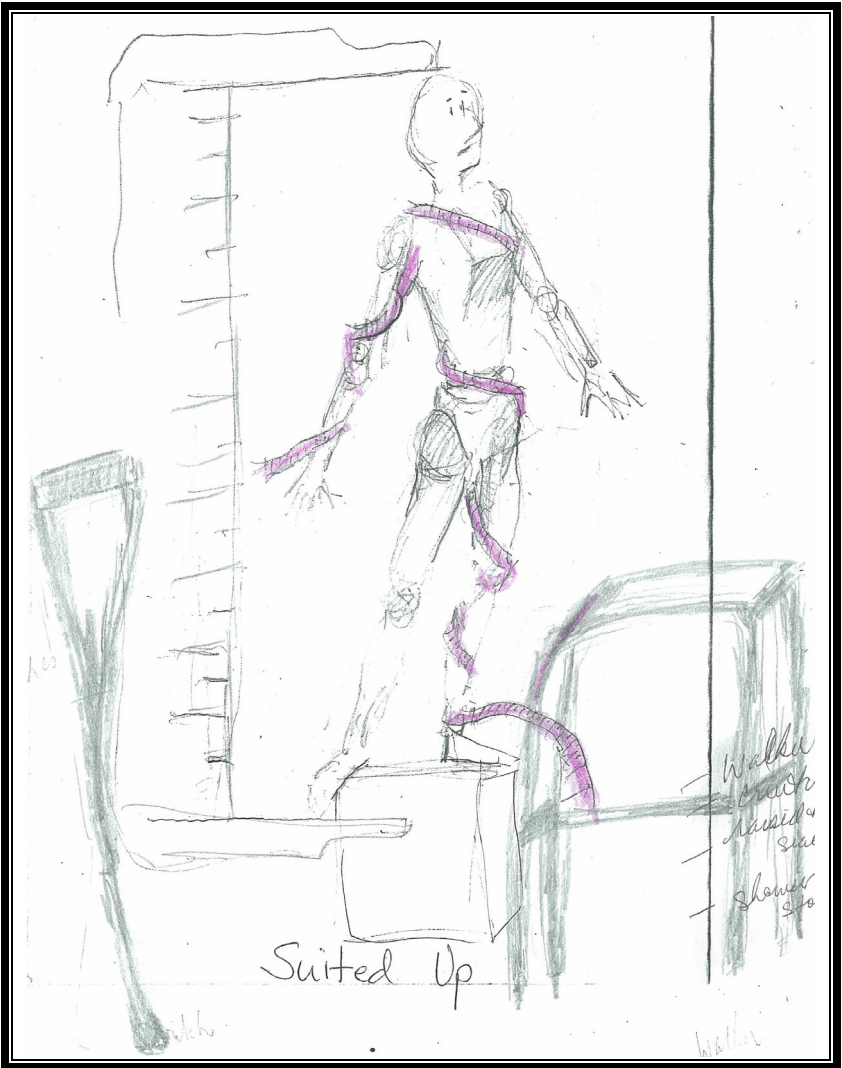


Image: Suited Up.

You will be measured by Physio. And Occupational therapists for the raised toilet seat, shower stool, crutches, and walker before you go home.

Post Op

Included are tips that make coming home, easy and graceful: it is the art of patience, the acceptance of what I call "surgery brain," and the graciousness of receiving help from all of those around you. Say "Yes" to all the flowers, chocolate, home made meals and housecleaners that come your way. It is a time of receiving and being grateful. Express your gratitude to everyone that visits. You will urinate again without the raised toilet seat, and walk without the crutches or cane. You will feel the freedom of no pain and experience the silly smile a toddler has when they can freely walk down the street. You are closer to the finish line.

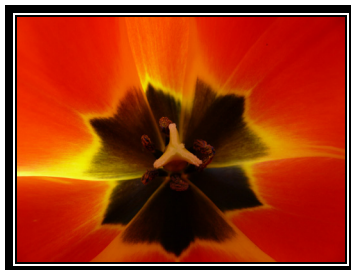
Oh No! Not the Fragmin! Just when I thought the difficult task was over, surgery, I was faced with having to inject myself for a month in the belly. I tried in everyway to be absolved from this challenge. The resistance was due to being poked daily in the bottom after a hip operation at 5 years of age. This left me feeling queasy about needles. I wish you all the best with this one.

Getting off the medications, completing the Fragmin dosages and removing the steri-strips off the surgical scar are remnants of the operation as well. If you have staples, having these removed at three

weeks or when the scar is healed feels liberating. You are closer to the finish line.

You will continue needing help from your support community - **ASK** for assistance. If you find yourself considering the question, "Can I do this myself?" There is doubt. Make a courageous safe decision. Please take that deep breath, pick up the phone and ask someone for assistance. Every task will seem like it will take forever to do and demands a lot of effort. It does... at present. This too shall pass. My reoccurring message here is that it is temporary. Be patient.

We live in a socially cultivated **independent** world. At this moment in my life finding **acceptance of my dependency** liberated me from enforcing the thought that I was a burden on my family or friends. They were excited to be able to give and many of them assured me they felt great. I started to see this exchange as a win/win for both parties.



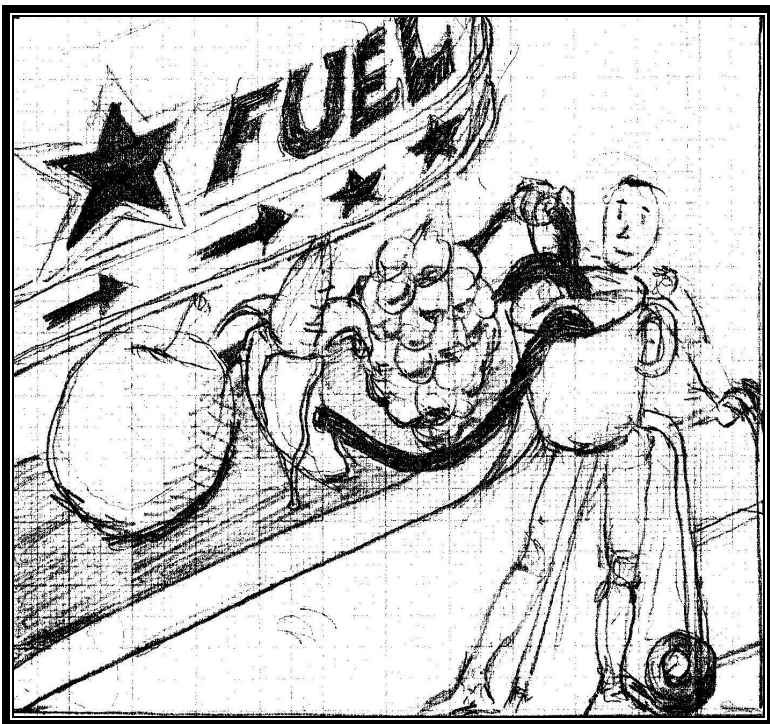


Image: Food as Fuel.

Force yourself to eat well to assist in your healing. Get over any issues you may have about eating without activity. I.e. if thoughts cross your mind like, "I am only in bed and am doing nothing therefore I don't need to eat." You are healing internally and the body needs support. You are recovering from the trauma of surgical stressors, with tissue healing, and many systems rebalancing trying to restore the healthy harmony within. You will likely have no reference for this experience, but I will enforce the need to see "Food as Fuel."

Rest

If bedridden - be gentle with yourself. When in doubt, you can physically flex and extend your feet at the ankles and mobilize the toes.

Get outside - breathe fresh air, open the windows, gaze skyward, watch the birds, cuddle with your pet.

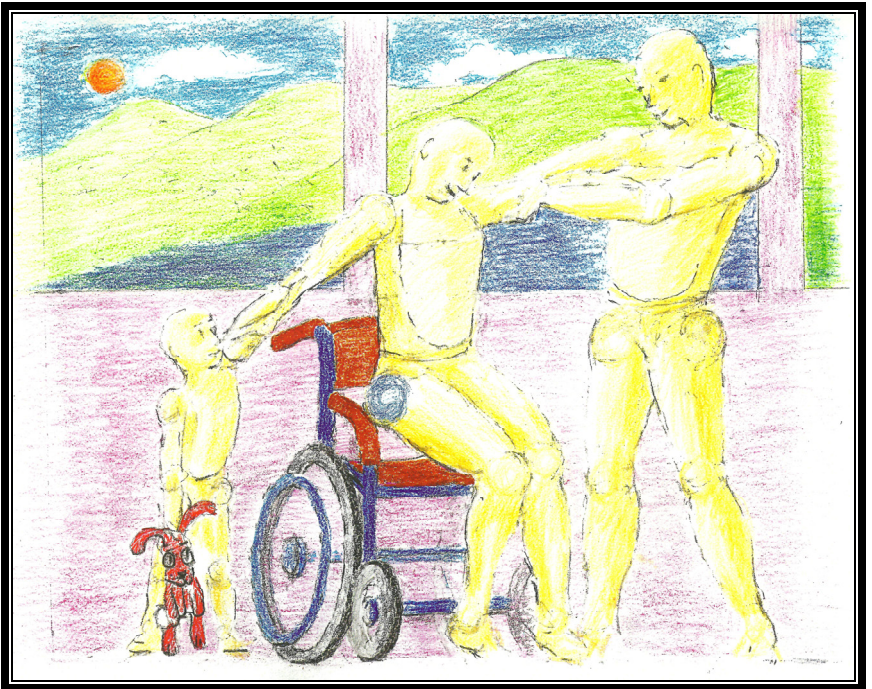


Image Feeling overwhelmed is natural. Allow yourself to receive.

It is OK to cry. For some of us, it takes courage. Reach out to your support team. Allow yourself to

receive. Start by saying "Yes" to anyone who offers.

Make sure your home environment supports you and your restrictions in order to avoid frustration i.e. - garbage bag in the sink, tea on the countertop, your favorite foods at arm and height reach in fridge.

Your picker upper and walker will be a best friend - keep it nearby.

Each day ask yourself "What do I need today?"
"What would help me through the day?"
...A friend to visit...a rose in the room...good chocolate... then ask someone to make this little dream come true.

The list of Ifs:

If you happen to have the leg lengthened from the surgical procedure, welcome to the "Defying Gravity Club." I am now 3 cms taller. Note: Before you have your shoes reconstructed investigate whether they are covered in your province under a Daily Assisted Living program. In Alberta, it is AADL. I was not privy to this information prior to having 5 pairs reconstructed. None of the vendors, I chose, were covered. The coverage is usually 75%. I wish I had this information.

You can also get your occupational therapist to requisition a shower stool if you feel it has to be a permanent addition to your showering safety. The government will cover 75%.

If you still have your menstrual cycle the first one after surgery may seem out of the ordinary. Your body is detoxifying so treat it as that. Drink extra water. Contact a homeopathic doctor in your area for tablets Magnesium Phosphate relieves cramps. Arnica Montana 200CH is an acute dosage for inflammation. I have used them successfully. Be patient and know that at 3 months it should return to normal otherwise see a good Osteopath/Manual therapist in your area.

Words of Insight: This too shall pass. It is temporary.

Learn to do as your doctor tells you for the first 6 weeks and you will be better off. Do not push what you may feel is the envelope. You do not get farther ahead. At your 6 week check up X-rays will be taken to see how the bone and prosthesis are healing and you will receive a new game plan with more weight bearing. Activities will increase. Your world will have fewer limitations.



Image: Can I drive yet??

Driving maybe considered consult your physician.

8 weeks Plus You will probably try to push the envelope physically by trying out your hardware. Be gentle with yourself. Inquire at your doctor's office what is advised.

You don't want to blow a fuse.

In your rehabilitation, you may still have your cane with you for balance when you walk. If so, try to use it in the other hand. Break old patterns. Try when you walk or climb the stairs lead with your operative leg.

Reason: We have compensated for months, maybe years, favoring the painful side. Now that the hip feels invincible, the brain and its communicators need to adjust the impulse of protecting the operative leg. Play with it. If you are challenged by this, keep working with it. If it is easy, this is a non issue for you.



In closing, you have arrived at the finish line.

Congratulations!!

Have fun and Play Well

Love,
Loren

Appendix A

Sample of Support Care Team email

Greetings Friends of Karen,

On Friday July 13, 2009 our friend Karen Barker is going in for hip surgery. Wanting to support Karen, I am proposing that her friends work together to support her during this healing time. I chatted with Karen about a book by June Callwood called *Twelve Weeks in Spring*. 60 of her friends gathered together to fulfill her wish to live her last days of life in her home. These friends discovered the needs of Margaret and created a schedule to support her. I am proposing that we do the same for Karen.

Here is an overview of Karen's surgery schedule and best case recovery time table.

Surgeon: Dr. James Powell.

Surgery Date: Friday, July 10, 2009 at the Foothill Hospital. 5 days are expected for Karen's hospital stay. For those people who live in Calgary, it would be very helpful to have healthy food brought to the hospital. Tasty hot meals will support Karen and provide some pleasure.

July 15th to Sept. 15th: Optimal Time Period of Recovery at Karen's home in Canmore.

Since hip surgery can be a long recovery, there are many ways we can assist Karen.

Pre-made Meals: Frozen meals that can be heated up. As for fresh food, various salads would be helpful. Karen and Aly have a fairly broad diet.

Cleaning: Hiring a housekeeper 2 hours to do vacuuming, taking out the garbage, bathrooms. Who wants to contribute let me know.

Videos and Entertainment: Entertaining magazines, or video collections

Water jugs: Karen lives on the second floor of a townhouse. Water jugs will have to be carried up to the second storey.

Financial Contribution: As a single mother and a self employed business person there will be an extended period without cash flow. Any type of financial donation will be another way to contribute.

Beauty: Flowers, art or cards.

Health contributions: There are many healing practitioners amongst Karen's friends, massage, manicures, acupuncture, Reiki, all are welcomed.



Biographies



Karen Barker – Karen was born in 1960 diagnosed with necrosis of the femoral heads. Initially, it was undetected and she was treated for Perth's disease. At 4 months, Karen sported a cast and spent a month in the children's hospital in Winnipeg. This began her journey in orthopedics.

In 1965, at 5 years of age, she underwent a surgical procedure on the left hip which was termed, a shelving unit. It was not as successful as they hoped so the right hip was spared.

In 1974, at 14 years old, she was diagnosed with severe osteo-arthritis in the hips.

In 1993, Karen gave birth to her daughter.

In 1995, one month after she stopped breast feeding her daughter, Karen's mobility instantly deteriorated to where she could walk one block using two canes.

In May and November of 1996, she underwent her first total hip reconstruction with Dr. Cecil Rorbeck at the London University Hospital in Ontario.

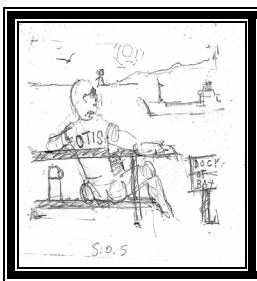
In May and November in 2000, Karen again was under the care of Dr. Cecil Rorabeck, where both hips were revised after a fall.

In July of 2009, Karen underwent a complicated revision with Dr. James Powell at the Alberta Hip and Knee Clinic. X-rays show she is up for a right hip liner change within the year.

As a child Karen loved the arts. It gave her great joy. At 13 years old she held the position as Drama Specialist for Transcona Parks and Recreation dept for five years. The following year 1978, Karen was accepted and trained at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre School. She has had a career in the theatre where she performed and taught all ages. In 1989 Karen sought out another profession. Massage therapy played an integral role in her pain management so she had the inspiration to switch roles and become the therapist. She has continued her post graduate work in osteopathy with a renowned French osteopath, Dr. Jean Pierre Barral. Fall 2009 for the Barral Institute, she will begin as a teaching assistant.

Due to the pain in her life she has embraced the role of exploring the mind's role in the physical healing process. In her early twenties, she had an epiphany where her need to find peace within was crucial to help her deal with the adversities in her life. In her exploration of cultivating a peaceful mind she became a Buddhist and has authored 4

books relating to this topic, as well as visual and audio meditations guiding those seeking personal peace and development. Her website, www.karenbarker.ca can be seen as a fun, interactive, celebration of life. "The Joy of Being", her last book, is a summation of the skills she has acquired with the intention of helping others discover the positive in life.



Gary Donald:

Gary Donald joins the team from Manchester, England. He is an "Explorer of Life." Graduating from College in graphic design in 1976 he then went onto working in advertising production. He received his degree in Fine Art in 2000. Gary's dissertation discussed his fascination of the cross over between fine art and graphic design. In 2001, he received his post graduate degree in teaching and taught in middle school and university. A man of versatility, he has owned his own company, built his own house, and is a father to three.

Gary brings with him his love for life by travelling and living amongst different cultures. From living in a cave in Ios, Greece and fishing for his own food to Israel on a Kibbutz is an example of his flexibility. He lived in Holland, Germany and Spain as a construction worker and on a fruit farm but always managed to have a commissioned art piece to work on along the way. While living in Thailand he taught a Canadian businessman drawing and lived in a Tibetan community outside of Delhi, India. The colors and continual celebration of life was inspiring.

In January 2004, just after the infamous tsunami, he was in Sri Lanka and desired to do art therapy through the Aid Agencies for the affected children. Unfortunately, he fell ill and returned home to Manchester a few months later.

His unending desire to experience all contributes to his perspective and his unique expression in his art.

Acknowledgements

A great big thank you to all who have supported and nurtured me on my healing journey

Huge gratitude to Gary Donald for blindly believing in this project

Loretta in the Alberta Hip and Knee Clinic whose encouragement was appreciated

William Roy Brownridge whose generosity and inspiration is heartfelt in his imagery

Dr. Cecil Rorabeck and Dr. James Powell who have been my knights in shining armor

Contact information for Karen Barker at 403 609 7020,
www.karenbarker.ca