

CHERIE DETER McARTHUR

Cherie Deter McArthur was a mild mannered bookkeeper with a big dream: She wanted to live in paradise.

Tired of city life in California and work that didn't make her heart sing, or even hum, her daydreams carried her to Hawaii. She longed to see the lush green of jungle, inhale warm, moist, tropical air, and live in a slower rhythm that brought her close to the land.

Her dream started to come true in 1990 when she and her husband, Ian, packed up their two kids and moved to the Big Island of Hawaii. Cherie became a flower vendor, selling to tourists who poured off the cruise ships in port, and worked in a nursery.

In 1996 Cherie and Ian bought a 10-acre macadamia nut farm. Or the remnants of one. Long neglected and reclaimed by the jungle, the 12-foot trees were barely visible. They had to be *uncovered* before they could be worked. Thick grasses as tall as the trees filled the orchards. Jungle vines an inch or two in diameter gripped the tree trunks and branches, twisting their way to the tree tops for light.

Ian's career creating special effects for Hollywood movies financed the purchase of the farm but took him out of state for months at a time. So Cherie rolled up her sleeves and got to work. She learned how to use a machete and scythe and led the attack on the grasses towering over her head. She took on the jungle single-handedly – literally. Cherie had been born with a right arm that stopped just below the elbow, so she had only one hand. That had never stopped her before, so why would it now?

Even with the help of men Cherie hired, it took two years of hard labor, slashing and removing the grasses, then hacking the vines and unwinding them from the 600 trees, to ready the farm. In 1998 Cherie's dream was realized as Puna Girl Farms went into production of macadamia nuts and macadamia flower honey.

Puna Girl Farms was good for Cherie's soul. The hard work continued, but she loved it. For nine years she and her workers mowed the tenacious orchard grass, pruned and fertilized the trees, gathered the nuts, and delivered the harvest to a processor. After each tropical storm screamed across the island, they cleared away broken branches and fallen trees. They battled wild pigs who damaged the orchard, and when it seemed that the pigs might win, erected an electric fence to keep them off the farm. Cherie ended everyday dog tired, but her heart sang anyway.

In early 2007 the bottom fell out. The price of macadamia nuts plummeted to a low that hadn't been seen in generations. Suddenly Cherie stood to lose her farm. The cost of picking the nuts would so extremely exceed the price she'd get at market that she was unable to harvest her crop. She couldn't afford to take her crop to market for such a loss, couldn't afford to pull out the trees and plant something else, and couldn't afford to do nothing. Cherie was stuck.

People recommended selling her land. Cherie loved her farm. It was her dream come true, and she had worked hard for it. She didn't want to lose it. And her employees depended on her; she didn't want to put them out of work. Cherie couldn't figure out a solution. Or, more accurately, her *personality* couldn't figure out a solution. So Cherie took the issue to someone who could: her true self.

Cherie turned to techniques she had learned in my *Living from True Self* class, which had met throughout the previous year. She sat quietly, did a few minutes of sounding, and then imagined that her breath was breathing her, gently and easily, into true self. To true self she said, “This farm needs to pay for itself. What can I do? I turn it over to you. Show me what I can do.” As she continued breathing into true self, an answer came: “You are in a state of confusion, but there are simple answers. Visualize what you want, and proceed. Your wanting has strength.”

A few days later, Cherie again sat quietly, sounded, and imagined that her breath was breathing her into true self. Again an answer came: “Don’t worry, let go, receive. Things are already being taken care of by your true self.”

Cherie, used to relying on a plan and her own hard work to execute it, was in new territory. It was the territory of yearning (or wanting) and Not Knowing. She wanted to save the farm yet didn’t know how to do it. Wanting was familiar to her. Proceeding in a state of Not Knowing about something this important was new and disorienting. Cherie had turned to true self to learn how to navigate Not Knowing.

True self had let her know that goodness was in the works, goodness that was greater than anything her personality could see from its limited perspective or make happen on its own. With the message “Don’t worry, let go, receive,” true self hadn’t been suggesting that Cherie become passive, but had been guiding her to develop a state of open receptivity. As long as her action-oriented personality was dominating, she couldn’t see her deeper path or receive the greater goodness waiting on it for her. A well-developed state of receptivity and new roots into true self would help her to find her way and gain the most from it.

During the next few weeks, stress, worry, and panic about the farm's situation visited Cherie several times a day. Each time, remembering true self's messages, she chose not to be controlled by her personality's distress, but instead to turn toward her true self well-being, even if she could not yet see how that well-being would manifest in her life. When the distress tapped her on the shoulder, she didn't deny or reject it; she just reminded herself, "I've already asked for true self's help. I believe in it. I'm open to it." Or she'd take a breath into true self. Or she'd turn her thoughts to something enjoyable that helped her to remain open to well-being.

Each time she gently chose well-being over her personality's reaction of distress, relief flowed through her body immediately. She felt happier and lighter. Stomach problems and stress headaches that had begun to plague her disappeared.

As Cherie practiced her new well-being process, it became easier and more automatic. She also found worry and distress occurring with decreasing frequency and her well-being lasting longer. For example, early on she felt happy and balanced for maybe an hour between episodes of worry. A few days later she felt happy and balanced for two hours between episodes of worry. Within a few more days it was up to three hours, and so on until happiness and balance were lasting all day. Worry and distress were taking a back seat to well-being.

One evening six weeks after Cherie had started her well-being process, she and Ian were sipping cocktails in the area of the farm they called "the park." The park was two acres of cleared land that had no trees, just lush, mowed grass on top of a hill that offered gorgeous views overlooking other farms and the ocean. It was their haven.

“This is such a beautiful spot,” Cherie mused, “and this view is *amazing*. People would love it. There’s just *got* to be something we can do with all this beauty to save the farm.”

They’d had this conversation before. Ian grinned and offered their new catch phrase, “Build a pavilion, and they will come.”

Later in the week Cherie was talking with the receptionist in her chiropractor’s office about her dilemma. “We’re trying to figure out something to do with the park. Do you have any ideas?”

The receptionist took in a quick breath and held it for a moment. “You’re giving me goose bumps,” she said. “Part of the week I work for a tour company that’s looking for a place to take tourists for their picnic lunches. I think your park would be perfect! Most our tourists have never seen a macadamia farm.”

Three days later the owners of the tour company met Cherie in “the park,” set up picnic tables under canopies, and handed Cherie a schedule. The next day, they started bringing their tours to Puna Girl Farms for lunch. Cherie became the first “real, live macadamia farmer” most of the tourists had ever met, and she happily stepped into the role. Chatting about the farm she loved so much, selling her honey, and giving samples of the macadamia nuts plus the bananas, star fruit, pineapples, and lychee that also grew on her property made her happy. Cherie realized that not only had she achieved her dream of living in paradise, now she was sharing it with people from all over the world. Yes, her true self definitely had known what to do.

In the following months the size and frequency of the tours increased, Cherie and Ian built the pavilion, and weddings and special events were added to the farm’s growing

list of draws. Enough income was generated for the farm workers to remain employed; they maintained the orchards and kept the jungle at bay so nut production would be ready to resume whenever prices should go back up. In short, the farm was saved.

But there was more to it than that. Cherie had used the crisis for the purpose it had manifested: to deepen her personality's roots in true self and to take her dream, the farm in paradise, to its next level. Her personality couldn't have seen the big picture or have figured out the details for making it happen. It had been a plan so big it could only have been orchestrated by true self.

Learning by experience that Not Knowing was not a weak or passive state, but a state of profound receptivity in which goodness was percolating for her; turning over her dilemma to true self and opening to true self's guidance; and choosing deeper well-being in the face of stress and worry had given Cherie a new way to navigate into abundance.

Martia Nelson, life coach and author of "Coming Home: The Return to True Self," helps you reclaim your true self and a life that makes your soul sing. Get your FREE mp3 at www.MartiaNelson.com . Copyright © 2008 Martia Nelson, all rights reserved.

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