April Newsletter

**Let in the good**

Last weekend I met an old friend at a birthday party. She didn’t look too happy and it turned out she had just split up from her boyfriend of seven years and had moved into a bare housing association flat on her own. The job she had been so pleased to get following the completion of her PhD turned out a disappointment and there was lots of tension with her colleagues. Years ago she had done a couple of mindfulness courses (one with me), but had somewhat got out of the habit of practise. Her depression had come back and she was at the end of a course of talking therapy. Had it helped her, I asked, and she said: ‘Not really’. She looked me straight into the eye. I sensed her pain. What could I say to her, apart from expressing my empathy with her loneliness and depression and wish for love and harmony? Generally I try not to give uninvited advice. But somehow I felt moved to share this with her:

‘The one thing that really has made a difference to me over the years is to focus on whatever is nourishing in my present experience.’

‘You mean, a kind of gratitude practise? Listing all the good things that happened to you? ‘

‘That’s part of it. But what really has led to significant change in the very make-up of my brain, it feels like, is to take in what is enriching right in the moment; linger over it; taste it to the full.’

‘Like right now, us talking to each other?’

‘Yes, exactly. I am so enjoying being here, meeting you and other old friends; I feel grateful to Mary (not her name) for putting on this party; It’s such a gift to the community. My heart feels all warm and soft. And hearing about your story is part of this too, pain and all.’

I could sense a shift in the space between us, and we just stayed silent for a while.