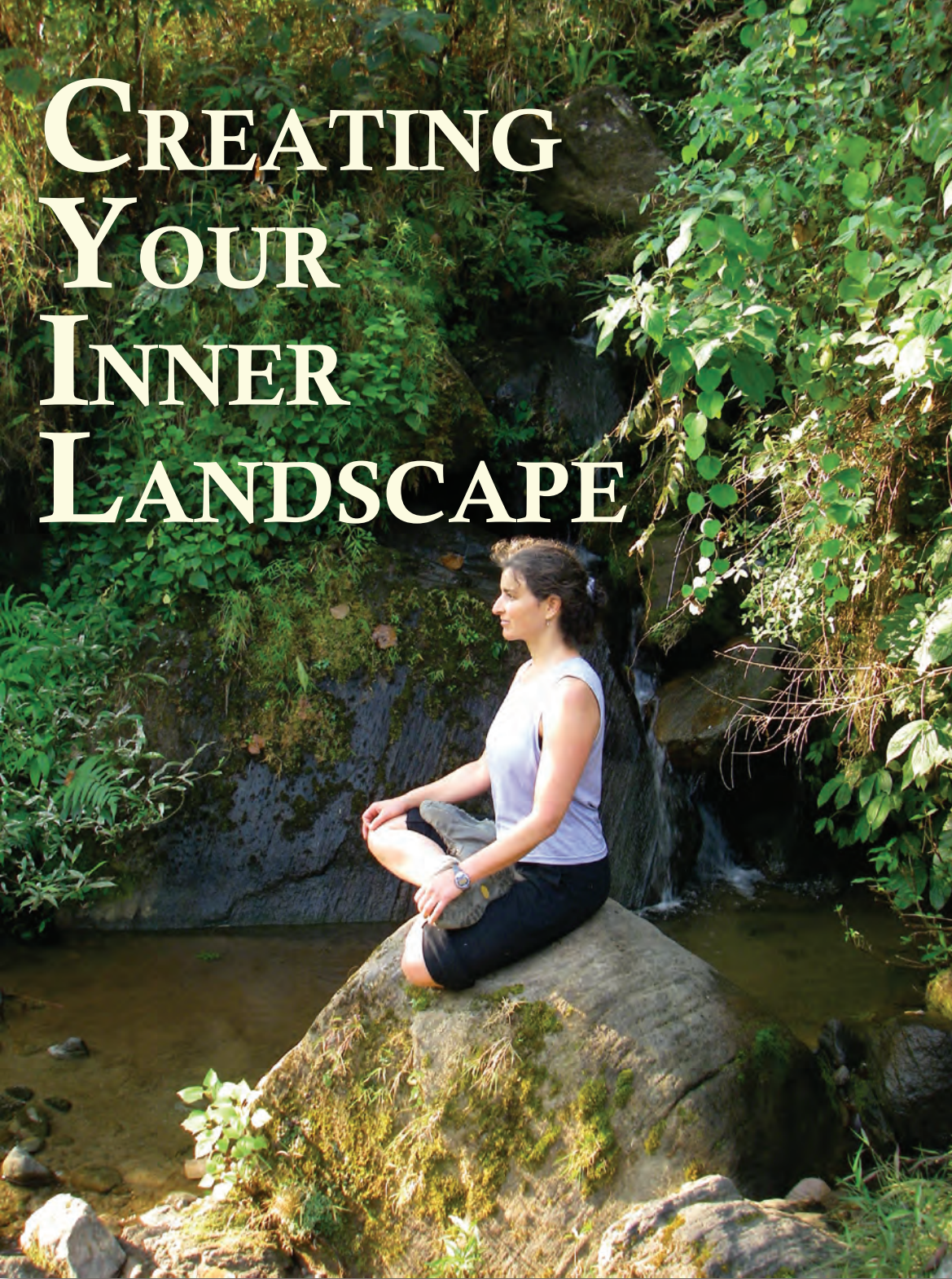


CREATING YOUR INNER LANDSCAPE



By Paola Feher

When you take a quiet walk through the woods where does your mind go? Do you solve problems? Worry about the future? Or are you able to let go and enjoy the scents, sounds and sights of your surroundings? And what is the result of each of these possible mental states? Does dwelling on problems and worries create suffering? Does your attention to the details of the landscape around you create feelings of peacefulness?

I will often go for such a “walking meditation”. For me, attention to the color of the sky, the shape of the clouds, the quality of the light, the texture of the bark on the trees is one of the

most tranquilizing drugs there are. It “grounds” me, puts life in perspective, gives me renewed energy and a sense of belonging to something much, much larger than a life filled with endless chores and work.

A sitting meditation is much the same. We have a choice as to how we choose to direct our minds. Why not choose something that makes us, and therefore all the people we come into contact with, more content? We could choose to meditate on famine, war and the cruelties of life. Or we can choose to link and understand the qualities of light, the heart, beauty, friendliness, compassion. This is not to say we can’t contemplate and empathize with the realities of the world. Meditation is not, certainly, a “polyanna” effort of ignoring what is real. It is simply not about dwelling on, and worrying over, that which we cannot change.

When you sit for meditation, try the following:

1. Focus on your heart. Take a tour of your heart. Notice its color, the cadence of its beat. What qualities do you attribute to your heart? For the next 12 breaths, on every inhale, infuse your heart with more of the positive qualities you desire for it. Fill it to the brim.

2. Focus on light. Light a candle, if you wish, for gazing at it. What qualities does a flame have? How much light do you enjoy? What happens if you have too much light? Too little? What sensations in your body does light evoke?

As you meditate, you are adventuring into YOUR inner landscape. You are exploring and becoming acquainted with the color, shape and texture of the clouds, sky and trees that make up what is your inner being. This understanding gives you the freedom not just to understand

who you are and what makes you “tick”, but also frees you to effect change. It is only with the awareness of who we truly are, with an understanding of our own inner landscape, that we can effect positive changes to create an ever more positive landscape not just for ourselves but for all those who we come into contact with.

Paola can be contacted at www.bozemanhealingarts.com or 586-7529. She is available for private consultations to set up your personalized home practice, and teaches group yoga classes. Check the website for class schedules.