

Nancy Mellon “Body Eloquence”  
Interviewed by Julie de Bastion

### “WAKING UP TO THE STORIES WITHIN US”

Nancy Mellon is storyteller, healer, visionary and artist. Her workshops brim with creativity and wisdom, and now she has written an extraordinary new book, “Body Eloquence: The Power of Myth and Story to Awaken the Body’s Energies”, published by Energy Psychology Press in the USA. “Body Eloquence”, written in collaboration with Ashley Ramsden, who is the founding director of the School of Storytelling at Emerson College in East Sussex, reveals deep and amazing truths about how our bodies respond to stories. Her web site is [www.healingstory.com](http://www.healingstory.com)

Nancy has been sounding the healing theme for twenty years in the storytelling renaissance worldwide. She continues to instigate more conscious awareness of the complementary relationship between storytelling and the healing arts. In “Body Eloquence” Nancy offers a wealth of new insight to a broad range of readers, including medical practitioners, storytellers, and community builders, by exploring the human body as the foundation for transforming the human story.

Donna Eden writes in the Foreword:

“Body Eloquence” is a thrilling read, guiding us into the cornucopia of poetic relationships that reside in the human body. Its thesis is that every organ embodies a purpose and has an influence that goes far beyond its biological function. Every organ is as vitally connected with psyche and spirit as it is with blood and oxygen. Every organ embodies a specific theme, holding its own important piece of the cosmos’ great mysteries.”

JdeB “This is a wondrously profound and far-reaching book which portrays both Eastern and Western perspectives, and looks deep into the connectedness between world stories, myths, patterns, and characters, and the human body. What’s amazing to me in reading your new book, “Body Eloquence”, is that so many aspects of yourself, as writer, teacher, artist, storyteller, performer, and healer, have come together in such an insightful integrated way. Do you feel the body’s organs are similarly integrated and connected ?”

NM “ The more I explore my own different creative abilities, the more I am able to appreciate the immeasurable creative activity that is always going on within me, and within everybody else. It is very inspiring to realise that actually every organ is a kind of storyteller with memory and creative responsiveness to internal conditions. Every organ can also be recognised as an ingenious teacher, an artist, a performer, a healer, and a technician of great proficiency.”

JdeB “Body Eloquence” is certainly a story of integration and harmony, as the ancient healing arts teach us.”

NM “I truly believe that the body is speaking with urgent eloquence now, to awaken us to its generative wisdom. I have always believed as an educator that every subject is connected with every other subject. When I was a college student, majoring in one subject seemed to me a distortion of the learning process. I have always been interested in how everything connects. This book is my salute to the unity within the vast diversity of all things.”

“I now realise the whole body and each one of our organs is a guru, a creativity expert, a world teacher. The body is a template for growing into a more creative, intelligent, and compassionate people --- more global individuals and cosmic citizens. The book offers a detailed itinerary for approaching this seemingly lofty goal.”

“Everyone has lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, skin, and everyone’s physical life is similarly engaged with spiritual creative life. Our bodies, no matter where we go around the globe, have a common language. There is always more to learn about this universal language. I believe that many others at this moment are working in the same direction to decipher more of the universal soul language that springs from the physiological similarity of every human being, no matter where or how we live on the Earth.”

“I hope the book will serve to awaken new reverence and practical appreciation for ourselves and our bodies, whoever and wherever we may be. This is my contribution to what I believe is the only positive direction we can take as a world family---to know that we are all part of the whole, and deeply connected with one another. I want this book to increase understanding of human nature and help remove fear of our apparent differences.”

JdeB “ In your book you speak of the “jewelled net of Indra,” which is a beautiful image that portrays the connectedness of all matter, the macrocosm reflected in the microcosm, which we now know to exist through holography and fractal geometry.

Do you see this as a connection of vibrations, as in the way drumming and rhythm reverberates in us, and as it does with sand forming different patterns to different frequencies from the vibrations of stringed instruments?”

NM “ Words all have vibrations, especially when they are spoken aloud. Images have vibrations; plot structures in stories hold vibrational patterns. Everything that lives has subtle vibrations and resonances that are similar and dissimilar. A drummer knows that some rhythms reach the heart and some address the breathing; others are more sensual and sexual; and others are more thought- provoking. Actually, every organ emits its own different rhythmic frequencies and tones, and musicians and storytellers have always tuned in with more or less intention to these different frequencies in order to communicate with their listeners. They form their words and gestures and plots to bring internal processes into play--- to refresh and stimulate, heal and balance.”

JdeB “It feels like what are saying is that our internal organs are gathering centres where information about our lives is stored, processed and transformed. Is this how you would describe

the relationship you see between the body's cellular intelligence and its receptivity to stories? For instance, in the way our cells store memory, including our traumatic experiences and other psychological issues, which eventually can impact on our entire body chemistry and structures?"

NM "Every cell of the body is a memory keeper as well as being responsive to emotion and thought, as the work of Candace Pert demonstrates in her book, "Molecule of Emotion." Masaru Emoto has shown in "The Hidden Messages in Water" how water responds to words and thoughts in its cellular structure. The human body is made of at least 70% water and is continually responding to the quality of thoughts and words that it hears. Many other researchers globally have been demonstrating in recent years that the way that we speak and feel about experiences can deeply affect the body. For instance, if a child has been frightened he will tend to continue feeling stress until the experience has been spoken of with loving confidence in his ability to recover balance and learn and grow from the experience. We all are familiar with how negative experiences linger until they are addressed and transformed. How we speak and think and feel about an experience makes a great difference."

JdeB " Then it seems our tonal and vocal expressions can either wreak havoc or heal our entire cellular landscape. So we as humans must be super sensitive to detecting "love" in the voice, (or its absence} The telling of the stories, with all their complexities, woven with archetypes and patterns, must be a powerful vehicle which carries important messages to our listening organs?"

NM " I believe that stories have always had many functions. If the storyteller wants to fascinate and entertain and has no shamanistic intention whatsoever, the listener can nonetheless be helped towards healing and development. With fairy tales as with great stories, the intention of the author of these stories may not be fully aware all the level of listening that can unfold. Some great fairy tales were created intentionally, for example, to strengthen the heart. There's a whole culture of fairy tales where the main character is not strong in any particular way except in their ability to be loving and responsive to others. These characters, though they may seem simpletons at the beginning of the story, turn into powerful wise rulers by the end of the story because they rule from the heart, guided by wisdom and love. Of course, not all fairy tales carry this agenda. Sometimes, as my book portrays, clever intelligence is the most important heroic quality that's being stimulated by a story. Other times it is perseverance and faith. Some fairy tales are not particularly enlightening at all."

JdeB "Among the chapters, you speak of your encounters with highly individual and creative souls whom you have worked with; it feels like you have the ability to connect with people on an almost clairvoyant level. Do you actually "read" body resonances as you conduct a storytelling workshop or when you do healing work with children?"

NM "During the last fifteen years as I have explored the different organ territories, I have learned to see many things I could not see before. I wouldn't call this clairvoyance- it is more a combination of grace, and devoted interest and attention and hard work. Over the many years I

have learned to trust my intuition and the imaginative pictures that come to me when I focus in the service of another person. I teach other people also how to trust intuition and imagination.” JdeB “The book is also very instructive, and has a comprehensive approach which integrates yoga, dance, music, and of course the stories which are relevant to each organ. These are all expressive and healing arts ---and your book has now brought the evolution and health of our bodies into deep relationship with these creative art forms. Does this suggest that the body is indeed a work of Art? I believe we are all artists at some level. Can we work on, direct and shape our inner and outer body/energy manifestation?”

NM “One way to look at God is as a Supreme Artist, working with many materials and assistants. As we allow ourselves to become more aware and respectful of all the creative activity that has formed and maintains us and helps us to heal and grow, of course we are collaborating with an already vastly artistic process that makes us human. We are all immensely beautiful and full of truth, goodness and evolutionary promise. Through the kind of stories and storytelling activities and other creative activities described in the book, the reader can become closer to the divine creative artistry that makes us well and whole.”

JdeB “ Storytelling as an art form has become very prevalent and popular with contemporary artists who have turned to this creative, rich source of inspiration. Here in the UK, there is now a high focus on storytelling workshops for artists and facilitators in most educational settings. Do you see this as a direct counterbalance to the predominance of the impersonal electronic age?”

NM “A storytelling renaissance is occurring throughout the world - there’s a big storytelling conference in Hong Kong, I recently read. This renaissance started in the USA where so many electronic inventions first burst into households and communities and changed the culture within a few brief years. I believe the storytelling renaissance is helping redress the imbalance that these inventions bring about because storytellers speak fully embodied, with visible gestures wrapped in body warmth, and hopefully with all their faculties intact, including rich imagination and intuition.”

JdeB “ So you envision this to be a way forward for our future children to keep their integral inner vision and imagination open, and not to succumb to the pressing ravages of perverse evolution and negative energies?”

NM “Every child must grow in heart, liver, lungs, digestive capacity. Every child must grow a skin and immune system. Each child must grow into responsible sexuality, and have the freedom to imagine themselves as adults contributing with their whole being to the life of the earth. Storytelling is their birthright. It allows them to inherit the cultural riches pertinent to their own soul’s mission and to express their dreams and visions. Without imagination, children are simply at the mercy of other people’s images and agenda.”

JdeB “In stories and storytelling, there are many instances of “magical transformations, for instance, when something or someone changes form, it usually means a great psychic shift has

taken place or a new awareness. Can you elaborate on this kind of “magic” from the aspect of how we make important inner changes?”

NM “ I don’t usually use the word “magic” because it has so many negative connotations. I trust that there are patterns for health for all levels of our being that we respond to when we heal and grow. What appears to be a magical transformation or a spontaneous healing, can in fact, be seen as a normal response to life. As mentioned in my book, remission and complete healing from serious disease can result from simply reaching into the dysfunctional story that has lodged in a certain part of the body or psyche, and restructuring the story, and /or listening to it in a new way. I prefer to look at change this way, rather than to relegate it to” magic” beyond the willingness of the individual to heal and in many cases, to let go and grow.”

JdeB “I am aware that you have worked closely with Ashley Ramsden who is the founding director of the School of Storytelling at Emerson College UK, and that you are collaborating in workshops “The Future of the Heart” at Emerson College (August 2008) and “The Eloquence of the Body” (5 weeks in spring 2009). You mention this collaborative work in the book. How did you come to work with Ashley?

NM “ Ashley Ramsden and I have been colleagues for two decades. He contributed from his vast repertoire, and gradually we developed many creative exercises in the workshops we have offered together during these past eight years on the subject of the body’s eloquence. In 2000 we began to explore how imagination and the spoken word resonate in the body. The book contains a selection of the marvellous myths and tales we found that are attuned with each organ territory. Before that I had been slowly exploring yoga and the meridians intensively over seven years.

JdeB “These powerful myths and fables which touch so many people in so many different ways, seem to act as channels and pathways for the flow of energy to be transmitted between souls.- both to and from listener to storyteller. It is a living energy exchange.”

NM “The body holds the framework and energetic patterns for understanding how to live together. Each organ formed over eons of time, and is a palimpsest of human earthly and cosmic evolution. I believe that as we recognise heart, our liver, our lungs, and all these physical/ spiritual formations as teachers, they will lead us, towards our full potential as a human community.”

“Religions, nationalistic cultural biases that have prevented us from meeting one another with a familiar intimacy must be overcome at this time, in order that we learn how to work and play more freely and responsibly together. It’s time for soul dynamics of human beings to loosen old forms. The picture of the human being can include the whole world, so that no matter who we meet from around the world, we can find ways to engage with one another with freedom and a deep sense of community. The harmony of the human body is a neglected prototype for personal and communal evolution.”

JdeB “I have always felt that there have been (and are) too few enlightened beings who carry this enormous weight of responsibility for those who are not yet aware; the world is changing so rapidly now. How can we speed up the much needed global healing process?”

NM “I wrote this book because I know that change begins within each individual. I have changed immensely as I have learned to see myself organically as a spiritual being who is wondrously made. As I learned to tune with my kidneys and my heart and liver and lungs, and all my other organs, I have experienced many mini and major revelations. I believe that in the coming decades, multitudes of people will be awakening much more fully than I have to the body as teacher. We have gone to the planets, we are on our way to the stars. We can travel the globe. Now I believe it is more than high time to go inwards to develop much more love and respect for the way we are made as humans, and to avail ourselves of the wisdom held in the organs of our bodies.”

JdeB “ This book is a timely and inspirational work, profound, complex and sensitively written. It is wonderful to read--- to become aware of the connections between the body’s functional and spiritual biology with the poetics of the universal language and meanings of the beautiful age old stories and their myriad manifestations into and with the human spirit. It is really profoundly insightful and a valuable wisdom that you have shared with us. Thank you”

NM “Thank you, Julie! “Body Eloquence” shows how everyone’s body is a wise old community. Let us wake up to what lives within us. As we wake up we will find the human community alive within us, the whole within the parts. So let’s find out how we are made, and enjoy learning from the great teachers of harmonious world cooperation within each one of us.”

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Nancy Mellon: author of “Body Eloquence” published by Energy Psychology Press.  
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