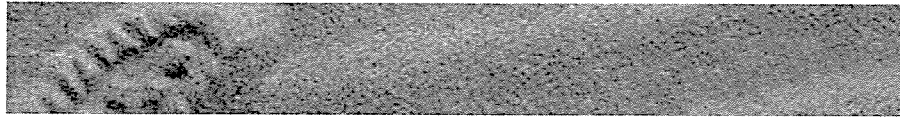


TheHamptons.com

...words...from some great local writers

I WILL RELAX DAMN IT, I WILL!



karen amster-young :: The Beach Chair Chronicles

...weekly observations & discoveries from manhattan to the east end...

I walked into the serene, Zen-like spa at 10:00 p.m. last Friday. After weeks of being trapped in my zip code I was finally away for 24 hours. The logistics of making this 24-hour getaway happen was equivalent, in my opinion, to getting Rosie O'Donnell and Donald Trump to dine together. The lights were dim and annoying "relaxation" music played in the background. When are these spas going to learn that we would actually like to hear some real music as we try to unwind? I was supposed to have a massage at 5:00 p.m. Unfortunately, traffic on the way to my destination was horrendous. I made three calls to the spa from the road to change the time of my appointment. "I am sorry," said the irritatingly-cheerful spa person on the other end of the phone. "We can't change your appointment at this point to tomorrow morning. However, if you want to come for the last appointment this evening — at 10:00 p.m. — we can accommodate you." I decided to take it. I figured my daughter would be asleep and I could meander down to the spa, relaxed (ha!) after dining at a kid-friendly restaurant with the required glass of chardonnay, and enjoy a massage. I craved this massage. I deserved this massage. I wanted this massage damn it! I wondered what

other crazy, time-challenged people would be at the spa at this time? To my delight, the gym was empty. This meant I could actually continue on this journey without feeling additional guilt for skipping the gym today; I mean, when was I supposed to work out? Was it when I was looking for my daughter's stupid swim goggles for the 100th time since Memorial Day or when I was behind a tractor-trailer accident stuck on the highway? The spa was quiet but a few others lingered in the whirlpool and locker room. "At least I was not the only crazy woman here", I thought to myself. I tried to get a sense of who these other crazy women were but decided to focus on my own experience instead. I grabbed one of those lemon-wedged glasses of water and sat in my robe and waited to be called for my treatment.

They should establish a new policy: anyone who makes an appointment for after 8:00 p.m. should have an "open bar" option. Oh, I forgot to mention my ten attempts of opening the locker with one of those key-pads where you enter your own code to open and lock it. I hate them. I prefer the key on the spiral key chain thing you put on your wrist; it makes you feel like you are back in college; remember those things from your dorm room? I ended up lugging my heavy pocketbook with me to the waiting room. I did not trust that I successfully secured the stupid locker.

After waiting for about 10 minutes and reading an article about getting your body "beach ready" (ha!), a girl (and I mean girl) came out and gave me a form to fill out before my massage. "Do I really have to fill this out?" I asked feeling tired and ancient. "Yes, we must have your information before your massage."

I read the first question:

DO YOU EVER SUFFER FROM DIZZINESS?

Sometimes, I thought. This form is making me dizzy – I should let them know. Anxiety can make you feel dizzy. Do they need to know that?

ARE YOU ON ANY MEDICATION?

Not at the moment, but the forced Zen in this place is fading fast.

ANY HEART PROBLEMS? ALLERGIES?

ARE YOU CURRENTLY BEING TREATED BY A DOCTOR?

There was not enough room to answer this question. I skipped it.

ARE YOU PREGNANT?

No! Let's leave that one alone for now. Thanks for the reminder on so many levels.

DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING?

AGH! Is this supposed to put me in a pre-massage mood? What is it with these places? Can't they just have you sign something to release them of all liability regardless of your mental or physical state? It should just read:

I hereby hold this expensive, irritating place harmless for anything that happens as a result of my massage. And then they should have you sign it. That's it. That's what all of these places should make you sign.

I gave the form back filled out, with partial truths to the twelve-year old girl.

I then checked my cell phone for the last time; shutting it off required an exhausting amount of focus. I then took a big gulp of the lemon-wedged water and waited. Mark, my assigned masseur, entered the waiting area and escorted me in to another, smaller room with the same music. He told me to take off all of my jewelry. I started sweating. Oh, here we go! Of course, most of my jewelry stays on all the time. Taking it off requires dexterity and patience, both of which were in short supply right now. "I will be back in a few moments," he said. "Just take off all of your clothes except your underwear and lay face down with your head in the cradle." Much to my surprise, I managed to take off the jewelry and follow his directions. There I was, face down, trying to relax. We all know though that when you try to relax it is next to impossible. I started thinking that perhaps I should have just forgotten the massage and paid the cancellation fee and join the list of spa "no-shows".

And then...just when I thought I could not possibly be more uptight, an old Bob Dylan song replaced the grating Zen music and Mark's hands worked my shoulders...

I began relaxing. By the end of the 50 minutes I was successfully in a different place – a state of mind that most “normal” people are probably in on a regular basis. The only difference? I had to pay for it. I floated back to my locker with my big freakin’ pocketbook and, of course, could not successfully open the metal box. I walked back to my room in those ugly spa sandals and decided to worry about getting my own shoes tomorrow.

The quest for relaxation is often elusive. It can actually take some work to get there. But, just as in life, you have to appreciate the journey. It all works in the end.

‘Till next week...

Karen Amster-Young, formerly principal of Amster-Young Public Relations, Inc., is a freelance writer living in New York City. She lives with her husband, Ben and 6 year-old daughter, Alison. She continues to work as a public relations & marketing consultant and is currently working on a non-fiction book. Her work has appeared in a number of publications, including magazines on the East End. She can be reached at atkaren@thehamptons.com

[...back to thehamptons.com](http://thehamptons.com)
click here



 the hamptons

June 23rd, 2007 Posted by staff@thehamptons.com | Beach Chair Chronicles | no comments