

Well-being for Body, Emotions, Mind, & Spirit

Volume 3

FREE

July-August 2016



Music and Wellness

Gardening Tips

Make A Mandala

Easy Delicious Natural Foods

Reflexology

Healthy and Energized With T'ai Chi

> Mindfulness Meditation

Word-Crafting as Alchemy

Short Story:

Being There for Each Other

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Natural Living Journal P.O. BOX 1506 Louisville, KY 40201 natural-living-journal.com PUBLISHER AND EDITOR Joyce Gerrish CO-PUBLISHER Bob Hudson GRAPHIC ARTIST & LAYOUT Svbil Watts

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IN EVERY ISSUE

Articles from Local Writers A Short Story Recipes & Home Tips Outdoor Fun in Greater Kentuckiana Gardening Tips Classifieds and Community Calendar

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Welcome to Natural Living Journal

Join us in opening to ever greater peace within ourselves and with the world and people around us. Rejoice in the rhythms, beauty, and integrity of Mother Nature. We hope that these pages will help inspire enhanced well-being, harmony, and joyful discovery along your life path.

OPENING TO LIFE'S ADVENTURES

- We walk through our days wondering what it would be like to try this or that.
- Our day dreams can lift us to wondrous heights of fanciful heroic exploits.
- There we are in our mind's eye exploring lofty misty mountains and crystal caves.
- We dance to thrilling music and twirl to our heart's content.
- It's all seems so safe as long as we keep it in our dreams and fantasies.
- It seems to give a moment's relief from the sometimes all too familiar.
- What if we step into those dreams?
- What if we walk right into and enter that radiant colorful world?
- - Even for a little while? Why not?
- Let's do it prudently and see what it feels like! Let's make it real!
- We can choose to enlarge our reality; we can choose to help transform the world.

There are so many ways to explore adventure.

Surely there's a way that is just right for you - - that sets your heart aflame.

What thrills you may not be what thrills me. That's OK!

The important thing is that our hearts are alive with the joy of adventure.

Life is meant to be an adventure, and we are the explorers.

There is uncharted territory waiting just for you.

There are uncharted riches in the fertile fields of your imagination, mind, and Spirit.

Let it express itself, my friend — be the truth of your possibilities!

~ Joyce C. Gerrish



Music & Wellness: Top Ten Tips

Dr. Alice Cash

I am often asked what tips I would give to people interested in consciously using music in their lives for health, healing and well-being. I offer my top ten tips to help those interested to begin their fascinating journey of life with healing music!

1. Understanding the Two Basic Principles of Music Healing

A. Entrainment

B. Isoprinciple

If one is to use music for therapeutic purposes, it is crucial to understand these two principles which I have discussed many times on my website. Entrainment is simply the principle from physics that tells us that our biorhythms tend to synchronize with the rhythm, tempo, or pulse of the music. We instinctively choose slow music when we want to calm down and faster music when we want to energize ourselves. The isoprinciple states that in order to change a person's mood with music, you must first begin with music that reflects the state he is in to start with. If you're feeling depressed you cannot simply put on "happy" music to change your mood. It must be done slowly and carefully.

2. Music With Pregnancy and Newborns

A. Lullabies

B. Music and the developing infant brain

We know now that the growing fetus' ear is functional from the fourth month gestation. At that point mothers should begin to sing to their unborn children on a regular basis. If you choose 5 or 6 lullabies to sing regularly, these same songs will comfort the newborn for at least 18-24 months after birth. They will also form the foundation of a healthy mother-baby bond, which is critical for the establishment of later healthy relationships.

We also now know that when the unborn and newborn child listens to Baroque, and Classical music, more neural connections are formed, which create a greater infrastructure for future learning. The Mead Johnson company has now made two CD's just for infants that they call "Smart Symphonies" and these CD's are given out to new mothers in the hospital.

3. The "Mozart Effect" ---Why Mozart?

The so-called "Mozart Effect" was based on three controlled studies that were done at the University of California, Irvine. All three were very different yet all three used the music of Mozart to elicit various positive results. Afterward, marketers put out the word that Mozart makes you smarter or raises a child's IQ. Not so. There is apparently a temporary effect after listening to as little as 30 minutes of Mozart that improves a student's sense of spatial IQ. It is possible that other highly structured and highly organized music would do the same.

4. Music for Depression & Anxiety: How Does it Work?

A. Recorded Music

B. Live Music

There is no doubt that "music soothes the savage breast." In the hospital where I work, I often go on wards where patients have attempted suicide and are deeply depressed about the state



of their lives. Usually I pull out my electric keyboard and some of mv books of favorite songs. Invariably people begin to stream out of their rooms and find chairs near the keyboard. I

invite patients to choose songs they'd like to hear. Many ask me to play "You've got a Friend" or "Unchained Melody." The music that works best for people is the music that has positive associations for them, reassuring and encouraging words, and music that calms them. Live music is always preferable to recorded, if possible. From my website, you can purchase "*The Healing Power of Music*," which contains specific information for using music to change your mood and lift your spirit.

5. Music for Surgery

A. Pre-surgery

B. Surgery

C. Post-surgery

I have now created my own audios that you can order for your surgery. In a nutshell, people who listen to their favorite music through headphones before surgery need less anxiety medication; those that listen to their favorite slow. steady, instrumental music through headphones during surgery need less anesthesia, and those that continue listening into the recovery room, changing the music to be a little more upbeat, need less pain medication. There is ample documentation for this in the medical literature. The "Surgical Serenity Headphones" offered on the Healing Music Enterprises website can also be programmed for Parkinson's patients, Alzheimer's patients, Lullabies, or your favorite meditation music.

6. Music for Sleep and Rest

Almost everyone has some music that they enjoy listening to while they rest. When one is ready to sleep, however, that music is often not good for falling or staying asleep. More often, people need the same sort of music that one would use for surgery, i.e., purely instrumental music with a simple texture such as harp or flute, and the tempo of the healthy resting heartbeat. Many people report that they like to use the machines that have a variety of nature sounds to choose from, such as gentle ocean waves, babbling brooks, gentle rain, crickets, and so forth. If one has trouble staying asleep, a continuous soft sound in the background that blocks street noise or other noise, can be very effective.

7. Music in the Workplace

Apparently, there are some workplaces today that have banned all music. A friend has told me that at his business, which is a printing business, workers are not allowed to wear headphones because the managers feel it is a safety hazard. He reports that he can hear perfectly well when his music is at a low level and that the calming effect is very important to his sense of well-being. I understand that managers have to put the safety of workers foremost, however I think if workers are willing to sign a release saying they believe they can control the sound level adequately, they should be allowed to do so. The music can not only calm people, it can also help them to focus.

8. Music and Pain Management

There are two kinds of pain: chronic pain and acute pain. Music will help some people simply because of the distraction factor. Others may be helped by what we call "<u>vibro-acoustic therapy</u>." In this, instruments with a strong vibration, such as a drum, are used to communicate rhythm and intensity in a way that can feel like a massage. Also people with hearing loss can feel vibration and intensity when hearing the music would be impossible.

9. Music for Addictions

When one is in the early stages of recovery, withdrawal symptoms are powerful. The craving to "use" is almost overwhelming. People in 12step recovery programs are taught to call their sponsor or recovery friends, use prayer and meditation, and also read their program literature. I have found with my clients that both chanting something simple, like the "Serenity Prayer" and toning on long, medium pitched vowel sounds to be very effective in breaking the thought of using again. You can purchase "*Toning and Chanting in Addiction Recovery*" from the Healing Music Enterprises website.

10. Music With the Elderly

The well elderly as well as the impaired elderly are among the populations with whom music therapy has been the most effective. Everyone loves the music from their youth and "courting years." This music immediately brings back memories of a time when most of us are at a physical peak and emotionally happy and hopeful. Patients I have worked with love the music from their childhood and youth as well as hymns and other sacred music. Research has documented the fact that when patients with Alzheimer's disease can no longer **Music...Continued to page 15**



Enjoy Relaxing Ride on The Belle of Louisville

by Faith Grady

Summer time is officially among us in the Derby City and there's no better time than now to head out and explore all that our beloved city has to offer. With temperatures steadily climbing upward and longer hours of daylight, getting out for a night on the town is perfectly ideal. I recently found myself engaging in an oldie but goodie; a sightseeing cruise on the Belle of Louisville. The Belle just recently celebrated her 100th birthday in October of 2014 and she is officially the oldest operating Mississippi river steamboat.



The cruise lasts a full two hours and the views of downtown Louisville and the bridges are absolutely stunning. Be sure to have your phone handy to snap some great photos! At some point during the cruise you will want to make your way to the bow of the boat where the breeze is nothing short of amazing. I brought my one year old daughter with me and we had a really good time. She was watching the water and smiling. She made a few new friends, too.

Whether you are looking for a fun date night outing or a family adventure, taking a cruise on the Belle of Louisville is a great option! What's not to love about watching the sun set over the Ohio River? On our cruise, the sunset had a lovely golden orange hue and the sun was bouncing and reflecting off the water so perfectly. The feeling of being on the water was so calming.

There are a couple of options available to enjoy a ride on the Belle. They offer a lunch/sightseeing cruise as well as a dinner/sightseeing cruise all of which booked be online can at www.belleoflouisville.org. If you don't wish the buffet, you can purchase your ticket at the boat ticket office the day of the cruise. (Buffet tickets must be purchased in advance on-line.) If you do not want to partake of the buffet, you can opt to just sight see, which gives you access to the outside of the boat, for \$21. For the lunch and dinner options they offer a full buffet and it is located on the inside of the boat. Adult tickets for lunch are \$35 and the dinner buffet tickets are \$43. There are also sightseeing tickets available for children ages 3-12 (\$12) and seniors (\$20).

Inside the Belle there is a full bar and concession stand with soft drinks and select finger foods. Also if dancing is your thing, after the buffet a DJ churns out a play-list of songs and line dances guaranteed to get you moving!

I definitely felt very relaxed after the ride. It made me want to go back again. The last time I was on the Belle I was younger. At that age I didn't have as deep an appreciation for life and nature and the water as I do now. The calmness of the Ohio River was just perfect. Even the next day I still felt a residual effect of calm. What I appreciated most of all was the special time to bond with my daughter on the boat.

There are just a few tips to ensure your cruise goes without a hitch: arrive early for parking purposes and also try to book your cruise on a weather permitting day so you can get the most out of the sightseeing experience. Be sure to go online to check for scheduling and availability. I definitely enjoyed myself on the Belle of Louisville and for a split moment, I felt like I was on vacation! If you find yourself looking for something fun, relaxing, and different to do I recommend going for a ride on the Belle. I'm most certain you will enjoy it and who knows; maybe you'll go more than once! Enjoy!

Ruel Chiropractic

Dr. Richard T. Ruel

3772 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40220

(502) 458-2559 www.reulchiropractic.com

Enjoy Delicious Whole Grains Millet & Quinoa

~ By Joyce Gerrish & Judy Conley, M.A.

How often do you enjoy millet or quinoa grains? They taste wonderful, as you may know, and they're both gluten free. Our body loves to have a wide variety of healthy foods. This helps to insure that we get a broad range of beneficial essential nutrients.

Millet "Mashed Potatoes." Easy to prepare and delicious. Many people love this dish and feel that it tastes similar to mashed potatoes. It may be a tasty way to get people who aren't fond of vegetables to eat a good helping of cauliflower.

Ingredients:

1 cup millet uncooked
 2 to 3 cups of raw cauliflower florets
 2 to 4 tablespoons Sesame Tahini
 Salt or 2 TBSP Braggs Liquid Aminos to taste.

Combine millet and cauliflower into large saucepan and add three cups of water. Cover pan, bring to a boil and then reduce heat to gently simmer. Simmer until vegetables and millet are soft, about 25-30 minutes. Add tahini and salt or Braggs liquid aminos and stir to combine. Mixture will become creamy. Serve and enjoy!

Basic Preparation of Whole Grains. Both millet and quinoa are light beige

little round grains less than 1/8" diameter. Quinoa is a little lighter in tone. As with any whole grain, rinse millet or quinoa (using a strainer) before cooking. Before rinsing look through the grain and remove any occasional little black "bits." Millet tends to periodically have a little black granule about the size of a millet grain. They are easy to see and

remove. Now place the uncooked millet or quinoa in a stainless steel pan with water. To cook millet combine one cup of uncooked grain with three cups of water. To cook quinoa combine one cup of uncooked grain with two cups of water. A cup of raw whole grain might serve about four people after cooking. I tend to cook two cups of whole grain at a time. Depending on how many people you are serving and how hungry they are, you may have some left over which is very helpful for a meal the next day. (Left-over cooked grain keeps well in the fridge for about three days.) Put the uncooked grain in the water and bring to a boil, then stir and turn down the heat, cover, and simmer for about 20 to 25 minutes. Simmer until it is the consistency you like. Do set a timer and check it at least once while it is cooking. This is also pretty much how you would prepare whole grain brown rice, as you are probably well aware. Whole grain brown rice cooks in about 40 minutes. Cooked grain can be added to soups, stews, enjoyed as cereal with milk, or served as a side dish.

To prepare a tasty side dish of millet or quinoa (or brown rice) for four people, combine in a pan: 4 C. cooked whole grain, 4 T. olive oil (added after any cooking), 3 smallish cloves of raw fresh garlic minced/pressed/or grated, salt or Braggs Liquid Aminos to taste, herb or spice of your choice such as curry, and ³/₄ C. cooked chopped onion. Heat until all ingredients are warm.

Closing Insights: The fact that millet and quinoa and whole grain brown rice are gluten free is very important. Gluten free is beneficial for everyone, and crucial to people who have celiac disease or who are gluten sensitive. Many people aren't even aware that they are sensitive to gluten because the symptoms might be experienced as headaches, fatigue, depression, or indigestion and may be misinterpreted. Also, organically grown grains and food in general is

> important in order to not have pesticide residue (no matter how little) in your body.

If we tend to generally eat the same grains, there may be crucial nutrients that we miss. These quality whole grains provide very valuable nutrients

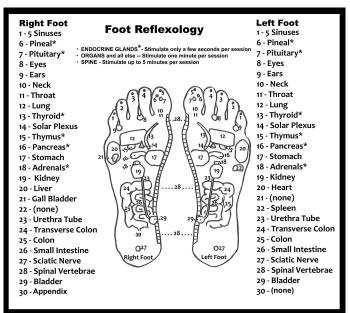
including: vitamins (particularly the B vitamins except B12); minerals; insoluble fiber; and protein. A cup of quinoa has about 8 grams of protein and a cup of millet has about 6 grams of protein. This compares to cow's milk at 7 grams protein and two eggs at 8 grams. An average size person needs about 45 to 55 grams protein in a day. It is important to enjoy whole grain rather than refined grains which have been depleted of part of their nutritive value.



FOOT REFLEXOLOGY

Enhance Health for Yourself or Someone Else

~ By Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.

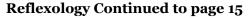


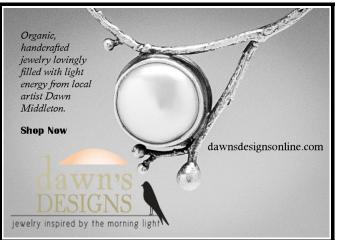
Foot reflexology works in exactly the same manner as hand reflexology which was explored in the May-June issue of this Journal. (You can read and print that complete issue at natural-livingjournal.com.) The choice between hand reflexology and foot reflexology is up to you. For some people, the main advantage of the foot is that it is larger than the hand, and therefore the reflex points are a little further apart and perhaps easier to differentiate. Numerous people find it somewhat uncomfortable to try to work on their own feet. Some people like to do both the hands and feet. It can be beneficial to simultaneously hold the pressure points for the same organ (or body part) on both the right foot and right handthen repeat with the left foot and left hand.

By massaging or applying firm pressure on particular pressure points in the appropriate area of the soles of the feet (or the palms of the hands) you can beneficially affect a specific organ or part of the body. Take a few minutes to look at the Foot Reflexology Chart. You will notice that on the soles of the feet there is a point for almost every organ and aspect of the body. By massaging these various points somewhat firmly (not hard pressure), you can stimulate an increased flow of vital life energy to the corresponding areas of the body. This aids the relaxing and/or healing of these areas. Any point you work on one foot should be repeated on the other foot to keep the energy flows on the two sides of the body balanced. The right foot corresponds to everything on the right side of the body, and the left foot corresponds to everything on the left side of the body.

To get an idea of where the pressure points are located, imagine superimposing a chart of the human head and torso over a chart of the soles and toes of the feet. Pressure points for the head are on the toes. Moving down the soles toward the ankles, you will find the same progression of pressure point locations as the actual organ locations occur in the body. Reflex points in the middle of the sole (half way between the toes and ankle) correspond to the waist area of a person. Points for the bottom of the torso are located in the lower half of the soles (near the ankle). Knowing these general location guidelines, you can use your intuition to locate pressure points. Notice how the reflex points for the spine go all along the outside edge of the arch from the heal up to the base of the big toe.

If you massage both soles and all ten toes completely, you will have benefited the entire body. Where there is tenderness (unless it is caused by direct injury to the foot), that spot may benefit from extra massaging to loosen stagnant or blocked energy in the corresponding area of the body. By massaging or applying firm pressure on particular pressure points in the appropriate area of the soles of the feet (or the palms of the hands) you can beneficially affect a specific organ or part of the body. In passing I'll mention that I used the word massage a few times in the description because it is a word with





DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE TREE THAT YOU LOVE?

by Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.

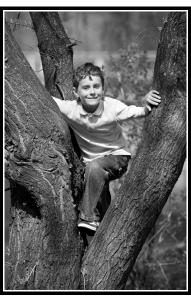
Do you have a special tree that helps you feel peaceful and happy just gazing at its beauty or relaxing near-by? When you were young did you enjoy climbing trees or playing in the shade of the trees in the summer? When I was a child, the

father of one of my good friends built for us a platform up in a tree. That "platform in the tree" inspired countless wonderful journeys of imagination. Probably most of us have warm memories and feelings about special events in our lives that evolved around a well-loved tree. Perhaps pause and bring those memories to your mind now for a moment.

When I gaze at a tree my heart is filled with wonder and awe. The beauty of its form is inspiring as it reaches heavenward. Looking at its limbs reaching upward lifts my spirit. How can we possibly totally

understand the magnificent gifts to us from the trees? They take the carbon dioxide we exhale and transform it into the oxygen that we need in order to breathe. We are in a crucial reciprocal relationship with the trees. Did you ever notice that you feel better when you are surrounded by trees? Among other things there is more plentiful oxygen and fresh air. The trees help purify the air for us and for the whole planet. It is a mammoth job. It's so important to remember that.

How else do the trees bless us? I'm sure that you are aware of many other ways. Trees are awesome. This is such a gorgeous planet in its natural state. Our deepest inner being craves to be surrounded by Mother Nature and her pristine exquisitely lovely forms. It helps heal one's soul to absorb the extraordinary perfection of undisturbed nature. The trees are among its crowing jewels. Consider the glowing colors of the leaves and graceful intricate patterns of the limbs and branches. The canopy of the tree branches and leaves provide homes for the birds and small animals. The traditional Native



Americans when they needed to re-energize themselves often sought out trees. They would stand or sit with their back to the tree (or hug it) until they felt renewed. We can do that, too. Have you ever leaned against a large tree and felt its vital energy renewing you? If not, you may wish to try it!

Trees hold the soil in place with their roots. Otherwise the minerals and clay and organic materials in the soil often get washed away and eroded. The leaves that fall in the autumn help to nourish the earth as they compost and

decompose. The trees are a crucial part of earth's ecological system of renewal and sustainability. They are our precious friends beyond belief, yet they are rapidly being cut down at a massive rate that can lead to serious depletion. The truth is that we need our trees.

A portion of the trees cut down are turned into various paper products. There are alternatives to constantly cutting down more trees to create more paper products. We can be dedicated to the complete cycle of paper recycling. That can really help. If we apply ourselves to buying recycled paper products and recycling the used paper as

completely as possible, it can make a huge difference. The prices are coming down on recycled paper. In many areas, including Louisville, some of the major grocery stores are selling 100% recycled papers at very reasonable prices—competitive with non-recycled papers. Fantastic! They aren't just specialty items any more.

Together we can make a difference! Preserving our trees and planting more are an important part of curbing climate change and

Tree.... Continued to page 15



Being There For Each Other

by Joyce C. Gerrish

Crystal looks around the coffee shop eagerly, watching for her friends who are due to arrive any moment. An attractive man is sitting at a nearby table. He smiles, winks, and gazes at Crystal a little longer than feels comfortable to her. She barely responds. "Funny," she muses, "usually I'd feel flattered, but right now I just wonder how many hearts he's broken. Thank heavens I'm getting to know myself better. These days almost every person I'm with I'm paying attention to the dynamics between us. Human nature is fascinating to try to understand. Maybe I'm finally doing a better job of choosing to stay off heart-break highway."

"Crystal!" exclaims Janis as she arrives, "Where did all your beautiful long wavy hair go? You look different!-— Still good, just different."

Crystal replies, "I feel different. I'd been thinking for a while about cutting my hair. I considered shaving my head, but settled for really

short hair instead. I feel like my whole life I've been sort of hiding behind my long wavy hair."

Nallie and Vic arrive just then and gasp as they join their friends. "Wow, I like it, Crystal," says Nallie, "You look courageous, like Joan of Arc."

Crystal replies, "Do I? That's good. I want to feel courageous. I

want to be known for my courage, ideas, and what I do — rather than just whether I look pretty or not. You know what I mean?"

Nallie hugs Crystal, "Sure, we understand. We're your friends. We love you inside and out."

Crystal rests her head on Nallie's shoulder for a moment and then quietly says "Thanks."

Crystal raises her head and gazes with a serious expression into the eyes of her three friends, "To be honest, I'm going through a lot. I feel like my life is shifting. Arnold and I are drifting apart because we both feel that we don't really want the same things in life. I want an easy-going familycentered lifestyle with my daughter Amy and with a man who loves both her and me. I'd like to garden and cook healthy meals together—and maybe have another child. He has no real interest in home life or family activities. It's sad to be gradually moving away from him, yet I feel that it's sort of a relief for both of us to not be trying to force ourselves to be what we're not. With all this soul searching I feel like I'm getting more in touch with what I really want in my life. It's a little scary —and at the same time it's liberating and freeing. Have you ever felt that way?"

Nallie gently replies, "We've all felt that way from time to time. That's part of being alive and growing. We need to figure out what works well for us, and what doesn't seem to. No one else can tell us that."

Responses of "Right!" and "For Sure!" and "That's the truth" are shared among them as they begin to sit down around the table.

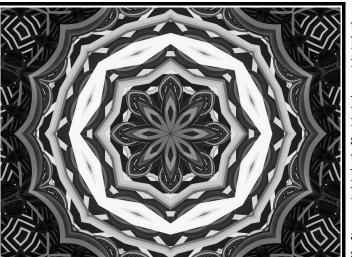
> Nathaniel arrives just then and says, "Hi! Sorry I'm late! I sense something important is going on here."

> Janis gives him a warm hug and says, "Crystal is moving through some mega steps in getting more in touch with what she wants in life, and we're encouraging her."

> Vic adds, "And we're agreeing that it can sometimes feel unsettling to make new choices and move

out of our comfort zone. Though if we stay open to discovering who we really are inside, we can often grow and learn through it. It can be empowering."

Nathaniel gets a pensive look on his face and replies, "That's true. I guess we all go through that at certain stages of our life. I know I have. Life's not always simple, is it? My wife is in big pain these days from her car accident a few weeks ago. It's hard on both of us. She's following her doctor's orders and she's seen her chiropractor, too. I guess some things take time. I want to help her feel better and I don't really



know how. I'm having to stretch myself to do things for her that she can't do right now. I'm trying to be really patient and compassionate, though it's kind of exhausting. I know she helped me in the past when I was hurt or sick. I guess that's part of loving each other for the long haul."

Janis reaches out her hand to Nathaniel. "My heart goes out to you and Ellie. Tell her we send our love."

"Thank you," responds Nathaniel quietly.

Nallie speaks up, "You're not alone Nathaniel and Crystal, I guess that we're all going through changes and challenges in our own ways. As for me, my husband and I have been doing marriage counseling. We're making progress, thankfully."

"Wow, that's wonderful," says Crystal.

Nallie continues, "Our group here has really been helpful to me. I thank each of you. I'm grateful we've been getting together here the second Wednesday each month for so long."

Vic agrees, "Me too, me too. Just sharing what's going on and what we feel—and knowing we're not alone is big. You know, something else I find helpful recently is journal writing about my feelings and thoughts and inspirations. From time to time it becomes a few lines of poetry. I enjoy that when it happens."

Janis chimes in, "That's cool, Vic, bring some next time we get together, if you will."

He responds, "Thanks, I think I have a couple short ones I could maybe share."

Janis responds, "Good, I look forward to it! And I'll tell you about something I've been doing recently that's feeling really helpful and enjoyable to me. I've been creating mandalas. It involves expressing one's feelings and visions with colors, shapes, and simple images within a circle drawn on paper. Colors, shapes, and images are a universal language of their own, and can speak to all levels of our consciousness, sub-consciousness, and super-consciousness. You don't need artistic ability at all. Just relax with the colors and shapes and allow your feelings to flow."

Nathaniel says, "I really like colors. I might enjoy that."

Janis continues, "Good. You can use any kind of colors you have handy such as markers. You don't have to show your mandala to anyone unless you wish. Just enjoy doing it. The psychologist Carl Jung's work with mandalas really inspires me. He had his students and clients express their dreams in mandalas. Fascinating, huh?

"Thanks for reminding me," says Crystal, "mandalas are wonderful. I think that I'll do one. I'll play some relaxing music in the background. Maybe I'll do a series of mandalas over time."

Nathaniel says reflectively, "Yeah, I think that I'll give it a whirl, too. Maybe I can get my wife to join me. She needs something to focus on other than her pain. The medicines don't really stop the pain, just lower it."

Vic responds, "I'm deeply sorry to hear of Ellie's pain, Nathaniel. I hope that it lets up soon." Then he adds, "Janis, the mandala sounds fascinating. I'll read up about Carl Jung on-line. I have loved looking at ancient mandalas in museums, but I never thought about creating one myself. Why not? Hum.

Nathaniel glances at the time, "Hey! Let's order our snacks! Waitress, we're ready to order!"

(Story to be continued in future issues.)



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T'ai Chi: A Way of Life

~ by Rebecca Martin, PhD

Perhaps, you have been walking in a park or along a beach and noticed a person or group moving slowly shifting to and fro, flowing from position to position; almost like the wind blowing tall grasses or trees. This is T'ai Chi – 'Balanced Energy in the Centered Person'.

Though it is practiced as a form of gentle exercise, tai chi is not just a physical activity; T'ai chi is a mind-body exercise that melds slow, gentle movements, breathing and a variety of mental activities – including focused attention, imagery and the act of doing more than one thing at a time.

The origins of T'ai Chi Chuan likely go back many centuries, perhaps to the practice of monks of the 12th century, who needed a form of exercise that could keep their joints 'well oiled' while also giving them a means of protecting themselves from wild animals and thieves as they made their way through forests and jungles. This protective form of movement, the National Exercise of China, has been said to be the foundation of all martial arts; while also providing a healthful, calming state of body and mind.

As a young woman, my first career was as a classical ballet dancer and gymnast. I loved the flow and strength of the movements of these powerful techniques and for their beauty and flexibility. Later, I married, birthed and parented six children, and helped raise eleven orphaned children. A time came when I could fulfill a longing to re-experience the flow, strength and beauty of movement I had loved earlier in my life.

I had heard of a T'ai Chi class, starting at a local university and taught by the T'ai Chi Master, Liang Ting Shuk, from Shanghai, China. I registered for the class. On the first evening session, I realized I had discovered a way to move my body and expand my mind, that felt immediately familiar. It was like 'coming home' to my roots as a dancer.

Over a period of months and then years, my body became healthier and stronger and my mind and spirit regained a new sense of power and joy. That was more than forty-five years ago.

Today, at seventy-eight years of age (and recently a great-grandmother) I am still very active; teaching T'ai Chi and Yoga weekly, while maintaining a full career as an Holistic Instructor / Therapist / Counselor and Director of Atmaram Ashram and Institute of Integral Education, a non-profit organization.

So, let's take a few minutes to actually experience a little T'ai Chi! Follow these easy instructions:

1. Stand up, with your feet a little wider apart than shoulder distance, and your arms raised at your sides, to about shoulder level. Keep your eyes open as you focus your attention on your breathing.



- 2. Now, imagine yourself as a water plant that lives at the bottom of a river, gently flowing to and fro with the current.
- 3. Imagine your feet are the roots of the plant; your legs and torso are the stems and your arms, hands and head are the branches of the plant.
- 4. Sense the river's current tugging at your stems (legs and torso), moving them slowly from side to side. Feel the current moving your branches (your arms, hands and head), gently following the side to side movement, slightly behind the flow of your stems (legs and torso).
- 5. Continue swaying naturally with your breath from side to side, as you shift your weight from your right foot to your left foot. <u>This is T'ai Chi</u>!

Though it may seem too simple to be a health exercise, as you sway with your breath and the river's current, you are lowering your blood pressure, increasing your body's oxygen supply and slowing the rate of your heartbeat. As you practice these gentle movements, your body and mind are becoming less stressed and more relaxed and peaceful. In fact, your body is working with more balance and efficiency, while your mind is actually becoming more creative and able to problem solve, with more accuracy (called "Genius Mentality").

Other important benefits of T'ai Chi is the sense of being present and mindful with others. Less reactive and more responsive. Less judgmental and more accepting. Less separated and more connected. Less uncaring and more compassionate.

I invite you to join me and the many others who are using this gentle, yet profoundly effective practice to open their lives and themselves to a world of greater awareness, health and peace.

Rebecca Martin is an author, educator, counselor, and certified hypnotherapist. She is an instructor and practitioner of T'ai Chi. She authored and developed the psycho-physiological training and certification program known as REGENESIS. Her philosophy is based on the principles of



mindfulness, compassion, and self-mastery. Learn more about Dr. Martin at <u>atmaram.org</u> or contact her at: <u>atmaashram@gmail.com</u>

Express Your Heart With A Mandala

by Joyce C. Gerrish

A mandala is a symbolic design within a circle. It has been utilized by people throughout history and prehistory to help them express what they are feeling and what is important to them. A circle represents wholeness. REALISM IS NOT IMPORTANT. Meaning can be expressed with symbols such as the sun, a flower, leaf, heart, or star and colors and shapes such as circles, diamonds, or wavy shapes. Have fun!

You can create a circle by turning a plate or a large bowl upside down on a piece of paper, and drawing a line around the plate or bowl. Mandalas often (though not always by any means) have four sections or quadrants. If you wish, divide the circle in half by drawing a line across the circle with a pencil and ruler or straight edge. Then draw a line across the circle in the other direction. Now the circle has four sections. For art supplies you can use crayons, oil pastels, or any other items you

would use for drawing and coloring. More options will be discussed later in article.

CREATE YOUR MANDALA

In each section of the mandala show a symbol or two (or a very simple drawing) of an important aspect of your life. For a gardener it might be some plants and gardening tools, for a musician it might be musical instruments, for a fisherman it might be fish, and for a mother it might be stylized children playing and toys. You get the idea. After you have placed a symbol or very simple drawing in each of the four sections, use colors and shapes to express how you feel about each of those aspects of your life and how they inter-relate. Do those aspects of your life support each other comfortably and in a balanced way? Allow yourself to explore however you wish as you create your mandala. The mandala is a symbol of your growing wholeness and unfolding life process. Realism is not important here, your feelings and insights are.

Colors express your feelings as powerfully as images. Warm bright colors such as yellow, red, orange, and bright clear green tend to have a happy upbeat strong feeling. Cool colors such as blues, violets, and soft greens tend to have a more peaceful quieter feeling. Pastel colors like pink or very light clear shades of all the rainbow colors tend to have a gentle soft feeling. Dark colors and various shades of browns and grays tend to be more serious looking. Allow the colors to express themselves however feels meaningful to you. Allow your mandala to be a creative outpouring.

Your mandala can represent whatever is



important to you. Enjoy yourself! Make your mandala any way you wish. Ignore the suggestions above if you wish. It is your mandala. If you wish, fill in empty spaces in the corners and other places with nurturing symbols and colors and shapes.

Use any art supplies you wish: colored pencils, water colors, colored markers, oil pastels, tempera paints, oil paints or acrylics, even crayons! Oil pastels are inexpensive (just a few

dollars), give nice clear bright colors, and are very easy to use. They can be blended nicely sort of like oil paints to create smooth color changes and transitions. Colors can be gently layered one over another to change the color a little, if one chooses.

I wish you a peaceful, joyful experience of discovery, healing and adventure! It might be helpful to start with a short meditation or relaxation. Perhaps play some peaceful nonverbal music.

Note of interest: Traditionally the four quadrants/sections of a mandala have sometimes represented:

- 1. north, south, east, west.
- 2. winter, spring, summer, autumn.
- 3. earth, water, fire, air.
- 4. (a) positive power & wisdom;
 - (b) nurturing, compassion, love;
 - (c) transmutation, transformation, change & growth;
 - (d) expansive inspiration & spiritual growth

FINDING PEACE WITH MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

~ by Carole Graham

There really is a miracle associated with Mindfulness Meditation. It is the miracle of oneself staying calm, and the miracle of the one who you are interacting with staying calmer. In my own personal experience, I have found this to be a great stress reliever. It aids me to be more fully engaged in the kind of life that I want to live. Mindfulness Meditation gives me the opportunity and the tools and the knowledge to really be in my life in a deeper more peaceful way.



The basis of Mindfulness is being focused in the present moment with curiosity, detachment, nonjudgment, and kindness. In that state one can make real voluntary choices over one's words and over one's actions. I have determined in the past two years of being involved in Mindfulness that there is a wondrous awareness that arises when you can be in an objective witnessing state of mind. Author Eckhart Tolle says that "Mindfulness is like being up in a helicopter and you are looking down on a situation with an objective detachment." This involves non-judgment which is really important. It is non-judgment of the other person and it's nonjudgment of yourself.

The curiosity aspect may involve asking yourself: "What is it that's going on here? What is it that he or she is not understanding? What is the other person thinking? Could he or she have misunderstood what I said? Might I have said something not quite accurate?" This helps keep one from over-reacting quickly and automatically with triggers from our own past issues.

When a person subscribes to Mindfulness it is like a personal commitment that you are going to engage in this set of behaviors: that you are going to stay focused in the present moment; you are going to subscribe to curiosity, non-judgment, and kindness. These behaviors make possible that your life is not a "knee jerk" reaction- -like when a doctor hits your knee with a hammer you have no choice but that your knee jerks up. Those awareness above are the Mindfulness techniques for daily living.

Then there is also Mindfulness Meditation. This involves sitting or lying with a straight back and shutting off your five senses. You're not looking at anything, you're not listening to anything, you're not smelling anything, you're not tasting anything, and you're not speaking. You're sitting or lying with a focused awareness on your breath. You're aware of your in-breath and your out-breath. And you're also focusing on relaxing your body. Some people focus on a mantra or a phrase or a concept such as the love of God. It is focusing out the senses and stilling the "monkey mind." It is stilling the mind to not think.

As long as we are human beings, something is going to be the focus of our attention. For Mindfulness Meditation, the focus of the attention is on the breath. When a thought comes, the point is to bring your attention back to your breath. Keep focusing on your inhalation and exhalation. You can't keep a bird from flying over your head, however, you can shoo him away if he starts to build a nest in your hair.

Why is this meditation helpful? It is helpful for the relaxation that it literally gives to your body, and for the way that it is helpful for relieving the pain body (energy) in the tissues. Mindfulness Meditation has been discovered to be neurologically, biologically, physiologically, emotionally, and psychologically healing and therapeutic in a myriad of ways.

Why does a person need to do sitting or lying meditation? Let's compare it to a person working out in a gym. Why does a person go to a gym? It builds your health, strength, and stamina. It does all these things so that when you're away from the gym living your daily life you can draw on those to sustain you physically. So coming back to sitting or lying meditation, when you practice that regularly, you find yourself able to more readily engaged in Mindfulness throughout the day. You Mindfulness.... Continued to page 15

Music Continued from page 5

recognize their family members to stay oriented to time and place they can often times still hear familiar music, enjoy it, and even sing along. Afterward these patients are calmer, sleep better and eat better. "*Music for Memory Care*" available from Healing Music Enterprises is especially created for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

The music discussed in this article can be purchased from:

healingmusicenterprises.com/products-services/

This concludes my "top ten tips", however, there are many, many other ways that music can be utilized for health, wellness, healing, and recovery. Please send me your own questions!

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Dr. Alice Cash: Helping people to use music for Healing and Wellness, Dr. Cash stresses the use of music for health, learning, motivation, relaxation, energy building, or well-being. She is known internationally for her work with music and pregnancy, surgery, addictions, and Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Cash can be reached through Healing Music Enterprises. <u>www.healingmusicenterprises.com</u>

Reflexology Continued from page 8 which everyone is familiar. Reflexology is not a form of massage, though it is sometimes included in therapeutic massage, and it does involve touching.

Treat yourself to relaxing and healing hand and/or foot reflexology often. It is very good for supporting health in a preventative way, even if one is already feeling excellent. It stimulates natural energy flow throughout the body. One to three times a week is probably plenty. Any type of therapeutic body work may tiger a release of toxins from the body. This is good, and is a natural part of the healing process. Drink extra water to help wash out toxins possibly released during a session. Also, you may wish to consider taking a brief rest afterward if you feel tired. You are doing yourself a lot of good.

Press the thumb with moderate (NOT HARD) pressure on a point which needs extra attention. A guide for the length of time to stimulate a particular pressure point is: (1) Endocrine glands (pituitary, pineal, thyroid, thymus, sexual glands, adrenals, pancreas): A few seconds. (2) Organs: One minute. (3) Spine and other bones: Up to five minutes.

Different ways to stimulate a reflex point: (1) Place your thumb on the reflex point and make very small circles without lifting your thumb. You are basically gently moving the skin and underlying tissues slightly, not sliding your thumb across the skin. (2) Place your thumb on the reflex point and move your thumb back and forth slightly without lifting your thumb. Once again, you are gently moving the skin and underlying tissues slightly, not sliding your thumb across the skin. (3) Place your thumb on the reflex point and apply moderate (definitely not hard) pressure without moving your thumb. Never hurt yourself or someone else. (4) Inch worm technique. Place your thumb on the reflex point and let your thumb sort of "inch" its way along like a tiny inch worm (one-eighth inch at a time). Experiment and sense what feels right for you.

Professional reflexologists apply quite firm pressure. However, I feel that it is very important to start out gently. Please read the complete Hand Reflexology article in the May-June Issue on the natural-living-journal.com website for further important information. You may wish to consider purchasing a Foot Reflexology Roller to have under your desk or table. You can roll your stocking feet over it periodically and it helps you feel better. Goggle "Foot Reflexology Roller." I wish you good health, peace, and joy.

You can download and print a full size copy of the foot or hand reflexology charts from:

http://joycegerrish.com/book/charts/

Note: Check with your health care provider before embarking on learning to do reflexology for yourself, particularly if you have a serious health condition.

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Tree Continued from page 9

global warming. It is part of the new wave of stewardship. The trees are among our greatest treasures. We can all help to preserve and renew this precious heritage. It is a "feel good" choice!

Mindfulness Continued from page 14 can keep pulling your mind back into peace. You can choose to maintain the peace of Mindfulness for the rest of your life.

Carole Graham has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, and is a Reiki Energy Healing Maser. Mindfulness is taught at Passionate Earth and Spirit Center, 1924 Newbug Rd., Louisville, KY 40205. 502-452-2749

Editor's note: It is important to mention that focusing on the breath in-flow and out-flow is basic to many forms of meditation. Mindfulness Meditation gives a good structure to the practice. The Mindfulness practices for daily living are very valuable, and are phrased in a readily grasped manner.

Gardening in July & August

~ Sybil Watts

The Summer garden is for enjoying the fruits of your labor — whether it be the harvesting of fruits and veggies or the enjoyment of the vibrant color in your flower garden. The biggest concern for July is making sure that plants have enough water.

In addition to watering, here are a few July & August tasks and projects that will help keep you garden looking its best for the rest of the season.

Water the Garden



• Remember to water the garden thoroughly and deeply and allow the soil to dry out between watering.

• To know whether your roots are getting enough water, using a trowel, dig down 4 to

6 inches on the *dry day*. If the soil is moist, then the roots are getting enough water. Generally speaking, run the water for 30 to 45 minutes, 3 times per week to get $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inches of water.

• A good general guideline is an inch of water per week, either by rain or watering; in arid climates, it is double that. In hot weather, vegetables need even more water, up to about 1/2 inch per week extra for every 10 degrees that the average temperature is above 60 degrees.

• By definition, the average temperature is the daytime high plus nighttime low, divided by 2. So, if the high is 95 and the low is 73, the average is 92 + 73, divided by 2. The answer is 82.5. In this case, the garden needs at least another inch of water. This explains why most vegetable gardeners in hot climates just laugh at the "1 inch of water per week" recommendation. That simply doesn't work in really hot weather for squash, eggplant, tomatoes, melons, and other crops with big leaves that wilt easily and need lots more water than most other vegetables.

• Containers typically need fertilizing more often since they require more water than veggies planted in the ground. Containers should be watered when the top inch or so of soil has dried.

• As the weather dries out, your container plants may need daily watering, especially if the pots are exposed to the drying sunlight. Push your finger into the soil in your container plantings at least once a day (more often on hot, dry days) to feel for moisture and be certain that plants are getting enough water. Apply water slowly until it runs out the drainage holes.

• The best time of day to water is during the morning hours so the leaves can dry off a bit before the hot sun hits them. Watering during the evening is sometimes acceptable if the temperatures are warm enough to insure that foliage dries before the temperature drops at night. (Wet foliage, from watering, makes plants more susceptible to fungus and disease.)

July & August Gardening Projects

• Enjoy the harvest of your fruits, vegetables and herbs and/or the beauty of your flower garden!

• Fertilize June bearing strawberries after the harvest, and ever-bearing varieties half way through the season.

• Plant out successions of salad crops for continued harvesting throughout the summer. Sow seeds for cool-season crops directly into the garden by mid-July.

• Continue to protect your fruit from the birds with netting until all fruits are harvested.

• Geranium cuttings may be made in late July to start plants for indoor bloom during the winter months, and for setting into the garden next spring. You may need to provide supplemental lighting with fluorescent grow lights for really good winter blooms indoors.

• Feed your house plants with 1/2 the recommended strength of a good soluble house plant fertilizer while they are actively growing.

• Continue to remove dead flowers from your annual plants to encourage continued blooming.

• Get a second bloom from faded annuals by cutting them back to one half their height, then fertilize them with a liquid 5-10-10 fertilizer.



• Roses need to be fertilized each month throughout the summer. In colder areas, allow shrub roses to ripen by discontinuing feeding them at the end of August. • Fertilize container gardens regularly with a liquid all-purpose plant food.

• Use a 'Rhododendron' or 'Evergreen' type fertilizer on flowering shrubs like Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Camellias immediately after they have finished blooming for the season.

• Dead head the developing seed pods from your Rhododendrons and Azaleas to improve next years bloom. Be careful not to damage next years buds which may be hidden just below the pod.

• Prune summer blooming shrubs for shape after they have finished flowering. Remove any dead or diseased branches.

• After your annuals die off, pull them out and add them to the compost pile. Replant that spot with hardy annuals or perennials, such as Pansies, Calendulas, or Armeria.

• Areas of the garden where the crops have finished should be replanted with either a fall vegetable crop, or a cover crop of clover or vetch to help control weeds. Cover crops can be tilled into the soil later, to add humus and nitrates to the soil.

Lawn Care for July and August

• Contrary to popular belief, a brown lawn isn't necessarily a dead lawn. Grasses go dormant in times of drought, yet will quickly return to life with the fall rains. If a lush green lawn is important to you, and you don't mind mowing, water it up to 3 times a week for 30 to 45 minutes each time. If a water shortage is expected, or you hate tending to grass, you may choose to just let your lawn go dormant, and water it as seldom as once a month.

• Raise the cutting height of the mower. Taller grass cools the roots and helps to keep the moisture in the soil longer.

• Avoid using lawn fertilizers in hot, dry weather.

Odds & Ends

• Be alert to slug and snail damage. These creatures hide during the heat of the day, and will come out of hiding in the cool morning and evening hours or after a rain. Seek and destroy ALL slugs and their eggs!

• Keep the weeds pulled, before they have a chance to flower and go to seed again. Otherwise, you will be fighting newly germinated weed seed for the next several years.

• Change the water in your bird bath regularly, and keep it filled with fresh, clean water. Standing water may become a breeding ground for mosquito larvae.

• Continue to watch for insect or disease damage throughout the garden, and take the necessary steps to control the problem.

• Summer blooming shrubs should be pruned for shape after they have finished flowering. Remove any dead or diseased branches.

• The first two weeks of August is the time to start your

fall and winter vegetables. Plant starters or seeds of green onions, carrots, beets, lettuce, spinach, radishes, and winter cauliflower directly into the garden.



Word-Crafting as Alchemy - Up-level Your Speaking or Talk Your Walk Third article in the series.

'Try' is Detrimental to Your Success

~ Sybil Watts

"There is no try. Only do, or do not."

~ Yoda

Have you ever noticed how the harder you try to do something, the farther away success at that task seems to move?

We have all heard the old adage: *If at first your don't succeed, try harder*. Or: "*Keep on trying until you succeed*."

I would like to suggest that the reason you did not succeed in the first place is because you 'tried' too hard. When someone says they will try to do something, they are telling you they are not committed.

When you say you will "try" you are setting yourself up for failure - for no success. One of the great tragedies of life is that a great many people get so tired and frustrated with trying and not accomplishing that they just give on their dreams.

Try is basically a state of inertia. When one tries, no matter how hard, they never accomplish what they set out to do. It is only when one stops "trying" and starts doing that they reach success.

When you are "trying" to do something, and find yourself unable to complete

the project, perhaps it is time to stop trying, back up, and take another look at the project. What are you doing? What is not working? What is working? How can you do this part of the project differently so as to obtain different results. Then go forward again. If that doesn't work, then once again, look at what didn't work and change that. Continue to make small tweaks in your project until you finally find something that works. Do more of *that*.

Do this experiment: Hold a pencil, or any other easily held object, lightly between you thumb and forefinger. Exert only as much pressure as it takes to keep the object suspended there in mid-air. Now, tell

yourself, "Try to let it go." After a couple seconds say "Try harder." Just keep telling yourself to "Try. Try harder. Try more." As long as you "try" the object will feel like it is glued to your fingers, and your fingers feel frozen in place. No matter how hard you try, you cannot move your fingers apart to allow the object to fall. After 10 to 20 seconds of trying (when you realize that you truly can't let go because you are tying so hard) just take a breath and say, "Let it go." BOOM! The object suddenly releases from your hand. This is exactly how trying works. To reach you goals, you must stop trying and start doing.

Personally, I have put a lot of intention into removing "try" from my vocabulary. I don't even try on clothes any more. I put something on, if it doesn't fit, or I don't like it, I take it off. There is no try.

As I said in the beginning, try is insidious - it permeates our language and keeps us from accomplishing our heart's desire. This is a word that creates a state of inertia; the inability to do what it is we want to do or achieve. It is only when we stop trying and start doing that we can actually obtain success at our endeavors.

Here are some words and phrases with which to replace "try":

attempt; work; strive; effort; go after; rethink and do it again; endeavor; have a go at; check it out; seek; consider; examine; investigate; undertake; exert yourself; experiment with.

These are all action / doing words that will get you on the track to success.

I'm not saying that removing "try" from your daily speaking will be easy, I am saying that the effort and focused awareness to do so will be worth it.

Sybil Watts is a Life Optimization Coach and Wordsmith. She guides people to let go of old habits and actions that no longer serve their highest good and supports them in living their optimal life. You can learn more about Sybil's work at <u>bioenergeticcoaching.com</u>.



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FLY AMONG THE STARS

Look deep in your heart, Reach across the rainbow, Fly among the stars, You will find your dreams.

Secrets wait in store, Dance within each moment. Treasure every breath. You will find your way.

By Joyce C. Gerrish