



Go Placidly Amid the Noise (Desiderata)

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender,
be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others.

Be Yourself.

Beyond a wholesome discipline,
be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.

~ Excerpt from Desiderata by Max Ehrmann, 1927



Natural Living Journal

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

Volume 1

FREE

March- April 2016



**Get an early start
on your Spring
Garden**

**Discover Yoga
That's Right For
You**

**Easy Delicious
Natural Foods**

Short Story:

**Hold Steady When
the Winds Blow**

**Healing
Relationships With
Heart Centered
Deep Listening**

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Yoga

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side-bending, and twists. Classes begin with warm-ups and then move to more vigorous poses that build strength and flexibility. Toward the end of yoga classes there are often postures where the student is lying on the floor on a mat. Some of these postures help prepare one for the closing guided relaxation or meditation. The deep relaxation at the end of the each class helps dissolve stress and tension.

Over time regular yoga practice can enhance your health and help you more readily meet life's challenges with courage and cheerfulness. Yoga can provide a lifetime of deeply satisfying discovery and growth physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

LAURA SPAULDING is president of Yoga East and has been practicing yoga for 49 years. Yoga East, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit educational organization founded in 1974 and has three locations in Louisville (Highlands, Holiday Manor, and St. Matthews). Yoga East provides yoga classes for all ages and levels of students, as well as yoga teacher training. For more information, see our website

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Yoga is not a religion. It is a science:
a science of well-being
a science of integrating
body, mind and soul.
~ Amit Ray, Yoga and Vipassana:
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Discover The Adventure of Yoga!

- Laura Spaulding

Yoga one of the world's oldest systems of physical fitness, wellness, and relaxation. It is very beneficial for people of all ages and abilities. When you are guided by a well-trained instructor, you don't need any prior specific knowledge or any special ability to learn to practice yoga. You will be guided at a skill level appropriate for you. Yoga postures (which are called asanas) strengthen and tone every part of the body. The breathing exercises included in yoga classes (called pranayama) help relieve respiratory conditions, and calm and center the mind. Different yoga classes are focused to meet the needs of people with different levels of physical flexibility and strength. They are geared to a wide range of physical ability.

Ashtanga Yoga is the original form of Hatha Yoga practice from which all other yoga currently taught have evolved. It has been taught in India since ancient times, and is very popular here in the United States now. It gives a good moderate workout. There are aspects of Ashtanga Yoga that are presented at a considerably more challenging pace and include much more demanding postures.

Gentle Level Yoga is ideal for seniors, pregnant women, and students recovering from illness, injury, or surgery. Gentle yoga has a slower pace and the teachers give more instruction on how to use props such as chairs, the

wall, blocks, blankets, and bolsters for support. These classes introduce fundamental Hatha Yoga postures with guidance for practicing the poses in comfort and safety according to the student's capacity. Some yoga classes are taught with special focus for people sitting in chairs and not on the floor at all (this can include wheelchairs).



Beginning Yoga (which is more demanding than Gentle Yoga) is the perfect choice for students new to yoga, out of practice, or students looking to build a stronger foundation in their practice. These classes are fairly challenging and are rewarding. These classes focus on fundamental standing poses, seated poses on the floor, easy inversion poses, and relaxation poses. From that level the student can gradually take more and more advanced and vigorous levels of classes.

A typical yoga class for somewhat experienced students includes postures that take one's body through a range of movement including forward bends, backward bends,

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Welcome to Natural Living Journal

Join us in opening to greater peace within ourselves and with the world and people around us. Rejoice in the rhythms, beauty, and integrity of Mother Nature. It's easy to get so totally wrapped up in the rush of day to day responsibilities and distractions that natural harmonious life perhaps seems irrelevant to the moment.



Let's rediscover our roots with the earth and our inspiration in the Heavens. May we rejoice in regular moments of listening quietly to the wind and the rain, the rustling of the leaves, and the calls of the birds.

Let's really listen to each other from the depths of our hearts and feel the bliss of deeper understanding.

May we allow our body to rest when we are tired - - and nourish ourselves with real honest food we prepare with our own hands from vegetables, fruit, and ingredients as they are gifted to us from the earth. Our body can begin to feel better as we meet its needs gently and faithfully without trying to override its messages to us.

Let us each be responsive to our own unique creative talents and abilities and how we can express them to give joy to ourselves and our family, friends, and broader community. Those are our true treasures.

As we look around us - - we see that this is a time of great change in every walk of life on planet Earth. Let's hold the vision that we are all moving into a better more wonderful life for everyone.

We at Natural Living Journal invite you to enjoy and explore these pages-- and hope that you will allow us to help inspire enhanced well-being and discovery along your life path.



HEART-CENTERED DEEP LISTENING

- by Joyce Gerrish

A couple comes to my mind that seemed to love each other very much--but sort of quibbled a lot. We'll call them Carl and Stacy. The first session when I did couple's counseling with them, their words were tumbling all over each other. One would speak and the other would often speak at the same time. They were both busy speaking, but who was listening? They seemed to be disconnected from hearing each other. I sensed strong caring, but there seemed to be "weariness" on both sides as to whether they would ever be understood. They both struck me as highly sensitive people with intense feelings. They had a lot in common such as a strong religious faith, and a network of close friends. She had numerous allergies, which he sometimes didn't want to hear about. Yet his health required a restricted diet that took a lot of special effort on the part of Stacy to prepare. It was clear to me that my job was to get them to slow down and stop talking long enough to listen to each other.

We started each session with a short guided relaxation listening to soothing music. We each simply focused on our breath as it flowed naturally in and out. Then I encouraged each of them, one at a time, to say three things they appreciate about the other. The peaceful music, guided relaxation, and sharing appreciation helped create a nurturing supportive space. Then I had them take turns speaking for four minutes without being interrupted. In this approach the speaker is to talk about his or her own feelings about life and what is going on within--and not about the other person at all. The partner simply listens attentively.

True listening is a profound experience. Many traditional cultures have "wisdom stories." These stories are said to have many levels of meaning. In true listening the intent is to deeply absorb the subtle nuances of some of the layers of what another person is communicating to you. In usual conversation, a large percentage of people are focusing on what they want to say next--rather than on the complexity of what the person with whom they are conversing is sharing.



When one listens with an open heart and mind, various of these layers of meaning can be understood. One layer may be the surface words, another layer may be the tone of the voice and the posture. Another layer may be what the person is saying "between the lines." Another layer may be the emotions you sense within your partner. Another layer may be how you sense your partner is responding as you really listen in a caring way.

After the first person speaks, then the second person has the precious opportunity to speak uninterrupted for four minutes while the other listens with full attention. This can go back and forth a few times during a session. I call this

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"heart centered deep listening," and it can work miracles. Carl and Stacy began to listen to each other rather than talking over each other. There was some interrupting, but they did pretty well. Their "assignment" between sessions was to practice their "heart centered deep listening" each evening, if only for one round of four minutes speaking for each--preceded by the relaxation and the sharing of appreciation.

After a few sessions along this line of "heart centered deep listening," they came in for their fourth couple's counseling session with an increased sense of gentleness and patience between the two of them. I didn't need to be the referee any more. There was a warm respectful tone in their voices. They looked at each other with smiling eyes and listened with real attention when each other spoke. We all felt that they were ready to take it from there on their own. They promised to keep practicing their "heart centered deep listening" skills. About six months later they let me know that they were doing well. They were enjoying exploring vegetarian cooking together and were having fun taking ballroom dance classes as a couple.

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Sliding Scale Fee

Body Mind Spirit cont from page 7

♦ **Embrace selfishness.** Spiritual practice, by definition, is selfish. Spiritual practice involves going inward, shutting out the stressors of the world, taking time to allow yourself to have some inner peace, and doing something that's just for your own highest good - - not everyone else's. How often do we allow ourselves to do that? We're constantly doing for others and not taking care of ourselves. And yet, that's not any healthier than eating junk food or living an inactive lifestyle. The old adage about putting your oxygen mask on first holds so much truth; you can't take care of anyone else if you don't take care of yourself first.



A daily spiritual practice has the power to nurture, uplift, and inspire. The benefits of a daily spiritual practice over time can lead to more peace of mind, a greater ability to handle life's challenges, and an increase in overall health. Can you find at least 5 minutes to nurture your spiritual side today?

Ashley Barnes is an author, speaker, coach and Integrative Energy Therapist. Her mission is "Angel Work" - the healing work we do for ourselves, which then allows us to be a healing force for the world. 502.889.7955.

Thoughts & beliefs can change your genes
and reduce, or increase, risk for disease.

~ Dr. Bruce Lipton

What you Say, Think, and Feel Matters

~ by Sybil Watts Temple

Languing Our Daily Life Into Existence

Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be. ~ Abraham Lincoln

What you **say** about and to yourself, your circumstances, your dreams, your intentions ... MATTERS!

It all matters! AND . . .

- it all has an EFFECT on how you feel
- which affects how you perceive things
- which affects the decisions you make
- which affects the actions you take
- which affects your outcomes and circumstances
- which affects what you think and how you feel about everything in your life.

Do you get the picture? It comes full circle. Over and over. The same is true for what you SAY about others.

What you set in motion with your thoughts and words returns to you in full measure, filled up and running over.

Thoughts are an important part of our inner wisdom. And they are powerful. A thought held long enough and repeated often enough becomes a belief. A belief then becomes our biology. Beliefs are energetic forces that create the physical basis for our individual lives and our health. -

~ Dr. Christiane Northrup

It ALL matters. It is all important to your well-being and quality of life.

Think about the words you choose. The sentiments you express.

- Are they hopeful or resigned?
- Are they blameful or self-referenced?
- Are they helpful or hurtful?
- Are they intended to make things better or to perpetuate what isn't working?

Please consider a commitment to "up-level" your languaging this year. Start telling your self and your body a positively worded story. Tell the story of your life the way you *want* it to be, not the way it was.

Science has now proven, pain in the body is often a symptom of some lack of care from you, or a thought or feeling that has been suppressed. If you are currently experiencing pain, see your medical practitioner and give your body the care it needs to feel loved, which creates a space for healing. Some people have actually experienced an improvement in over-all health and well-being just by paying attention to the body and acknowledging its need for attention.



To learn more about this interesting subject matter, go to bioenergeticcoaching.com

If you need guidance in changing your story and up-leveling your self-talk so that you learn to cherish your self, unwaveringly, you may want to consider gifting Self to a session with Sybil.

Sybil is a Life Optimization Coach and Clinical Hypnotherapist who assists people to learn a new way of caring for and speaking to themselves and thus learn to experience life in a more nurturing, positive way.

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Being Creative Is Discovery

by Ann Hemdahl-Owen, M.A.

We are all creative in many ways. Fixing a healthy salad is a creative project. I think of taste, color, texture, and shape of the veggies. I am aware of similar things when I choose clothes and accessories. However, instead of shapes, I think of line and balance, design, color, and texture. On days when I am sad or want to be invisible, I choose different clothes than on days I feel flamboyant and daring. When I need to be brave I choose clothes that support me. What I surround myself with tells me and others what I value and a little about my inner world, which even I may not be aware of.

Recently, I have been working with shells and lights in glass blocks. I use the same design principles. This is true with all creative art projects. Even with the new popular adult coloring books. The next step in that process is to start making your own drawings and then color.



Making things and being creative brings me joy. During that time, I lose myself in the creative process. My

problems and thoughts are lost in the concentration of creating. Sometimes in the concentration I learn things about myself...what pleases me and what is ugly or scary. The latter things often relate to my past or to a dream. Sometimes, I consider these mysteries important enough to explore further. I talk with a friend or councilor or write in my journal about them.

My favorite journaling technique for self-discovery is using my dominate right hand to ask/write a question and my non-dominate left hand to write an answer. If I decide to trust the process, I often get hints, clues or answers. They may be childlike or naive or simple yet they have an honesty that feels true and

can be very helpful. This process works well for dreams and problem solving.

A simple way to begin creating is to make doodles and develop them into stories adding color with markers, colored pencils or watercolors.

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Body-Mind-Spirit Connection

~ by Ashley Barnes

I believe that we need to have a balance in our life of activities and aspects that nourish both our body and our soul. These can include relationships, career, finances, creativity, education, spirituality, and so on.



Of those, regular spiritual practice is the most important, in my opinion, because I strongly believe that spirituality plays a significant role in overall health and wellness. This belief has been validated by my own personal experiences over the years, and was a motivating factor for me to become trained as a health coach and energy therapist.

We probably all know how and why eating healthy foods and exercise increase our health and wellness. For many of us, the connection between spirituality and health may seem less obvious. In reality, much research has been conducted on this topic. The Chicago Theological Seminary posted a review on its website of the book *“God, Faith, and Health: Exploring the Spirituality-Healing Connection”* by Jeff Levine, PhD. In his book, Dr. Levine explores evidence of the connection between health and spiritual beliefs and practices, including prayer, attending religious services, meditation, faith in God,

and other factors. His research findings include:

◆ People who regularly attend religious or spiritual services have lower rates of illness and death than do infrequent or non-attenders.

◆ For each of the three leading causes of death in the United States—heart disease, cancer, and hypertension—people who report a religious affiliation have lower rates of illness.

◆ Older adults who participate in private and congregational religious or spiritual activities have fewer symptoms, less disability, and lower rates of depression, chronic anxiety, and dementia.

◆ Religious participation is the strongest determinant of psychological well-being in African Americans—even more important than health or financial wealth.

◆ Actively religious people live longer, on average, than the nonreligious. This holds true even controlling for the fact that religious folks tend to avoid such behaviors as smoking and drinking that increase the risk of disease and death.



Dr. Levine points out that findings like these are becoming commonplace in medical journals. He states: “Scientists have begun using the phrase “epidemiology of religion” to refer to this growing field of medical research.

Creative

cont from page 5

Another idea is making collages. Choose a topic like a peaceful place where you’d like to relax, or my next vacation, or a problem that is ready to be solved. Cut out images, words, blocks of color, designs, etc. For problem solving, cut out images of as many different solutions as you can think of and glue them around an image or symbol of yourself. Think about how you would feel with each solution, maybe write in a journal. Put the finished work in a prominent place, add a title, and create a mantra or a helpful phrase to repeat to support bringing the solution into reality.

The act of creating is an intuitive process. Understanding the meaning of the project, whether glass blocks and shells, painting or choosing clothes, can be a thoughtful process of self-discovery and awakening to your real, authentic Self. Have fun!

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EASY TASTY HOMEMADE VEGGIE SOUP

(It Is Easy & Fun To Improvise)

ABOUT 10 MIN. PREP TIME, about 30 min. cooking at medium low heat while you relax or prepare something else for the meal. Serves 4 people.

1. CHOP VEGGIES: Chop up some of whatever vegetables you have in your fridge that you feel would taste good together: maybe onion, carrots, potatoes, green beans, zucchini or green peas (probably not leafy green vegetables or broccoli for this soup). If possible let an onion be one of the vegetables. It's worth buying a vegetable chopper device to help make chopping easy and super quick! See the chopper described on page 15 as one option. For this recipe chop a total of about 4 cups mixed vegetables. Put the chopped veggies in a pan along with about 6 cups of water or stock (left over water from cooking food previously). If you have fresh garlic, chop fairly fine about two medium cloves (or as you prefer) and add. Add one teaspoon of one of your favorite dried herbs such as basil, oregano, or thyme (if herb is fresh use a tablespoon).

2. BRING IT ALL TO A BOIL IN A PAN, THEN TURN THE HEAT DOWN TO MEDIUM LOW. SET A TIMER FOR 20 MINUTES.

When it starts smelling good - - it is getting close to being done.

3. ADD SOME LEFT-OVERS that you have in the fridge that you think might be good in the soup - - such as pieces of left-over meat or cooked beans (about a cup or two, as you prefer). Or if you wish, add left-over cooked rice or other grain such as quinoa or millet (about 1 cup). It is really up to you to add what is handy and that you like. It is going to be good no matter what. Let it all continue cooking at low temperature about ten more minutes until it tastes good to you. Add salt and pepper as you desire. Natural bouillon cubes from a natural foods store can add good flavor (follow directions on the package). When soup is done, add 3 tablespoons of olive oil. If the soup is too thick for your preference, you may wish to add more water. If for some reason onions tend to give you indigestion, you may wish to leave them out or sauté them about 5 minutes before adding to the soup. **Have fun with this recipe and vary it any way you wish to make it just how you like it! Enjoy!** This can be a one dish meal if you add left-over meat or beans and rice. Possibly serve this soup with good quality whole wheat bread & butter and a simple lettuce salad. On top of the bed of lettuce add a few raw pieces of cucumber, green peppers, and tomatoes (or as you prefer).



Just several years ago, few physicians and scientists knew that such data existed. Now, thanks to these studies, researchers have begun to realize that expressions of spirituality have measurable effects on health and well-being. This information is causing a revolution in medical research, medical education, and clinical practice.

These findings are encouraging. Even if we're not actively religious, we can still reap the benefits of an active spiritual practice. Spirituality, like health, is very personal, and can be manifested and nurtured in a variety of different ways: church attendance, prayer, meditation, creativity/art, and mindfulness practices, to name a few. The purpose is the same for all of those practices: to disengage on a daily basis from the distractions of life, focus our attention inward, open our minds and spirits to the bigger picture, and reconnect—with ourselves, our Higher Power, or even a concept or mantra that we need in that moment (i.e., “I am relaxed,” “I am at peace,” “I am healthy”).

Here are some additional ways this is possible:

♦ **Tune in to your body.** Subtle changes in the body often go unnoticed due to our busy lifestyles. Then one day you have a serious problem that seems to come out of nowhere, when really your body was giving you clues all along. Quiet your mind and shutting out the world for a bit each day allows you to tune in to subtle feelings and address potential issues before they become bigger health problems.

♦ **Support a healthy lifestyle.** When you form a deep spiritual practice you may naturally start to desire healthier foods and lifestyle choices. As your spirit becomes healthier, the rest of the body often follows. Belief in a Higher Power can also provide you with the support you need to achieve health goals by praying for assistance, meditating on solutions for better overall health, or simply giving over your struggles (e.g., “Let go and let God”).



♦ **Value interconnectedness.** The overarching (mis)belief about health is that each part of the body is separate from the whole, and therefore must be treated accordingly. In reality, our bodies are systems, and its parts are interconnected. When part of your body experiences poor functioning, other parts are affected, even if you don't feel it at the moment. The same concept can be applied with spiritual practice. As our spirit is uplifted and nurtured through a daily spiritual practice, other parts of our bodily system will benefit as well. Because our body is a whole, enhancing one part can only serve to enhance the whole.

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HEALTHY EATING IS A LIFESTYLE - NOT A SHORT-TERM DIET.

SOME THOUGHTS ON PET NUTRITION

~Karen Lanz, DVM, CVA

As we all become more aware of our foods, food sources and nutrition, it is only natural to think about the foods we feed our pets. After all, they are cherished members of our family. What should I feed my pet? Is she getting the right food? What is IN her food, exactly? Should I feed dry, canned, home-prepared or raw? There are so many questions and, honestly, conflicting and confusing answers. There is no absolutely right or wrong answer. The food you feed depends very much on your pet, her lifestyle, YOUR lifestyle, dietary needs, medical issues and other factors. Below are some starting points to consider when choosing food for your canine or feline friend.

The pretty label screams: BUY OUR FOOD!



The pet food industry is a booming business. It is estimated at about \$15 billion annually worldwide. Many pet food suppliers are huge corporations with great marketing. That may make it harder to determine what exactly is in that bag of food. Pretty labels and words like “real meat” mean very little. Unless you prepare your pet’s food, you don’t really know what is in it. But, fear not! There are some basic things you can do right now to get some answers. Ideally, our pet’s food is safe for human consumption. This is a question you should ask your pet food manufacturer and the answer will give insight to the quality of the food. Know that ingredients are listed on labels in order of weight, including water, so ingredients with high water content (like fresh meat and vegetables) are going to be listed higher than similar amounts of dry ingredients. Can you understand what most of the

ingredients mean? Are there vague terms like “meat by-products?” Ask questions about these. Most pet food companies list calories per cup or can of food on the label and this is important to know so we can provide the right amount for your pet’s lifestyle.

Speak to your veterinarian about your pet’s specific dietary needs, especially if they have any kind of health concerns. There is controversy on just about anything you read about pet foods -- raw, home preparing, grains, etc. It’s too simplistic to say one thing or another is “bad.” Raw foods can be the answer for some pets, if fed properly. Home preparing is wonderful, if care is taken to balance the diet. Grains can be a very unwelcome part of many pet’s diets, but replacing “grains” with starches like potatoes so the label can say “grain free” yet still may not be the best for your pet.

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Garden Projects Cont. from page 12

When adding mulch to garden beds or around the base of fruit trees, keep the mulch a few inches away from tree trunks and the crowns and stems of plants. This will help reduce rot on the stems of young plants and will protect the bark of young fruit trees.

Protect Early Seedlings From Frost

Early spring plantings are vulnerable

to hard frost which can set in overnight. If you expect a hard frost, cover seedlings overnight with anything you have on hand - an overturned bucket or cardboard box (with a rock on top) or large flower pot, a portable garden cloth or a cold frame. If your garden has the space, and your budget allows, a starter greenhouse is ideal for starting seedlings early in the season and protecting them from inconsistent early spring weather.

5 Sustainable Gardening Tips for Early Spring

1 When buying new plants, seedlings or seeds for your garden, buy heirloom (a.k.a. non-hybrid varieties). You can save the seeds and not have to purchase seeds next year. Get open-pollinated seeds if you can.

2 Purchase seeds from your local Seed Savers Exchange. If you don't need a whole package of seeds, perhaps you and a friend could go together and purchase seeds then share.

3 Buy seeds and seedlings from local growers, as these seeds are already "hardy" for your local weather and thus will grow better and produce more.

4 Plant flowers intended to attract bees, and provide a supply of clean water in a birdbath for the pollinators. For water, use a bird bath with a rock in it. The rock gives the little guys something to stand on while they drink, so they don't drown.

5 Plant natural pest control flowers such as Borage, Chrysanthemums, Lavender and Marigolds among vegetables. Make sure to leave plenty of early wild weeds, such as goldenrod and dandelion, along the edges, to feed the bees during times when there aren't many other flowers. Mulch the paths and beds with sawdust, cardboard and cut grass, which provides a habitat for frogs, toads, and lizards, all of which help with pests. Plant clover around cabbages and roses to prevent cabbageworm and aphids.



Overall Advice on Sustainable Gardening

Get involved. Read, watch films, join local organizations and clubs, and start with the kids. My parents and grandparents got me interested in growing, preserving, reusing, and saving seeds and natural resources. Sixty years later, I am still doing it.

Sustainability is a process, a journey. Every year brings the opportunity to do better than the year before — avoiding waste and using what you have efficiently, whether it be space, water, seeds, supplies or time. Anyone can create a sustainable garden—people just have to use what they have. For instance, I have seen a retaining wall built with stacked wine bottles and rock. It's beautiful and didn't cost anything other than time.

A few early preparations for the spring gardening season will bring benefits all year long.

GARDEN PROJECTS FOR EARLY SPRING

The urge to garden in early spring is primal. Re-connecting with the earth is affirming, renewing, promising. Waking up the garden to a new growing season is about more than soil and seedlings...this rite of spring is a tonic to the gardener as well.



Early Spring Garden & Yard Tasks

Clear Drainage Ditches.

Leaves and debris gather in drainage areas over the winter. Now is the time to ensure that the spring rains will have adequate runoff. Spring seedlings do best in soil which drains well. Because vegetative growth is at a low point in early spring, this is the easiest time of year for clearing drainage ditches. And be sure to put the cleared material, usually dead leaves and small branches, into the compost. Spring compost piles are commonly short on carbon-rich materials, and every addition helps.

Repair Raised Beds, Trellises and Fencing

Repair any bowed sides to raised beds. fix trellises and fencing. Soggy winter soil puts a strain on raised beds; sometimes a stake will rot and give way. Any bowed or leaning sides should be fixed now. Dig back the soil behind the bowed side and drive in new stakes on the inside of the sideboards with a slight inward lean. Push sideboards up to stakes and fasten well with screws or nails - screws hold better than nails.



Trellises and fencing are also easiest to repair in early spring, with less growth to work around and fewer roots to disturb. Setting new fence posts, however, is best done after the spring rains have had a chance to drain through the ground. If the water table is too high, post holes will fill with water as you dig.

Weed Young Spring Weeds. Mulch Bare Spots In Beds

Any weeds which appear in your garden beds will be easiest to pull now, as the roots are shallow. Covering bare spots with mulch or ground cover will minimize the emergence of new weeds. Adding mulch to a depth of 3 to 4 inches is usually sufficient. Black plastic sheeting can also be used to cover the beds before planting as a way to suppress emerging weeds. And if you flip the sheeting over once a week you may likely find slugs which have been hiding in the bed. This is a simple way to reduce the slug population in garden beds.

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Pet Nutrition

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PUDGY POOCHES AND TUBBY TABBIES

Over 54% of US dogs and cats are overweight or obese. Unfortunately it is following the trend of 2 out of every 3 Americans being overweight or obese. This contributes to many health problems such as arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, breathing problems and cancer. Fat is pro-inflammatory, so makes inflammatory conditions like arthritis that much worse and that much harder to treat. Obesity will shorten your pets' life. Whatever diet you chose, it's important to consider the calories. That is one reason I do NOT suggest feeding "leftovers" from your plate. It is too difficult to judge how many calories we are adding to our pet's daily intake this way. I do like adding fresh, whole foods like vegetables and lean meats, but in a known quantity. In addition, there is an almost unlimited array of treats for our furry friends. As long as we use high quality treats (can you read and understand the ingredients?) and in a limited amount per day, they can be a fun part of interacting with our pets.



SNACKERS VS. MEAL EATERS

Some pets can have access to food (like dry kibble) all day and eat only what they need. Others, like my Dachshund Zonker, would eat until they became very ill. I have always encouraged feeding 2 or 3 meals per day--dog or cat. This makes it easier to find out "something is wrong" when your pet is not as enthusiastic as usual at mealtime, or refuses to eat at all. If that bowl of kibble stays full all the time it could be a day or more before you realize something is amiss with your pet's appetite. And, of course, if you feed canned, home-prepared or raw, it needs to be consumed soon after serving to avoid spoilage.

CONTINUE LEARNING ABOUT YOUR PETS NEEDS

Read reputable sources of information about pet foods, nutrition and pet's nutritional needs. For instance, there is new information about cats needing more dietary protein than originally thought. This will change how we feed our kitties throughout their life! Work with your veterinarian. Find a food that works for you and your pet and you are doing your best for your furry friend.

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Hold Steady When the Winds of Change Blow

Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.

Nallie normally loves life. The smile on her face is usually contagious. That doesn't mean that challenges don't come her way fairly regularly. It is just she figures that is how life is. She tends to face obstacles and then begin figuring out what in the world to do about them. Usually options begin occurring to her before long. That is the way her life has been going for many years now. She has felt, "since my family is still afloat financially, my health is more or less stable, and my friends still call - -that's pretty good! I'm getting this 'life business' all figured out - - EXCEPT what is going on with my husband?"

Nallie's friends love her gentle kindness and her ironic humor. They know that when they call her - - she will listen to their life exploits attentively and laugh with them at just the right places and commiserate with them when they need it. She will help them lick their wounds and remember that the sun comes up again tomorrow - - even if she's riding rough waters herself.

Nallie and a few of her friends have an informal group that meets every few weeks at their favorite restaurant for a snack and to catch up on each other's lives. They used to work together teaching at the same junior high school - - since then they have gradually been transferred around the city to different schools. Nallie is on her way to meet those friends right now. She

enters the restaurant and sees four of them gathered at a table. Their faces light up as they motion her to join them.

Nallie thinks, "I'm so lucky to have such loyal loving friends. What would my life be without them?" She rushes over and greets each of them with a big hug. "Oh-h-h-h-h, it's so good to see you! I can't wait to hear what you've been up to." She bites her lip and thinks to herself, "I've got something I've got to tell you."

They settle down ready for the usual banquet of humorous incidents, intriguing ideas, and life challenges that need loving advice and encouragement! Nathaniel raises his water glass, "My friends, let's drink to our being back together again - no worse for the wear - our usual fantastic selves! Let's lift our glasses in tribute to the gentle winds of fate that watch over us." They all laugh happily except Nallie (who attempts to laugh but just can't quite do it).

Janis says, "Nallie, are you O.K., what's going on? Tell us. We're here for you."

Nallie clears her throat and looks around at her friends. She thinks, "How can I tell them that my heart is broken?" She looks down at the table and says softly, "My

husband is divorcing me. He says he's in love with a woman he met on line. I can't believe it. We are best friends - - at least I thought we were. Over the years we have become a lot less passionate romantically. I just thought that it is sort of normal as people get older and have been married quite a long time. We have two teenage sons. Isn't it eventually time to have a gentle love that doesn't need to be dramatic

and explosive and mysterious? I'm confused. Should I have been doing exotic dances of the seven veils and learning ever new and more exciting sensuous techniques? I feel like a failure, you know what I mean? I look in his eyes now and they have a faraway look. I grabbed him and said - 'what's she like, what does she have that I don't have? Newness will wear off, you know, and then you may be bored again.' He still just looked at me blankly."

Crystal puts her arms around Nallie and says, "For Pete's sake, he's crazy. He's got the nicest wife in the whole world." We're here for you, Precious. You know, your husband seems to me like some people who start doubting themselves at a certain age in mid-life and subconsciously feel that a new romance will revitalize their life. That can be a revolving illusion! I've seen that leave people sadly disappointed and more unhappy than before. Please don't take what he says as a reflection on you. I feel that it is coming from some change within himself.

Vic quietly reflects, "My wife left me a few years ago. She said that we just didn't seem to have much in common any more. We haven't gotten a divorce so far - - we're still friends, sort of. At first I got really depressed, as I think you may remember. Then I decided that I was O.K. on my own and it was up to me to make the best of it. I still love her to a certain extent, and it saddens me to see her hurting herself by dating men who don't seem to take her seriously. But I'm just holding steady and pursuing my life. I've developed a new spare time interest in amateur astronomy. The stars are endlessly fascinating. I often meet with members of my astronomy club. We go out with our portable telescopes and have wonderful times observing the beautiful night skies. I'm gradually becoming good friends with one of the women in the club, but I'm in no hurry to develop a relationship. I feel quite peaceful, and my teaching is going well. I'm fine."

Nallie says with a shaky voice, "Thank you for your support." I'm going to focus on staying

steady for now. It's not like I'm dependent on him financially; I make about as much money as he does. But for better or worse I still love him. This is going to have to be a process. It is going to be hard on our sons - - it will be a hard on all of us," she says quietly. She rubs her eyes, "- - I'll be O.K. I know I will. My youngest son and I are planning to take our dog Landy to the dog agility competition this weekend. That will be fun." She manages a half smile. Nallie's phone rings. Nallie says, "Excuse me, I want to catch this. - - Hello. - - You did? You couldn't sleep last night? Oh - - You want to talk? - - all right - - I can meet you there in about an hour. O.K. - - - do you?" She whispers something very quietly and then hangs up.

Nallie looks at her friends with a serious expression, "I guess it isn't completely over quite yet, maybe there's a chance we can heal this. What do you think? It's worth a try, right? I'll see if he'll go to therapy with me. Maybe we can remember why we fell in love in the first place. Either way I know in my heart I'll be O.K. I'll pray and meditate a lot.

Thank you for your help. I know I'll be needing more of your support along the way. I guess we all need our friends to help hold us steady when the winds blow."

Joyce Gerrish is an author and publisher. She lives in Louisville where she writes, and teaches meditation, natural healing and Reiki. She provides coaching to help people live life to the fullest.

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