



Natural Living Journal

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

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With Colors**

Saving Our Trees

**Helping Children Find
Healing & Magic**

**Staying Healthy Into
the New Year**

**Holiday Childhood
Memoirs of 1940s-50s**

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***THE EARTH'S RESOURCES:
SAVE OUR TREES!***
Environmental Protection Series.
Joyce Freville, Ph.D.

Imagine our world with no trees. It would be as smooth and boring as a cue ball. Many people take trees for granted, but the fact is human life could not exist if there were no trees. Let's really look at this. A mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year. What many people don't realize is that the forest also acts as a giant filter that cleans the air we breathe. In many ways, trees are the Earth's lungs. To produce its food, a tree absorbs and locks away carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the wood, roots, and leaves. Carbon dioxide is a "greenhouse gas" that is a major cause of global warming and climate change. A forest stores carbon as wood so it is not released in the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas. A perfectly efficient system!

Excess CO₂ is building up in our atmosphere and contributing to climate change. Trees absorb CO₂, remove and store the carbon while releasing oxygen back into the air. In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO₂ produced when you drive your car 26,000 miles. Trees help cleanse the air by intercepting airborne particles, reducing heat, and absorbing such pollutants as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. Trees remove this air pollution by lowering air temperature, through respiration, and by retaining particulates. In fact, trees can



Photo: 9883074 542 Images Pixabay

either store harmful pollutants or actually change the pollutant into less harmful forms. Trees filter sewage and farm chemicals, reduce the effects of animal wastes, clean roadside spills, and clean water runoff into streams to name just a few benefits. The list of benefits goes on and on.

Forests are being rapidly cut down. A worker with a lumber company in the South American Rain Forests was recently quoted from an interview as saying, "This is how I earn money to support my mother. As long as there are trees, I will cut them down." How sad the limited understanding of the severe global situation. Humanity needs to truly realize that we are dependent on the trees.



Photo: Siggynowak, Pixabay

In fact, a previous article in the *Natural Living Journal* told us about the benefits of walking through trees. To summarize, exposure to trees and forests boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure, reduces stress, improves mood, increases the ability to focus (even in children with ADHD), accelerates recovery from surgery or illness, increases the level of energy and improves sleep to name a few benefits. To walk among trees is natural meditation. Furthermore, numerous studies show that exercising in forests or simply sitting looking at trees reduces the stress-related hormones cortisol and adrenaline. A recent study that examined the psychological benefits of walking through a forest found that walking through forest areas decreased the negative moods of depression, anxiety, anger-hostility, fatigue, and confusion and improved the participants' positive mood of vitality compared with walking through city areas.

I think you get the picture of how vital trees are to the Earth. Yet 15.3 billion trees are being chopped down each year. This loss has significant implications for the planet in terms of climate change and humans' well-being. We are in a building boom. Massive numbers of trees are being cut down in order to build houses in our cities. There are other building materials than wood. We must do all we can to stop this destruction to our environment. Write a letter to the City Council and Zoning Commission and tell them we want more responsible development that helps preserve trees. Start a petition to change policies or to protect certain trees. Rally neighbors to get involved in saving neighborhood trees. *Buy recycled toilet and towel paper, and other paper products, Also, there are alternatives to trees for paper products, such as bamboo, cork, cotton, and mulberry. These grow faster than trees.*

In conclusion, if we don't get involved, more and more greatly needed trees will be needlessly cut down. Together, we can make a significant positive impact on our trees. This in turn will help reduce the greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Start to make a difference today. And you can start by thanking a tree, and maybe planting a tree!

BIO: Dr. Joyce Freville earned a doctorate in Human Services with a specialization in Health Care Administration from Capella University. In addition, she earned an MBA from Webster University, a BS in Accounting from Arizona State University, and is certified in Health Care Compliance and Health Privacy Compliance. She has been in healthcare reimbursement, finance, and compliance for over 35 years. She is a retired Command Sergeant Major in the U.S. Army.



STAYING HEALTHY DURING HOLIDAYS & INTO NEW YEAR

By Dr. Victoria Snelling

The holidays and new year can be a great opportunity to be with loved ones, and to celebrate and take a break from work and our day-to-day responsibilities. They can also be stressful at times with shopping, cooking, travel and more. Things may still be somewhat different with covid restrictions, but we can nevertheless strive to fill these celebrations with joy and meaning. How can we balance this busy season with self-care? I have a few ideas to help see you through to a healthy 2022.

Give Yourself Enough Restful, Restorative Sleep.

Our sleep routine can be disrupted with a longer than usual to-do list during this season. Adequate sleep and good quality sleep are important for the immune system and our energy level. Try to have a nighttime routine that works for you. Keep to a routine bedtime and waking time since that supports the circadian rhythm that is so important for our cortisol/melatonin balance. Try to de-stress before getting into bed and minimize distractions. Some people need a very dark room, and some need a cooler room temperature for better sleep. If you need a temporary sleep aid, think of GABA, melatonin, or magnesium threonate. These can help you relax and fall asleep more easily.

Keep Your Energy Level Up with Movement that Energizes and Reduces Stress.

It can be difficult to find time to exercise during such a busy time. If you have an exercise program already, try to find time to continue that good habit during the holidays and into the new year. If time is very short, try to get a walk in and invite your loved ones who may be visiting to walk with you. If that seems impossible, find movements you can do for even a few minutes. Try a few lunges or stretches as your oven is warming up. Do a few crunches or planks while you enjoy a movie with the family. Find a 20-minute yoga video on YouTube and invite others to join you before the big meal is ready. Even half a video counts! Give yourself credit for the steps you're taking as you shop, clean house, etc. Use a free app on your phone to track your steps if that would encourage you.

Get Plenty of Fiber at Every Meal to Balance Blood Sugar.

It's not uncommon to indulge during the holidays and enjoy foods we seldom eat. Since sugar has such a strong effect on our energy level, try to limit it as much as you can. It might be desirable to make that sugary treat something that you look forward to as something special at this time of the year, instead of indulging in all the treats that may be out in view and too easily at hand. Keep your fiber intake up to moderate your insulin during these times.



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Fiber will slow the effects of sugars and support a steady insulin level. Fiber also acts as a pre-biotic to feed our gut's probiotics. Have whole grains instead of refined. Choose fiber rich foods such as sweet potatoes over white potatoes.

Add Stress Busters to your day.

Chronic stress over time has a negative effect on health. Make time for meditation, prayer, or slow breathing techniques. Again, even a few minutes is valuable for your health. Think about what you're grateful for. Share this with your family. This can reduce stress hormones in the body and bring about a sense of wellbeing.

Consider Supplements to Boost Immunity.

It's no accident that many people contact colds, flu, and sinus infections more often during this time. More sugar is consumed now than at any other month. Keep your intake down and add some nutritional helpers. If you're on a good supplement plan, make sure to continue it now. Try to add probiotics, vitamin D3 with K2, vitamin C and zinc. Think about bone broth which is a nutritional powerhouse to enjoy as a warm drink or to use when making gravy, sauces, and soups. Ashwagandha, holy basil, and rhodiola are great adaptogens. Adaptogens are used in herbal medicine for the stabilization of physiological processes and promotion of homeostasis. They can be used as capsules, tablets, or as teas. I prefer them in combination as a hot drink in this chilly weather. Add a little manuka honey and enjoy! As always, these are recommendations I give to my patients, but speak with your doctor about any changes in your health care regime. Wishing you all many blessings during this joyous season and into the New Year!

BIO: Dr. Victoria Snelling has a varied practice in homeopathy, functional medicine, chiropractic, nutritional genetics and CEASE detox therapy. She has been in practice in Louisville since 1988. Dr. Snelling leads the monthly Kent Society Homeopathy Study Group (you're invited!) and offers a quarterly schedule of one-day classes on natural health topics. She can be reached at 502-426-2033, or www.DrSnelling.com.



THE DELICATE, YET HARDY DEER

By Elsa Lichman, MSW, LICSW

I have been lucky to spot white-tailed deer coming out of the edge of a wooded area at dusk to feed. Once, a large herd of ten or twelve gracefully meandered through trees, on long slim legs, their steps deliberate yet delicate. A few lightheartedly gamboled about. They were close enough to civilization to skittishly attempt to eat bushes near the doorway of a small house.

Deer belong to the Cervidae family, which includes elk, red deer, reindeer, and moose. Males shed and grow a new set of antlers each year. This process is controlled by hormones and regulated by the amount of light per day. Members of the bovine family, such as sheep, bison, and antelope, have horns of bone,



which carry a blood supply, vs. antlers which are all bone. Horns remain for the lifetime of the animal, whereas male deers' antlers fall off and re-grow annually. This bone tissue can grow extremely fast, as much as a quarter of an inch daily. All deer species shed their antlers in winter, after a sustained drop in

testosterone. Several months later, they regrow them from spring to late summer, the timing of which varies according to geography. The antlers start as nubs in spring and reach full potential by summer. At that stage, they are covered with velvety, blood-rich fuzz and are somewhat fragile. Some call these animals button bucks when the nubs first appear.

The velvet is shed once the antlers have stopped growing and the blood supply ends. Bucks can often hasten the process by rubbing the antlers against trees or brush, perhaps because the dying velvet creates an itching sensation. New antlers are usually complete in fall, well before the rut, the mating season.

Bucks can be seen rubbing antlers in a kind of sparring match, a practice for the full-blown aggression of the mating season. After the breeding season, hormone levels decrease, and when the antlers fall off, they then can become food for mice and squirrels, and attract hunters who can discover which animals made it through the hunting season. Native Americans hunted deer for food, clothing, and tools.



Photo by Frank Peace. Author Elsa's beloved recently deceased partner. This is his first posthumous photograph.

Regulated deer hunting, by Massachusetts Wildlife, is necessary for the management of the deer population. A dramatic spike in numbers would mean that the deer would eat themselves out of their own habitat. There would be significant crop damage and forestry degeneration. Disease and starvation would take over. Ticks responsible for disease would multiply.

Among Native American tribes of North America, the deer was seen as a messenger, an animal of power, and a totem representing sensitivity, intuition and gentleness. It also signified innocence, grace, kindness, and unconditional love. No wonder we stop in our own tracks, open-mouthed, when we spot a deer. There is such a special quality emanating from this animal, that we are somehow transported, often filled with love.



BIO Elsa Lichman, MSW, LICSW, retired from 43 years of social work, and began writing for the Waltham News Tribune and the Natural Living Journal. She has published poetry, prose and photographs in a variety of venues, and is a singer, performing with a duo and chorus and her voice studio. Contact her at elsalichman@comcast.net

Photos: Faun: on left by Scott Carroll of Unsplash. Buck with Horns: by Yuja Yoshioka of Unsplash.

HELPING OUR CHILDREN FIND HEALING & MAGIC DURING THE PANDEMIC

By Colleen Marie Olinski, M.S.Ed

Sometimes you feel like you are shining like a diamond. Sometimes you feel heavy and weighed down like you are wearing a "backpack of boulders." It is a powerful message to teach our children that this range of emotions and everything in between exists and is okay to feel. Mental health awareness is so important. Permitting our children to feel all of their feelings, giving them tools to recognize and label how they are feeling, and the skills to self-regulate their big emotions are things that will last a lifetime. It is never too early to start teaching our children how to regulate the many big feelings that we all experience

I wrote my children's picture book *A Wolf Named Elvis* with careful thought on teaching kids about mental health and healthy coping skills. Learning to honor all kinds of emotions, including the dark, difficult, and heavy ones is an essential step towards our children growing up to be adults who know how to cope during the inevitable bumps along the road of life. As Mama Wolf says in the book, "All feelings deserve respect."

In the Fall of 2020, I was planning on returning to my in-person teaching job. I knew that I would be able to show up for my young students in a way that supported their social/emotional needs during this challenging time where they had collectively been asked to adapt to so many new changes. My plans changed when the school where my son was starting Kindergarten announced that they would be remote. I was committed to showing up for my son the same way I had planned to show up for my students.

The time during the pandemic has been filled with so many big feelings for all of us! The same has been true for our children. Sadness, anger, fear, frustration, loss of control, a need to escape, loneliness, wanting to give up, and feeling how unfair the world can be are all big emotions that are brought to light in my book *A Wolf Named Elvis*. Children can label those big feelings, and they are given the empowering experience of learning different ways to help themselves feel better by exploring what creative actions bring them healing.

In the book *Elvis* the wolf pup demonstrates examples of healthy coping skills such as sharing your feelings with a trusted adult, playing music, creating art, exploring nature, reading books, staying connected with friends, playing sports, and activism/listing ideas for positive change in the world.

While these are some creative ways that he finds healing in the book, I always express to children that everyone has their own special unique magic. I ask them to think about what makes them feel better when their big feelings come to visit. This question sparks curiosity in



Empowering children and their adults to feel their feelings, flip their scripts, and find their own unique magic.

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children to learn what helps them "flip their scripts" when they are upset.

The idea of a wolf pup without the friends in his pack felt so much like what we all had gone through during the pandemic when we were separated from our friends. I watched firsthand how this impacted my young son and other children in my life. As a mother, long-time educator, and advocate for all children, it was on my heart to do something to show up for kids during this unprecedented time. I knew I could use my two decades of

experience to support them socially and emotionally. Writing *A Wolf Named Elvis* was the answer to how I could show up for kids while we were still home during remote learning. The book tells the story of our experiences during the time we were isolated at home. It also validates the many big feelings that children have experienced since March 2020 and will continue to feel throughout their lives during challenging times.

While working on my book with my illustrator Sidney Lander, I started sharing the story with children almost immediately. I put my manuscript and any illustrations I had into a binder that went anywhere we

went. I would read to younger siblings at his baseball practice or to a group of neighborhood children at the park. As I shared the story of *Elvis* with children, I instantly felt how therapeutic and healing it was for them to hear. Children related to the scenes where *Elvis* is stuck home doing remote learning and where his Papa Wolf who was on a Zoom call for work tried to quiet him. They all started to share their own stories and feelings with me.

A Wolf Named Elvis is a resource for parents, guardians, teachers, child therapists, and anyone looking for a tool to help children process what they have just collectively been through. Since the book has been published, I've shared it with larger groups of children. When *Elvis* and the rest of the wolf pack howl to each other, I have children howl with me. We howl together and feel the words on the page that tells us "they all felt better knowing that they were all howling under the same sky."

BIO: Colleen Marie Olinski is an author, educator, speaker, and an advocate for all children. She graduated from the University of New Haven with a Master's degree in Education. Colleen has worked with children of all ages over the course of two decades as an educator and counselor. She can be reached at colleenmarieolinski@gmail.com. Her book can be ordered from www.awolfnamedelvis.com.

ILLUSTRATION: by Sidney Lander

Holiday Childhood Memoirs of 1940's-50's, Deanna O'Daniel, Author

A softness fills the end of the year as families gather around the hearth to celebrate the year's most heartwarming holidays – Thanksgiving and Christmas. Yesteryear memories recall former sacred practices used for family bonding. Traditions bond communities, too, giving residents a sense of security and common identity.

I grew up as the oldest of eleven siblings on a farm in Hikes Point, Kentucky during the 1940's and '50s. Without much money, our rituals made every Christmas special. It was not the toys – we were only allowed one of those. "The Santa in Hikes Point is poor," Mama smiled as we poured over and over the Sear- Roebucks Catalogue that had stuffed our Rural Route mailbox. Mama's mood made our Christmas's rich with tradition.

I wrote of the O'Daniel family Christmas in my first book, *Kiss Your Elbow – A Kentucky Memoir*. Here I described sacred rituals of both the O'Daniel family and of our city - Louisville. Though the book was published in 2010, letters still come to me at this time of the year from thankful readers for its Christmas story entitled, "Christmas Comes, Slow as Molasses." This title describes the way we felt. Anticipation was the glue that held everything in place.

Let's play a bit of 'recall' from the 'old days.' Remember, there was always a Christmas parade downtown in early December to announce Santa's arrival. The area of Fourth and Broadway was packed! Visitors poured into the crowd from city busses and the trains at nearby Union Station. Carols played on loudspeakers as parade goers stood in front of beautiful Christmas decorations in department store windows. The wintry scenes and colorful toys that filled the windows of Stewart's Dry Goods were everyone's favorite! My brothers and I enjoyed running into all the shoe stores and examining our feet on the popular, stand-up x-ray machines. (You could see your bones!)

Who could forget the delightful toy departments? Stores had their toys assembled and out for children to play with before they went to see Santa Claus. The week before Christmas, Daddy actually took us down to Sears-Roebuck to talk to Santa and tell him what we wanted. Sitting around our kitchen table we had already scrawled out our requests weeks before. Daddy dropped the letters in the mail on his way to work at Fehr's Brewery.



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Daddy went to the area of town called the Haymarket, located close to Fehr's and bought us foods that were special to the season like figs, dates and colorful hard candies. We eagerly awaited the turkey and fruitcake that was given to us by Fehr's Brewery. Daddy sawed the turkey in half so we could enjoy some of it on New Year's Day. We raised chickens and hogs on the farm, so the turkey was a special treat. On Christmas, I would be helping Mama prepare the most fantastic meal of the year, including turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans we had canned from our crop in the summer, and sauerkraut Daddy had made in the 5-gallon crock in the basement. What we loved most was the cranberries and the fruitcake!

Another ritual was to crack the nuts from our black walnut tree after Daddy did his job of driving over them for week, in our gravel driveway. Our hands were brown with walnut stains, but we didn't care. Mama and I used them in baking our holiday cookies, prune cake and white divinity fudge. We waited with great anticipation for the arrival of the huge box of gifts from our aunt and uncle who lived in Chicago. They were wealthy, and we knew there was a gift in there for each of us. Usually, there would be a dress for me. Three days before Christmas, Daddy gathered all of us on our scratchy horsehair sofa and read, "Twas the night before Christmas." We older ones, John, Marcellus, and I jumped up and rubbed our tummies on the line that read "rolled like a bowl full of jelly."

Christmas evening ended with us kids singing carols while Mama played our upright piano. Afterwards, we drank Orange Float which was a special drink we only had for Christmas. It was similar to eggnog but was flavored with orange peels. I helped Mama make it the night before, so the delicious flavor was all through it.

The season ended with Fehr's Brewery giving a party for all the employee's children in the Rathskeller of the beautiful Seelbach Hotel. Each child got a bag of cookies. Usually a tomboy, I was happy to wear the pretty dress that my aunt and uncle gave me. My family has more money now, but the humble Christmas's of my childhood will always pull my heartstrings! Savor more memories of the old days with Deanna's three books:

<https://www.amazon.com/Opening-New-Window-Kentucky-Memoir/dp/172835871X>

Bio: Deanna O'Daniel is **retired** from being a classroom teacher. She became a writer and also developed a company called *SelfSeek Spiritual Center*. Besides writing memoir, she has also been published in magazines, newspapers, and anthologies. Deanna is the mother of two and a grandmother.

MANIFESTING YOUR REALITY

Rev. Valerie Mansfield

Life is a cycle of ebbs and flows, closings and openings. As the seasons change, we change. During the winter season we pull in our energy. It's a time for deep reflection about who we are, what we want to manifest. Looking at our passions, values, mission, and vision. Review your journal or take time to reflect on the last year. Bring awareness of patterns or behaviors you wish to change. If you are a goal setter review your goals for the last year. Get an understanding about what was achieved and what we chose not to do and why.

Celebrate letting go of what no longer serves you and set intentions for the New Year with hope and desire. Ceremonies like a Burning Bowl where you write down what you want to release from your life such as relationships, patterns, or behaviors and then place the paper in a safe fire space. Maybe a friend has an outdoor fire pit, and you can create a gathering outside on a brisk evening. Otherwise, you can buy flash paper and use a candle with caution (or use water solution paper) and create a ceremony inside. "Letting Go" creates a vacuum within you, and then spending a week or two in the void allows new energy and new thoughts to emerge.

Understanding your heart's desire is important in manifesting your dreams. This will help you open to new opportunities. Ask yourself what is your heart's desire, take time to be still and listen to your inner self for clarity, understanding, and direction. Write down the first word or thought that comes to you. Let go of any judgment and be open to the word or thought which you sense is your focus for the year. You may be totally clueless as to why this word or thought is your guiding light. Remember to let go and let spirit guide you. The why will be unveiled at some point during the year when you least expect it. Use the word in creating or adjusting your vision, mission, and smart goals for the year.

A vision is the big picture you are moving toward each day. Visioning is the ability to think about or plan your future using your imagination and/or wisdom. You can create a mental image of what the future might or will be like. Then you take action to create the picture in every area of your life. My favorite way to vision is a process from Quantum Resources of standing in the future and telling someone what a beautiful life you have right now. Then look at the actions it took to bring you to the now. Consider: (1) What brings bliss, joy, and peace in each area of your life? (2) How you use your creative powers of imagination and wisdom. (3) How you daily practice to keep the vision alive as you act. (4) Tweak the vision

Remember to create a vision for the many facets of yourself. You are more than your thoughts, physical body, relationships, responsibilities, and careers. When you feel stuck or unsure, focus on your vision in the silence and ask for guidance on next steps to manifest the vision. Your vision statement is ideally two to three sentences.



A personal mission statement provides "clarity and gives you a sense of purpose." It defines who you are and how you live. It is a guidepost for direction in your life. "Who am I?" Here are some questions to assist you in figuring out the answer. (1) What are your values? Do you believe in honesty, justice, kindness, and self-reliance? (2) Who has inspired you? Do you want to have qualities like those folks? Figure out what those qualities are and list them. (3) What do you love about your life? Your work? Your family, friends, and other relationships? (4) When are you at your best? Your worst? Where do you see growth occurring in yourself? What would you like to share with others? (5) With unlimited resources and unlimited time, who are you? (6) What promises are you willing to make to yourself?

Let your pen scrawl across the paper without worry. The fine tuning comes later. Write things that come to mind easily. Reference what you jotted down answering the questions above. Be honest with yourself. The more honest you are with yourself, the stronger and more applicable your statement will be. You will probably do several drafts until you get it fine-tuned. A mission statement generally is one to two sentences. Simple to remember. Once you have your vision and mission fine-tuned post it as a daily reminder. Now you are ready to create your SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based) goals. Remember to keep it simple, you can always create more goals during the year.

REVEREND VALERIE MANSFIELD'S NEW ENTERPRISE.

She is an Ordained Unity Minister, Life Coach, & Holistic Healer. She is manifesting a new enterprise "Pathways to Harmony". Pathways to Harmony is a threefold operation. It's an opportunity for individuals to bring harmony, clarity and understanding to their daily life. Families work together to bring harmony, peace, and love to the forefront of the family dynamics, through Conscious Connections. Consulting for non-profits and small businesses focusing on harmony, efficiency, and effectiveness. Valerie currently serves as the Minister of Record at Unity of East Louisville, Inc., and the Treasurer of Unity Worldwide Ministry. Valerie's mission in life is to create a harmonious, loving, conscious experience daily. Reverend Valerie Mansfield is a lifelong Unity Truth Student and welcomes you to join her on a spiritual journey of harmony, love, and transformation. Rev. Valerie lives with her husband Bruce of 40 years & loves time with her children & grandchildren. **NEXT PAGE SEE AD FOR HER REIKI I & II WORKSHOP, & WORKSHOP MANIFESTING YOUR REALITY.**



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|---|--|



SWEET POTATO LENTIL SOUP
From the Kitchen of Barbara Bosler

- 1 1/2 cup lentils washed and checked for stones
- 2 sweet potatoes peeled and cubed
- 1 yellow summer squash cubed
- 1 stalk celery diced (optional) I love the flavor it adds
- 4 cups vegetable broth. I use Imagine brand organic low sodium
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 Tablespoon curry powder (I use Penzey's brand)

Put all ingredients in your crock pot slow cooker set on low heat for 5 to 6 hours. It may take longer depending on your cooker. When finished and sweet potatoes are tender add a little more curry powder and salt to taste. Serve with crusty bread or as you desire. On those cold gray winter days nothing tastes better than a bowl of fresh warm homemade soup. These ingredients are healthy. Lentils are rich in fiber and high in protein offering high levels of B vitamins. Sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene and vitamin C. Have a wonderful winter. Spend some time trying new recipes. Whatever you create, enjoy your time in your kitchen.

HAPPY COOKING! *Barbara*
(Photo of Woman, Pixabay 1180847-1920, Photo of Soup from Pixabay.), Photo Son Father by Jimmy Dean of Unsplash



WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM? Gerry Boylan, Ph.D.

What are the keys to the Kingdom? You have heard it said: "The Kingdom of heaven is within you; the Kingdom of heaven is at hand; "You shall not enter into the Kingdom unless you have the heart of a child."

What is the Kingdom? You don't really "get in," you recognize the truth of it here and now within you, and you recognize it simply as "being." You do not need to define it or even understand it. As a child creates worlds of magic and whimsy defying all logic, so does the Kingdom defy being described or pinned down by labels or definitions. In a way you cannot yet understand, "You are the Kingdom. It could not exist without you."

What are the keys? How do I recognize the truth, the reality of the Kingdom? It's this; it's that; its over there; "Look here it is; there it is." The keys to the Kingdom are to a doorway that is already open. What do you need a key for if the door is already open? You need a key because you think you need a key. You think there is something that must happen, or someone you must become, or some tasks to perform, some goals to reach, some uniform to wear, or some worthiness to accomplish in order to enter into the Kingdom. None of that is true. You recall that sad parable of the man who is given a wedding garment and yet did not put it on, and who, as a result of his puzzlement, was thrown out into the darkness. (He was already in the darkness long before that).

Your frightened self or your personality self perhaps saw that as being terribly unfair, but also, in a strange way, you may have identified yourself with this character. You identified with him from your fear. In your claiming ignorance of not putting on the wedding garment, you are like the servant in the parable of the talents who buried his coin rather than take the opportunity to invest it. Your fearful limited self looked upon inaction or lack of commitment as being a way of playing it safe. You forgot that even inaction in the material world is still creation. It is creation by default or fear, which in turn is the creation of more fear which creates more limitation and an even deeper sense of separation. Your fear then speaks these words which you have heard many times before, "If you listen to me, I will keep you safe." From the viewpoint of your limited self this seems to make sense.

This sense of safety in the material world or the limited world of your personality is dangled in front of you as being the antidote to fear. It does not matter if this promise has never been true. In the past, to the limited ego self, it still carries with it a sense of attraction. To the ego there only exists fear and the implausible need of protecting yourself from the consequences of your fear. No matter what other disguises or illusions are presented to you, essentially they are all the same—the attempts to escape from the projections of your limited sense of self. (It is the impossible task of the self attempting to escape the self.) It is not that your personality self is refused admission to the Kingdom. It is simply that your ego or personality self has no concept of the Kingdom, which is too big and is far beyond the ego's scope of knowing. However, the personality or limited ego self wants to be embraced and loved by



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the heart. By the power of Spirit, which is the Divine within, the ego can be brought gently into the Kingdom by your soul (your spiritual nature). In this way it can be transformed.

As you love your ego and honor it as a teacher, still recognize that it is not who you are -- yet it serves as an aspect of your unique expression of the Divine. All desire (defined or not) is your limited self seeking the keys to the Kingdom. Essentially there is only one key and that is surrender. The ego / personality self does not disappear. The act of surrender is also an act of unconditional love. That releases the hold of your ego and allows your true identity to come forward. As your true identity is revealed and embraced so can your limited ego self be embraced as well. The transformational process is one in which the personality or ego self chooses to move to its proper place of alignment.

So, you enter into the realization that the ego is not who you are. Yet you become more aware that this personality you have created and through which you present yourself to the rest of the world, is an aspect of your unique expression of the Divine. What is fascinating about this stage of the journey is that as you embrace this personality that you have created (even though it is an aspect of your unique projection of Spirit), you continue to become less and less attached to it. This continues until the veil between your personality and your divine self becomes thinner and thinner, almost transparent, almost nonexistent. Jesus and Buddha showed us the way.

When you are focused in love you are in the Kingdom. When you are in judgment it is impossible for you to see yourself or any others as being in the Kingdom. For now, practice non-judgment. When you find yourself in judgment, do not judge yourself for failure but bless the awareness that has come to allow you to release your state of judgment and separation and realize your Oneness again. Peace



BIO: Gerry Boylan began his career as a teacher and retreat leader at Xavier High School where he taught Biology, Chemistry, and Religion. His undergraduate degree is from Catholic University, and he has graduate degrees in Biology and Transpersonal Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Comparative Religions. He teaches classes at Unity of Louisville along with guest speaking at Sunday services.

YOUTHS MAKING IT THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Lynne Cochran, MA Speech Pathologist

Ruby, my high school age granddaughter, recently shared with me, "My early memories of Covid 19 were not greatly alarming. March Break was coming up. Teachers and school administrators answered that it was serious but not to worry about it. The general consensus at school tended to be it wouldn't affect school and we were encouraged to wash hands for 20 seconds, but it was not bad. I hung out with my friends the last Friday that we had school on campus before online school. We didn't know how bad it would get but that was the last time I saw them until about a year later. After Spring vacation, the principal announced that return to school would be delayed by three weeks, then four weeks, then no school at all. Things changed. I was pretty sad about that."

Ruby was also switching to Zoom for her senior year classes. She also experienced other changes. She told me, "I had carpooled with friends to high school. That stopped. I missed my friends." Other changes happened to her active busy life, full of friends. "I was sad because this was the last year my friends and I would be together as one cohesive group, and I couldn't see them. Prom and graduation were cancelled so that was a bummer." Covid-19 also left Ruby feeling changed. She explained: "I began to lose my social skills. I am less social. I don't know how to act. I don't know how to talk anymore. I missed seeing people's faces. Sometimes you don't know you will miss something until you lose it." So now Ruby is adjusting to being out in the world again. "I am trying not to think of what I lost/missed. I prefer not to dwell on COVID-19 and, instead, look to the future. Initially, I am just happy to see friends, even strangers, walking around." Ruby's words and actions inspire me. We agree that it is important to enjoy the present, look forward to the future and not dwell on what was lost or painful in the past. She has started college this autumn.

The following are insights from my eldest granddaughter, Lydia, who lives in Berkeley, California. "Before the pandemic, I was a student at Berkeley City College. I went to in-person classes every day of the week and worked at an after-school program in San Francisco. In early 2020, I had heard about COVID-19, and by that point, it was already widespread in Italy. There were a few cases in the San Francisco Bay Area, but I really didn't believe that there would be a lockdown at any point or that it would become a serious threat, which is strange because I'm usually a hypochondriac and get very worried about relatively minor issues. I think that in response to an actual threat, I was minimizing the severity of the situation. It came as a surprise to me when first my workplace closed down due to a case of COVID-19 at the school, and then the next day Berkeley City College closed down its in-person classes. For the rest of the semester, all of my classes were held via Zoom."



"For the next year, I lived with my boyfriend Alex and his mother in Aptos, California. We had a relatively good situation during the pandemic, as we mostly just went on hikes and read and binged on TV shows. We also really got into playing tennis and outdoor recreation. I spent time with friends on Zoom and got very used to most of my social life being online. Alex's mother did work full time as a veterinarian, and that allowed us to stay home, but we worried a lot about her because she is in her early 60s and was being potentially exposed every day. Many people we know were essential workers and weren't able to stay home. A few people we know got COVID, but thankfully no one in our immediate families got seriously ill."

"One thing that changed significantly was people's level of aggression in daily life. Alex's mom dealt with many aggressive and even frightening clients at her workplace, and it seemed like people were angrier on the road. There were some protests from "anti-maskers," and the pandemic increasingly became a politically divisive issue."

"I was relatively early to get the vaccine. After that one of my closest friends, Meenakshi, and I met up with three of our other friends at her house. It was great to be able to see friends that I had only talked to via Zoom for over a year. I also worked full-time this past summer at a camp. I worked with kids aged 6-12, and though there were some restrictions, those lessened throughout the summer. This fall I started as a transfer student at UC Berkeley. Most of my classes are in person, but we all wear masks inside. One of my classes is completely online, and another one of my classes is online every other day, and in-person every other day." Lydia has hopes for the future.

BIO: Lynne Cochran has a MA degree in Speech Pathology from Cal State, Long Beach. She worked as Speech Pathologist 22 years and was honored to represent her school district as one of Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year. Upon retiring, she became a supervisor of student teachers and graduate students. Deacon at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, Lomita, CA. Student of Tai Chi and Senior Yoga. A major part of her life has been involved with her 2 daughters, Grace and Laura and her grand-daughters, Lydia and Ruby. Photo: Canstock Photos, Michael Yung



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE, by Leah Bomar, Author

If you are experiencing heartbreak with some people, there is hope. Whether you are estranged from family members, recently divorced, or recovering from a bad friend break-up, there are ways to reclaim your joy and release yourself from the pain of the past.

Be In Your Own Power. What can you do about the current situation? Many times, a source of pain when dealing with an estrangement or ending of relationship is a feeling of powerlessness. There is little that can be done or changed about past events already transpired, but you can control how you react right now in the present and beyond. You do not have to allow the person in your life who you experience as abusive to steal one more second of your joy! Vow to move forward in love and self-forgiveness. You may not have been able to speak up or take action with your family when you were a young child, but you can make decisions now to protect your own children and heal your own inner-child or wounded heart. You can choose to end familial patterns of abuse, alcoholism, racism, or homophobia by not passing down these harmful traits or beliefs on to your children. Be brave in not exposing them to the same kind of stressful environments you may have grown up in just because “they’re family.” You now have the power to say NO MORE.

Keep Your Own Vibrations High. Don’t fall into the pattern of allowing yourself to be pulled down to their level. Participating in petty arguments won’t change any outcome when dealing with a narcissist or difficult person. Getting sucked into a shouting match lowers your vibration to their level (and it is never worth it!) You have a voice, so use it when you feel it’s necessary, but be careful to not speak out of anger, hurt or resentment! People who name call, spread untrue rumors, or try to convince others they are ‘right’ often feel the need to defend themselves because they know they are in the wrong. On some level, they are probably just battling their own feelings of guilt and shame. Most of the time, it’s pointless to try to refute the words spouted from a bully. Everyone else can usually see through the lies, that’s why the toxic person is so desperate to convince others of their innocence.

Release Them. It’s ok to end a relationship that is harmful to you or your children. Another way to free yourself from unwanted thoughts, dreams, or connections to past relationships is to practice letting them go energetically, as well as physically. Once you have removed yourself from contact with a family member, friend, or partner you find harmful, protect your own energy by performing a cord cutting ceremony. Meditate about the situation imagining you are surrounded in the white light of love as you cut the energetic cords that connect you to them, releasing the person with love and gratitude for the learning experience. You can also write a private letter in your journal saying everything you need to say and then burn it!! Or you can read it out loud to a neutral party, even mail it, or press “send” if you must. Then let the situation go with the satisfaction you’ve spoken your piece. Let there be peace in your heart. Healing cannot happen in a poisoned, angry, unforgiving environment. Act only in love.



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- Disrupt cycles of self-sabotage
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Be Intentional. Being alone doesn’t have to be lonely. Your own company can be delicious after a lifetime of stressful family functions. If you miss aspects of your childhood or loud and crazy family gatherings, recreate them in a way that feels safe and healthy for you. Replace old memories with new traditions! Love yourself and your new life. Back up your newfound enhanced self-love with action! Go over the top with treating yourself extra well.

Get Out and About. Go somewhere totally new! Join a support group or yoga class. Get out your paints, crafts, favorite journal, or other new project or hobby you’ve been curious to try. Schedule that massage for which you’ve been carrying a gift card around in your wallet for years. Join a women’s camping or travel group. Jot down a menu of “*Fun for You Ideas*” and start scheduling and executing new adventures! What sounds fun to you? Give yourself permission to do that. Bring your own joy to the Party.

Start New Traditions! If the holidays are a painful time because of being estranged from family members (by your choice or theirs) create new ways to bring yourself joy. The idea of Friendsgiving came about to celebrate with chosen friends as family. Do the same for other holidays or occasions that get you down. Make alternate plans with friends, neighbors, co-workers or just cuddle up at home with all the comforts of what makes you happy, plus lots of pet snuggles! You could go see a new movie at the theatre or rent the latest release from the comfort of your own home on a new streaming device.

Get Out Of Here. Go somewhere totally new! Join a women’s camping or travel group on Facebook and plan a safe solo outing to a new city on the anniversary of a death or divorce. Book an Airbnb or hotel room just for you. Pack your paints, crafts, easel, favorite journal, new project or hobby you’ve been curious to try and go to town in front of a fresh change of scenery. Schedule that massage for which you’ve been carrying a gift card around in your wallet. Jot down a menu of “*Fun For You Ideas*” and start planning and executing new adventures! What sounds fun to you? Give yourself permission to do that. Bring your own joy to the party.

BIO: LEAH BOMAR is an author, speaker and certified Life Coach specializing in Therapeutic Art. She graduated from University of Louisville with a degree in English, teaching elementary art and working as a substitute teacher for JCPS. As a Super Mom of three children, she started a local Creative Co-op for Homeschoolers and taught middle school & electives at a local cottage program. More info at LeahBomar.com or email authorleahbomar@gmail.com.

Monarchs need Milkweeds!



Free Milkweed Seeds!

For your package of free milkweed seeds
Email me at Jeannie.Samdani@lpl.com

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Thank You,
Jeannie Samdani

* Milkweed is the only host plant for the monarch butterfly. Without milkweed, the caterpillar will not develop into a butterfly. These seeds are from the common milkweed, which is a hardy perennial and likes sunny meadows. If you see milkweed on the side of the road, it is probably common milkweed.

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SEEKING PEACE & COMMON GROUND WHERE POSSIBLE

By Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.

People in the U.S. seem to be lining up in separate “camps” and harshly judging people who seem to be in an opposing “camp.” Can we listen to each other and find common ground? This is a subject of massive importance for the future of our country and for all of us. Because of the pandemic and all the trauma around economic and social dislocation caused by that, increasing numbers of people are turning to illegal drugs, excessive alcohol, increased violence, or other behavior that is abusive to themselves or others. Deaths are significantly higher than usual due to all of that. This is very difficult for all involved, yet it is important that we try to keep peace where possible with our extended family and friends some of whom may be struggling or pulling us down. This is a very complex problem and are no easy answers. As souls we are drawn to the people in our life for a reason - - as they are part of our soul group. Hence, we need to try to reach out with understanding and compassion to find peace where possible. This may require agreeing not to talk together about politics or religion for now - - and/or praying for them from a distance. If harmony doesn't seem possible, then separating from them for now may be valuable. Coming together at least somewhat in the future may be possible, particularly with family. May we all beam out peace and harmony wherever we are. May we pray for the highest good of people we care about and for our country and world as a whole. These are complex and important times of transition and transformation.

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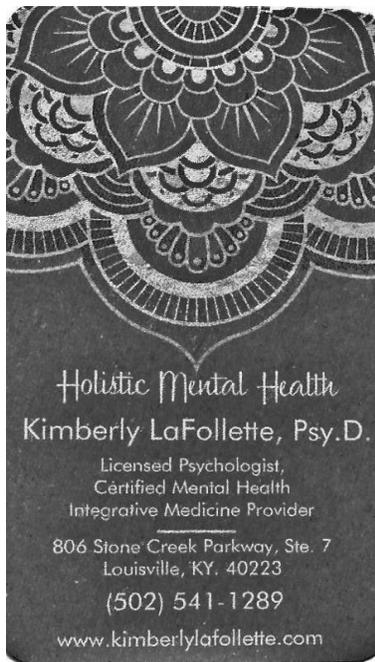
THE GREAT RECONSIDERATION

By Kimberly LaFollette, Psy.D.

I've been reading a lot about the great resignation. People are leaving their jobs in record numbers. The headlines sound like we've all just given up and decided to walk away from our careers. I'd like to reframe this moment in time as the great *reconsideration*. People aren't just resigning; they are redesigning their lives. Twenty months of life altering changes have caused us to take a hard look at our lives and how we spend our time and reconsider if this is how we want to move forward.

For me, Covid changed my life in ways I never could have predicted. In fact, it changed everything about my work. As a professor, I had to move all of my classes online, and as a psychologist I had to practice telehealth for the first time. While online classes and telehealth existed prior to Covid restrictions, it was a mode of interaction I was certain I would not like. So when I was forced to shift my whole life from in person interactions to entirely virtual ones, I was adamant it would be temporary.

Twenty months later and I am completely surprised to say that I have found a great love for providing telehealth services. I have realized the benefits it provides many clients. It is a wonderful mode of therapy for those who do not have access to therapists in their community or for those who are too busy to commute to an office for an hour. Perhaps the biggest shock to me is that because of my newfound passion for telehealth, I have decided to resign from my career in academia. This is a move I would have never



predicted two years ago. Had it not been for Covid, I don't believe I ever would have left.

My resignation from academia does not reflect the joy it once provided me. I wasn't



unhappy before, I did love my life and career prior to Covid. However, over the past few months I have come to terms with the fact that I am not the same person I was in early March 2020.

The world has changed and so have the possibilities for work. So while I am resigning, it is only because I have found a new passion and therefore, I have taken the time to reconsider and redesign my life.

The truth is, you can never go back to the way things were after a significant life event because you are inherently changed. Fighting and resisting the change in the world around us, and within us, only brings frustration. I believe that those of us who have decided to walk away from our careers are just accepting that significant change has occurred, and we are opening ourselves up to new possibilities.

I view this great reconsideration as a commitment to bettering our lives and our world. I am hopeful that we are taking the fear, pain, and suffering endured over the past 20 months and being intentional about how we move forward. I hope that when this time in history is recalled, we are

not remembered as a cohort of individuals who resigned from their jobs. Instead, I hope that we are remembered as survivors who wholeheartedly ran toward a future that honored who they have become.

BIO: Kimberly LaFollette is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified Mental Health Integrative Medicine Provider. You can find out more about Dr. LaFollette and her practice by visiting her website kimberlylafollette.com
PHOTOS: Top, Kristna V of Unsplash, at Left, Monkey Business of Comstock.



ENHANCING OUR LIFE WITH COLOR. *By Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.*

We can greatly enhance our well-being with the colors that we choose to wear, the colors with which we surround ourselves in our home, the colors of nature, with colored art & craft, with color meditation, and more! Wow! This is a great gift. It is a subject that is dear to my heart. Let's explore it!

There is a science to color healing that it's valuable to be at least somewhat aware of. The sun is the source of all life on planet Earth. Right!? The energy of the sun is extremely powerful as we all know. Light travels at 186,000 miles a second (that's fast!) and is the source of all electromagnetic power on Earth. This "family" of electromagnetic power includes alternating current which generates electric light and heat and power, broadcast radio band, short waves and television, radar and microwaves, infrared, visible light (which includes the colors we see), ultraviolet light, x-rays, and gamma and cosmic waves. That is color's massively powerful "family." As we know, colors can be seen when visible light shines through a prism or in other ways which I'll explain shortly. As mentioned, all these sources of electromagnetic energy travel at the same speed of 186,000 miles a second. What differentiates them is the length of their different wave lengths as they travel. (See chart on Blog at www.joycegerrish.com)

The alternating current wave lengths can be measured in feet. The broadcast radio band wavelengths are in the range of a few inches. The short waves and television, the radar and microwaves, and the infrared each are progressively shorter wave lengths. The visible light is between 1/16 to 1/32 millionth of an inch. Now that is short!! The ultraviolet light wavelength is even shorter. The x-ray wavelength is 1/10,000 of visible light. Then you come to gamma and cosmic rays which are even shorter. We are talking here about extremely powerful sources of energy as mentioned. The particularly awesome fact here to me is that the colors that we know and love are a part of this amazing "family." Therefore, color is POWERFUL, more so than most of us probably ever realized!

When visible light shines through a prism and is refracted, the different wave lengths within visible light separate and we see them as the different colors. Red light is the longest wavelength at 1/16 millionth of an inch. Orange is a slightly shorter wavelength, yellow comes next, then green, blue, indigo, and violet is the shortest wavelength at 1/32 millionth of an inch. Learning this 40 years ago (when I was creating paintings in luminous color) truly opened my perspective on color! Maybe you find it awesome, too! These colors that surround us are an amazing source for enhanced well-being as we come to truly understand and utilize them more fully.

What is your favorite color?? My favorite color is royal blue, though I love all the colors profoundly. When light shines on a white wall or something else white, ALL of the colors of the visible spectrum bounce back at us and we "see" white. We receive energy from that. What we "see" as a particular color such as green is the green wavelength of visible light reflecting back out at us from a green shirt or green chair. All of the other wave lengths of visible light are absorbed into the shirt fabric or the chair. This is of great value to keep in mind. It is not just our emotional reaction to a particular color we like that is benefiting us, it is also the actual energy

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wavelengths of different colors that are benefiting us! Let's reflect on that a moment more. Let's say that someone is wearing a yellow sweater and has yellow curtains in their kitchen. The energy wavelength of yellow is actually bouncing back and nourishing that person as he or she is wearing the sweater or near the curtains.

To some extent we crave the colors that we need in a particular moment that will help us feel better physically and balance our emotions. It is good to pay attention to these color cravings. It can be helpful to have clothing (even a scarf) in each of the colors of the visible spectrum rainbow so that we can respond to our color cravings. Of course, we can also enjoy the various colors through our color choices for our living spaces. It is so important to not limit ourselves to mostly black or grey or brown in our clothing or home décor. Black and grey are the absence of color. When light shines on something black or grey, ALL of the rays of the visible spectrum are absorbed, and none are reflected back out as color energy. With light grey we get a little light reflected back. Shades of brown mostly cancel out the vibrant healing energy of the individual colors.

All of the following color descriptions vary somewhat depending on the shade of the color. Red helps one feel more energetic, outgoing, physically strong, or perhaps sensuous (depending on the shade of red). Orange energy also helps one feel active and outgoing. Yellow is lighthearted and cheerful. It helps one feel confident, wide awake and clear headed. Green has a calming balancing quality. Blue and indigo are peaceful and uplifting. Violet is definitely spiritually uplifting and calming. These are very brief yet useful descriptions. Creating colorful art or crafts or enjoying looking at them are also excellent ways to draw on the healing benefits of color. I will describe healing with color meditation and colored breathing and much more in an upcoming article. I wish you much joy with the wonders of color!

BIO: Joyce Gerrish, M.A. provides highly effective Zoom, phone, or in person sessions for Transformational Healing, Emotional Therapy, & support for Soul Mission. She is a highly attuned and sensitive guide for Higher Meditation and Spiritual Awareness. She has extensive training and decades of experience as a practitioner and teacher of numerous natural healing modalities including Reiki, Chakra Healing, and Reflexology. She has a Master's Degree in Human Development, is author of the book "Secrets of Wisdom -- Awaken to the Miracle of You," and is Publisher- Editor of the Natural Living Journal. Louisville Office. 812-566-1799, www.joycegerrish.com

MENNONITE WAY
Haiku Poem by Michael Reitz

An outer peace here
created by inner peace
Mennonite kinship

Mennonite labor
working in gardens and fields
for earth and family

The men and women
attractive and hard working
vegetables grow

Long hours in the field
conducive to peace of mind
a content lifestyle

Mennonite acres
vegetables for everyone
at Meadow View Farm

Colorful dresses
blushed faces of creamy skin
Mennonite women

Young Mennonite girls
working beside their mother
becoming women



A SIMPLER WAY OF LIFE



The Mennonite boys
working aside their father
becoming young men

No more than eighth grade
knowledge learned from their elders
enough for their Way

PHOTOS: Horse & Carriage & Couple, Randy Faith; Boys, John Kovacich, of Unsplash; Windmill and Horse Drawn Plow, Steinbach of Pixabay; Men Working on a Roof, Randy Faith of Unsplash.