

March 2024

BREATHE DEEP
WITHIN



Celebrating Women's History Month





Welcome BDW Community!

Hello BDW Community! It is with great pleasure to introduce to you our first digital magazine issue! I am so grateful for the success of the BDW newsletter last year. Your contributions each month made it a warm and welcoming publication that invited the readers to get to know us as a friendly mindfulness/meditation community.

We are now three months into the year 2024. It's an opportunity to evolve in ways that can change us for the better. We can be inspired to try new things with the lessons we have learned from the previous year. We can be bold enough to take chances and live a life that deeply fulfills us. We can also experience the awakening of our spirit as we grow towards the light.

In March, we celebrate the achievements, struggles, perseverance, and contributions of women that help move our society forward. March 8th is celebrated as International Women's Day, and at BDW, we take this opportunity to acknowledge and applaud the tenacity of every woman who shows up in the world and gives her heart to help humanity progress. This is a valuable endowment for our future generations.

The month of March is dedicated to celebrating Women's History Month, and as a tribute to the incredible accomplishments of women, we are highlighting the amazing women in the BDW community. In this issue, we will share inspiring stories, handcrafted jewelry, poetry, the March forecast, a special word of the month, an easy and delicious recipe, and much more. Thank you for being a part of our wellness community.

Peace and Blessings,
LaDonna Funderburke, Breathe Deep Within

In Celebration of Women's History Month We Honor The Women of Breathe Deep Within



Thank you to the women of Breathe Deep Within who weave a beautiful tapestry of love, connection, and support. Each one of them is doing amazing things to bring peace and healing to many lives. We celebrate their talents, expertise, and dedication in creating a harmonious environment to breathe in. Let's honor our BDW community members.

Annette Jewell-Ceder, BDW Blogger & Community Member

Anne Ness, BDW Contributor, Holistic Practitioner & RN Nurse

Barb With, Author & Educator of Conflict Resolution

D'Mchelle, Jewelry Designer, Reiki Healer, Teacher, and Owner of Soulistic Twist

Elizabeth Uter, Award-winning Writer, Poet & BDW Community Member

Gail Gerlitz, BDW Contributor & Community Member

Geraldine Haydock, BDW Contributor & Community Member

Heidi Connolly, Author, Coach, Intuitive Musician of Vacationing Angel

Kathleen Gulley, Elder & BDW Community Member

Nakesha Caldwell, CEO of Coco Nashay & The Mother's HEALth Program

LaDonna Funderburke, Owner & Operator of Breathe Deep Within LLC

Lein Tran-Doan, Healer & Owner of Light of Lotus

Mary Freerks, Artist & BDW Contributor

Mary Jo Sterling, Author, Writer & BDW Contribution

May (Buffy) Yang, BDW Contributor

Paula Sampson, BDW Columnist & Community Member

Sarah Congress, Writer, Producer & BDW Community Member

Shelly Reed, BDW Contributor, Writer & Editor

Tania Coffield, Healer & Owner of Field of Oils

Theresa Thompson-Nix (Queen Tea), BDW Contributor, Healer, & Editor

Tanya Coehlo, RN Nurse & BDW Model

Tina Shang, Virtual Reality Production Manager & BDW Contributor

Vaerna Meyer, Artist, BDW Model, Blogger & Community Member

MEDITATION BREATHWORK SOUND HEALING

*Breathe Deep Within
Online Meditation*

breathedeepwithin.com



Empowering Mothers through the Mother's HEALth Program

By Nakesha Caldwell

In the bustling heart of North Minneapolis, the Mothers HEALth Program stands as a beacon of hope for mothers navigating the often tumultuous journey of motherhood. As the founder and driving force behind the Mother's HEALth Program, Nakesha 'Coco' Caldwell has devoted herself to creating a transformative space where mothers can find solace, support, and empowerment.

The Mother's HEALth Program is a testament to Caldwell's unwavering commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by mothers on a daily basis. Through a holistic approach encompassing physical, mental, and emotional well-being, the program offers a lifeline to mothers grappling with the strains of modern motherhood.

Statistics paint a stark picture of the struggles many mothers endure silently. From mental health disorders affecting 1 in 5 mothers during or after pregnancy to the staggering 73% who don't get enough physical activity, the statistics underscore the urgent need for initiatives like the Mother's HEALth Program. Sleep deprivation, financial strain, and social isolation further compound the challenges faced by mothers, especially those from marginalized communities.

Yet, amidst these challenges, Caldwell remains steadfast in her mission to uplift and empower mothers. The Mother's HEALth Program provides a nurturing environment where mothers can access vital resources, engage in holistic wellness practices, and forge meaningful connections within their community.



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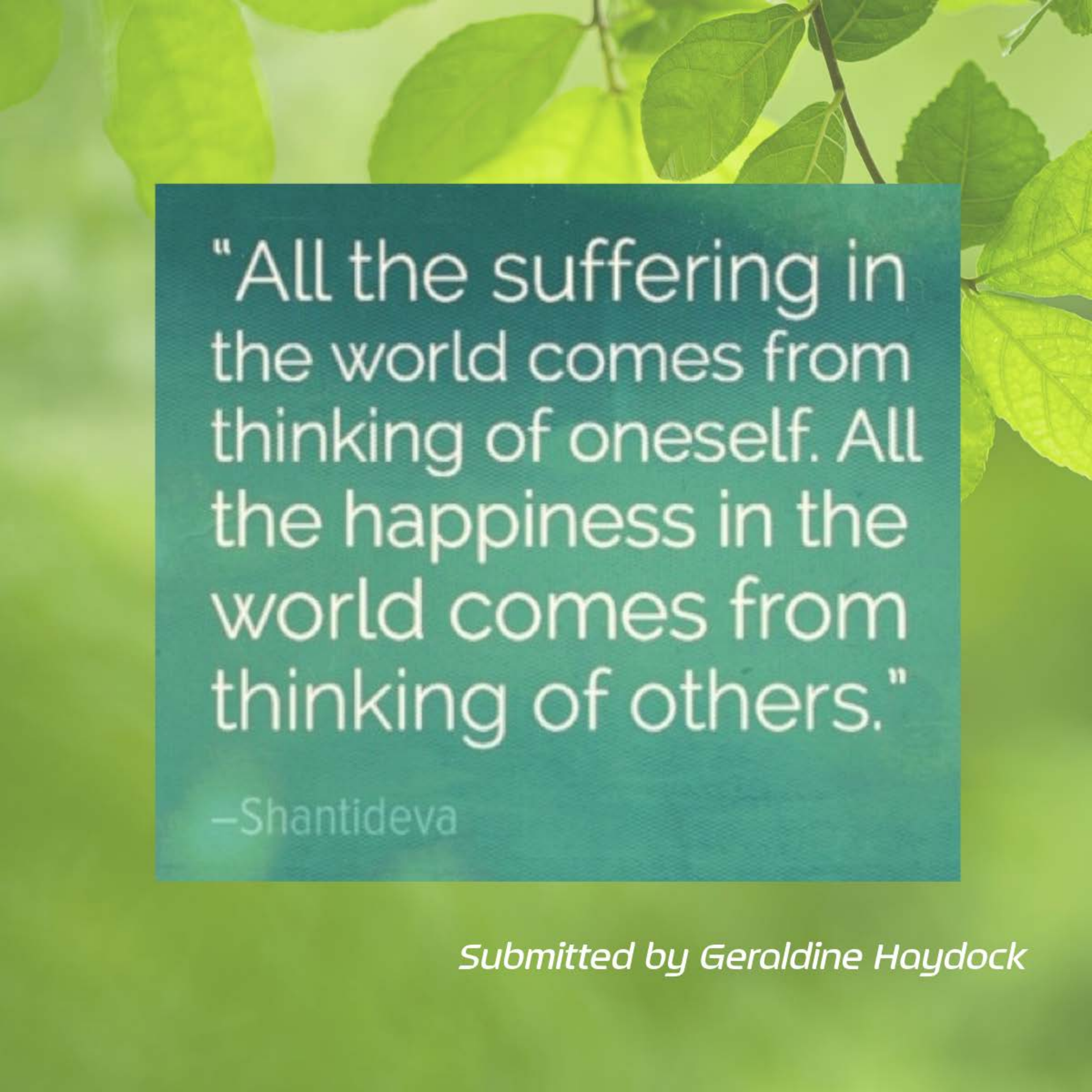
As the COO of Haus Dé Pénäsh, Nakesha Caldwell, alongside CEO Pénäsh Jones, brings a wealth of experience and passion to her role in the upcoming "Don't Forget to Breathe" Mother's Health Fashion Show on March 24th. This event not only showcases the resilience and strength of mothers but also serves as a platform to raise awareness and support for the Mother's HEALth Program. Caldwell's leadership and dedication underscore her commitment to empowering mothers and promoting holistic wellness within the community.

To support Caldwell's vision and the Mother's HEALth Program, individuals are encouraged to contribute in any way they can. Whether donating time, resources, or items, every contribution makes a difference in the lives of mothers striving to thrive amidst life's challenges.

Nakesha Caldwell's journey is a testament to the transformative power of compassion, community, and unwavering dedication. Through the Mother's HEALth Program and initiatives like the "Don't Forget to Breathe" Mother's Health Fashion Show, Caldwell continues to inspire and uplift mothers, one heartbeat at a time.



Nakesha Caldwell is a mother to three beautiful children. She is the founder and owner of Coco Nashay and The Mother's HEALth Program. Kesha's passion is to uplift mothers that will build family and community legacy.



“All the suffering in the world comes from thinking of oneself. All the happiness in the world comes from thinking of others.”

—Shantideva

Submitted by Geraldine Haydock



Decluttering the mind.....

A scholarly man recited a quote that greatly affects the way I deal with repetitive and intrusive thoughts. It states, "Don't dwell on the past, or worry about the future. These are merely mental excuses for not dealing with current realities. Take some action, or let it go." I have come to the realization nothing in this world can control me more than my own thoughts and that I alone am responsible for the ones I choose to hold onto or release.

Mindful breathing is a simple, yet powerful technique. It draws me back to the present moment when I feel myself obsessing over past and future misperceptions. Repeating a mantra multiple times creates a distraction that enables me to focus on my conscious mind. It provides a means to disidentify with unreasonable beliefs. Holding onto misconceived mental cognitions and replaying those images over and over again serves no purpose and only stifles my growth.

Recognizing that letting go is in my best psychological and physical interest is very liberating. Being untethered to distorted thoughts grants me the freedom to experience a more authentic and peaceful life.

Letting Go

"The act of detaching oneself from unpleasant, meaningless, harmful thoughts and feelings."

Breath & Emotions by Anne Ness



When I was in nursing school in 1991, I was separated from my partner and living alone with my toddler in a studio apartment next door to two friends. One day when I was studying the respiratory system and the dangers of impaired air exchange, I felt like I could not breathe. I tried taking a shower to steam my airway and hopefully improve my air exchange. I felt weak and dizzy. The more I focused on my difficulty breathing, the more anxious I became. I feared that I would lose consciousness and my daughter would have no one to watch her. I called 911 and a firetruck came, the firefighters gave me oxygen and checked my vitals. They were fine. My friend next door came home, and I immediately felt better. I knew if I died my daughter would not be abandoned. The firefighters left, and I was embarrassed that I was so frightened about being unable to breathe.

In nursing school, I learned about the dangers of poor respiration: hypercapnia (too much CO₂ causing confusion, decreased level of consciousness), respiratory acidosis (usually from hypercapnia), atelectasis (collapse of a lobe of the lung), emphysema (alveoli collapse), asthma, anaphylaxis, and pulmonary embolus. Many respiratory problems can be fatal. While studying the respiratory system, my attention to my breath became pathological. What I did not learn in nursing school was the benefits of good respiration and how to do it.

On the swim team in junior high, I learned how to take a deep breath and hold it. I also took singing lessons, and learned how to breathe from my diaphragm. I was able to push air out long and slow. But when I was worried and stressed, I became aware of how improper breathing can harm you. I felt like I could not breathe. I had the physical skills but did not understand the emotional and spiritual components of how my place in the environment affected my breathing.

In 1992, I finished nursing school and moved back in with my partner. We had another baby and got married in 1993. I was breathing easy.

In 1994 I took my first formal yoga class at Present Moment Herbs and Books. I learned to inhale with extension of the body and exhale with contraction. With stretching and breathing, I learned about prana and the power of breath to move energy in the body.

I continued my nursing education and became a board certified holistic nurse. Holistic nurses treat the whole person: mind, body, spirit, emotions, and community. The space we are in is part of who we are, it affects our health. The air we breathe connects us to everything around us. Breathing in the presence of a beloved being feels so sweet. On the other hand, breathing in the exhaust of diesel trucks can cause asthma and heart disease. Some communities breathe easier than others. Unfortunately, some underserved communities experience the injustice of racism which makes it hard for all of us to breathe.

Now I work with people with anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia, and PTSD. I know from experience that anxiety makes poor breathing worse, and I have learned that slow, deep breathing can reduce anxiety. I slow down and exaggerate the sound of my breath when my client is anxious to help them slow down their own breath. Resonating the breath at the top of the throat is called Ujayi and breathing together with someone is called *breath entrainment*. If my client is able to calm down enough to follow instructions, I can ask them to breathe down into their belly and concentrate on a long and full exhalation. This helps in the moment and is a practice for good long term health. Fully expanded then fully deflated lungs, massage the heart. This method helps the heart stay strong. Aside from the physical effect of lung expansion in the chest, deep breathing and Ujayi increase nitric oxide production, which aids in the healthy functioning of all the cells of the body. Nitric acid helps cells make energy from ATP and helps cells produce hormones to direct healthy functions in the body. Nitric acid functions like prana described in ancient Sanskrit texts. Scientists are discovering how breath contributes to chemical health beyond oxygen exchange!



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As the long winter nights here in the northern United States affect our bodies, minds, and communities, many people experience symptoms of depression due to reduced serotonin levels as the hours of daylight decrease. About 10% of people experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) in the Northern latitudes. Bhramari Pranayama, also known as Humming Bee Breath, has been shown to increase serotonin and dopamine levels. Visit shreehariyoga.com. I learned to do it from the International Day of Yoga YouTube video here https://youtu.be/8ch8_AX-7ZU?si=5kTwIMmwFlbeJPR9.

Family holidays can trigger post-traumatic stress in people. If you become anxious during and after the holidays, know that you are not alone. Breathe deeply, slowly, and mindfully. Paying attention to your breath is an easy way to slow down your thoughts. You can do it anywhere.

In January, the sunlight starts to increase, and is a good time for healing our anxiety, depression, and SAD. Breathe Deep Within meditation helps very much. If SAD is affecting you, get a full spectrum light bulb for the room you stay in most of the day. If anxiety or PTSD is affecting you this winter, experiment with different ways of breathing and focus on your breath when you are ramping up or being triggered. Breathing in good smells like lavender essential oil can also help you calm down. The nose contains a direct channel to the brain, and essential oil aromas get into the brain quickly. Pay attention to the connection between your mind, body, emotions, spirit, and community. If other people or forces in the community are pulling you down into despair, look for those who can help uplift you. You are not alone.

This winter let's all do our part to increase happiness and health in the world by breathing deeply. Breathe for ourselves to massage our hearts, increase dopamine and serotonin, and nitric oxide. Breathe for others by entraining your breath with someone who needs to be calm or remember what breath is. Breathe out love for the world. Work for an environmentally just world where all can breathe clean air. Blessed be the breath that connects us.

Anne Ness, DNP, MPH, MAHS, RN, PHN, CCAP, HNB-BC, is also an American Heart Association BLS Trainer and Reiki Master.

Dear Friends,

This year our collective work requires us to be present and document what is happening within us and to see us as a part of our legacy.

Paying attention to our transitions along with the undulating lunar cycle will help us transcend any challenges by gaining new skills.



Pluto's transition into Aquarius in Early 2024 marks the dawn of a new era. It may be hard to imagine what life will look like 20 years in the future, but we can expect a time of rapid change in communications, technology and leadership. Previews of this energy can be felt during notable astronomical events in 2024.

For example, the eclipse season is here. Grab your journal and mark your calendar for two spectacular days of transformation as we welcome an early spring.

It is rare to have more than one eclipse close together on the calendar. However, within the next month we will welcome two eclipses.

In March, a penumbral eclipse will happen in the sign of Libra on the 25th. This brings a beautiful energy of nostalgia and a brief window for bringing buried memories to the surface.

In April, a total Solar Eclipse will happen on the 8th in the sign of Aries. The gradual aligning circles of the sun and moon will form a glowing corona that will captivate global attention.

The energy of these days will be amplified. Documenting eight life areas will give a baseline of information for looking back on your life over the next 20 years. The year 2044 is when the next Total Solar Eclipse will occur.

I'm with you in the search of the light.
Queen Tea

Theresa Thompson Nix known as Queen Tea is a writer and contributor for Breathe Deep Within. She is an artist, advocate, and soul medic for communities served and under-served. Her passion is to rebuild health and wellness for everyBODY one breath at a time.

The Power of Women

by Shelly Reed



Women are so powerful – whether they know it or not. Women are the first educators of children and can set them up for success in school and in life. Mom read to us a lot, and consequently we are a family of readers. We had a chalkboard at home. My older sister played “school” with us – going over our ABCs and learning how to spell small words. On my first day of school, I felt like a rock star because I knew how to spell CAT and a few other three letter words. It was very empowering. When my younger brother came along, we did the same for him.

I grew up in a very small town, and when I was young the only library was in the school. In order to give us the best tools, my parents bought the whole set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, A to Z. We used them a lot. These were an investment for our education. They were also very, very heavy. When Mom’s house was cleaned out, the paneling behind the bookshelves had been pulled down from the ceiling due to the weight of all the books. It was quite impressive.

Mom is a very curious person. Her love of learning was passed on to us. She bought a set of Childcraft Books for us and for her (art projects and the like). I still remember one Halloween when she made little airplanes out of Lifesaver candy to give out. Candy and art - that was a good year. Even though she didn’t have what is now considered a traditional job, her work ethic in volunteering, serving our Faith and being a fantastic role model set us up for success.

Women are educators, encouragers, and nurturers – by design. These gifts transfer from child-rearing to the workplace and of course in leadership roles from companies to countries. If all women were able to embrace the power we are born with, it truly could change the world. Of course, it would help if women and men were thought of as equals and had the same opportunities.

That’s still something that needs improvement. Think of humanity as a bird. This is a quote from the Baha’i Faith about the importance of the equality of women and men:

“For the world of humanity possesses two wings: man and woman. If one wing remains incapable and defective, it will restrict the power of the other, and full flight will be impossible. Therefore, the completeness and perfection of the human world are dependent upon the equal development of these two wings.”

Here’s to striving toward full flight. Embrace the power.

Shelly Reed is a member of the BDW Community and Editor of the BDW Publications. She is also a devout member of the Baha’i Faith.



March Sale
20% OFF

BDW Apparel & Merch

Enter Code March20

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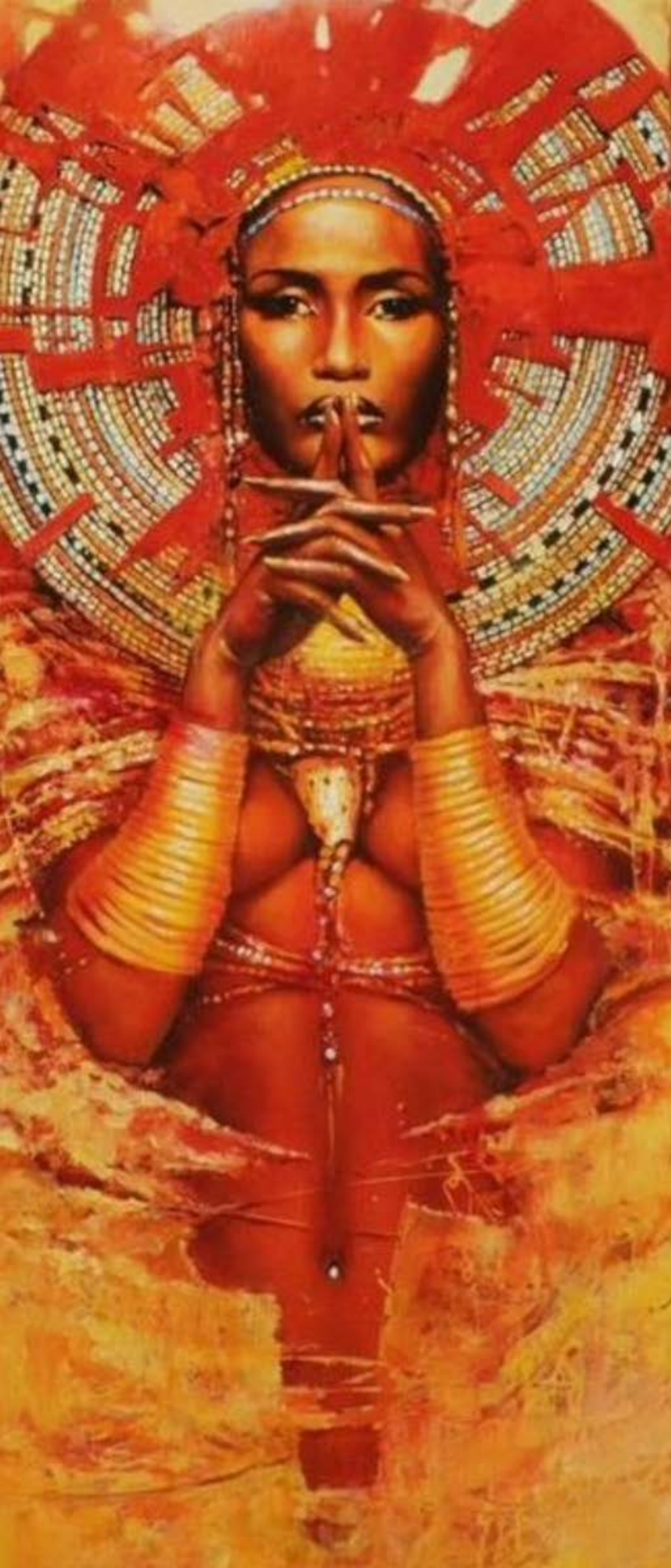
BDW MARCH ARTIST

THE USE OF GEMSTONES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The use of healing stones for wellness dates back thousands of years and can be traced to cultures throughout the world. Ancient Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, and Native American cultures are a few that have used healing gemstones for various purposes. Modern-day holistic healing practices have helped revive the use of gemstones for spiritual, mental, and emotional health especially when combined with meditation, sound therapy, and intentional gemstone adornments which is an easy way to utilize their properties when needed the most.

According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, meditation and mindfulness can promote relaxation, reduce stress, and combat feelings of anxiety and depression. Incorporating healing stones into such practices enhances the effects of your meditative focus and vice versa. Using healing stones and crystals while practicing mindfulness, meditation, and meditative movement helps you examine your habits and patterns, beyond just your emotions or wounding. It can involve understanding the deeper story of your life, finding a sense of purpose, putting a name to deeply held values or needs, and confronting your inner shadow. Just as supplemental minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and iron help keep our bodies functioning properly, the use of crystals in computer technology stores and transmits information. Gemstones can be used for their energetic properties to help us in the processing of thoughts and emotions.

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Therefore, these complementary and alternative health practices work well together in promoting relaxation, and peaceful processing of thoughts and emotions. Gemstones & crystals can help you navigate the dark waters of your unconscious and stay connected to your heart and your goodness as you sort out the inner workings of your mind and maximize the beneficial effects of your mind-body practice.

As a practitioner, I intentionally wear specific gemstones and metal arrangements based on their properties. For clients, I create zodiac birthstone arrangements, meditation crowns, and chakra arrangements to help them align with their energetic blueprint. This helps clients to identify what is true to their nature and what mindset or beliefs have come from other outside influences. This helps them to process repressed trauma without having to relive it. Gemstone zodiac arrangements, meditation crowns, and other intentional jewelry can be wonderful additions to making your mental health practice and healing journey a success.



D'Mchelle, CMT, CPT, CCHP, VMP, is a Reiki Master Teacher who has been a practitioner in the healing arts for over 20 years. She is certified in several modalities. If you are interested in adding gemstone arrangements for your wellness journey, contact her at genesischiropractic.com or on Instagram #soulisticwist

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MAY YANG'S
DELICIOUS
EGG ROLL
RECIPE

MAY YANG'S DELICIOUS EGG ROLLS

Ingredients

1 lb ground pork*
1 c. finely julienned carrots
2 oz bean thread vermicelli noodles
1 pkg Simex Lumpia wrapper**
Salt
Pepper
Garlic (minced or powder)
1/2 c. Cilantro (optional)
1/2 c. Basil (optional)
1 egg*** (yolk and egg white separated)

1. Soak bean thread in hot water. Bean thread will soften and separate. Approximately 5-10 minutes. Drain completely. Lay bean thread on a cutting board. Take a knife and cut bean thread into equal sections of about an inch in length. Set aside.
2. In a bowl mix together the ground pork and all the seasonings including the herbs if including them.
3. Add in the noodles and remaining egg white and yolk and mix. The egg white and yolk gives the filling a more moist finish.
4. Place one wrapper on a dry cutting board. Spoon 1/4 cup of very loosely packed filling onto the wider side of the wrapper. Take the end closest to you and roll it over the filling like how you would a burrito. Pinch corners and fold in the left and right sides. Roll until about an inch is left of the wrapper. Wet the side of the filling generously with egg white and finish rolling. Place the wetted side down on a flat surface such as a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper (best) to help with sealing.
5. Heat oil to 350 degrees. Fry egg rolls for 5-6 minutes until golden brown. Note: The lumpia brand of wrappers is a thinner wrapper. The finished texture won't be a crackly, blister like texture. If you would like a crackly, blister like texture you will want to get a wrapper that is thicker skinned.

Yield 16 egg rolls

Recipe for sauce

1/4 c. water
1/4 c. sugar
1/8 c. fish sauce
Julienned carrots (about 2 pinches for garnish)

In a small bowl mix together the water and sugar until completely dissolved. Add in the fish sauce and carrots. Enjoy.

*Can substitute chicken or shrimp or include shrimp along with the pork. If using two kinds of protein, be sure to reduce and go half and half.

**This brand of egg roll wrapper has two different kinds of packaging. One where the wrappers are stuck together and one where the wrappers are individually separated by liners. If you buy the package where the wrappers are stuck together just make sure that it is totally defrosted before separating. They come frozen.

***As you won't need all the egg white you can divide the separated egg white in half and use one half for wetting the wrappers. The remaining egg white can just be added to the filling. For this recipe I had to double it because 16 egg rolls just wasn't enough. The one half of egg white is plenty.

All ingredients are excellent for all blood types unless one has a food allergy. Note: This recipe only listed one vegetable. If you want more you can add chopped cabbage and/or mushrooms (fungus style, soaked, cut into small strips or minced). I like to limit the number of ingredients in my filling to 5. If more than 5, the flavor of the egg roll just gets lost.






Breathe Deep Within
Breathe in peace... Breathe out love...

BDW Apparel



breathedeepwithin.com

self care checklist

- Listen to your body and give it what it needs.
 - Spend at least 20 minutes in the sun to get your daily dose of vitamin D.
 - Eat healthy food with life-force energy.
 - Drink plenty of purified water.
 - Get 8 hours of sleep.
 - Spend quality time with the people you love and appreciate. Tell them you love them.
 - Live your life with gratitude.
 - Move your body. Exercise!
 - Be mindful instead of mindfilled.
 - Spend less time on your phone and more time reading your favorite book.
 - Create boundaries. It's ok to say, "NO".
 - Remember to BREATHE deeply.
 - Each day look at yourself in the mirror and say, "I love you."
- 

Be Kind To Your Heart & Mind

Grounding and Centering Breathwork To Open the Heart and Calm the mind

This breathing exercise will help you connect to the heart and mind while stabilizing your sacred seat known as your root chakra.

Sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed and take slow, deep breaths until you are relaxed. Take a moment to think about what you are grateful for. Place your right hand on your belly button and your left hand on your heart.

Inhale slowly feel your belly rise. Inhale again and feel your chest rise gently then slowly breathe out through your nose or mouth.

As you inhale for the first time, you connect with your foundation, which is represented by your root chakra. This chakra is responsible for your sense of security, material needs, and connection to the physical world. With the second inhalation, your heart chakra opens up, allowing you to tap into your emotional center, which includes feelings of love, gratitude, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, kindness, and more. As you slowly exhale, you release all your feelings of gratitude and let them flow out into the world.

Practice this modality a few cycles until you feel centered and grounded with deep feelings of love and gratitude for all the blessings you have in your life.



A GODDESS ARRIVES

by Elizabeth Uter



Elizabeth Uter is an award-winning poet and double award-winning short story writer. She's facilitated Farrago Poetry workshops in London and performed at the prestigious Queen's Park Literary Festival, London. Please see the link for published work and poetry videos: <https://momentsalongtheway.wordpress.com/latest-news/>

The poem *A Goddess Arrives* is inspired by all the women I have ever known whether from the past, present or those yet to come — imagining how they might be.

It has a touch of whimsy that moves from the sublime to the ridiculous — esoteric on the one hand — dropping into pop culture, the next. It is seated in the times we are in right now where everything and anything goes and is seemingly available to everyone. Everything that is possible can be aspired to though may not necessarily be so easy to access because of the patriarchal structures still in place and the adverse reactions women may experience at any hint of feminism or the idea of a returning matriarchy. Perhaps we should be looking at a mutuality instead?

The Guardian Newspaper's article on The World Bank, 5th March 2024 states :

'No equality for working women in any country in the world, study reveals. Global gender gap is far bigger than previously thought, as annual World Bank report takes childcare and safety issues into account for first time.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/mar/05/no-equality-for-working-women-in-any-country-in-the-world-study-reveals-world-bank-gender-gap#:~:text=No%20country%20in%20the%20world,20%25%2C%20s%20aid%20the%20report>

But no matter the visible or invisible constraints today's women are subject to, we should perhaps remember to draw comfort from the knowledge that we possess a charm, a magic, a glamour that is perhaps far more potent than any man's power, position or money could ever be. We enjoy a secret, inborn allure that they do not — an undefinable mystery or as the French might say, a certain 'je ne sais quoi' that defies all comprehension and attempts at suppression. It should make us smile, give us courage to come into our own moment by moment.

I hope this poem has resonance with you, and above all, remember we are all *Amandas* — Latin for — worthy to be loved. Enjoy and love, love, love. ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

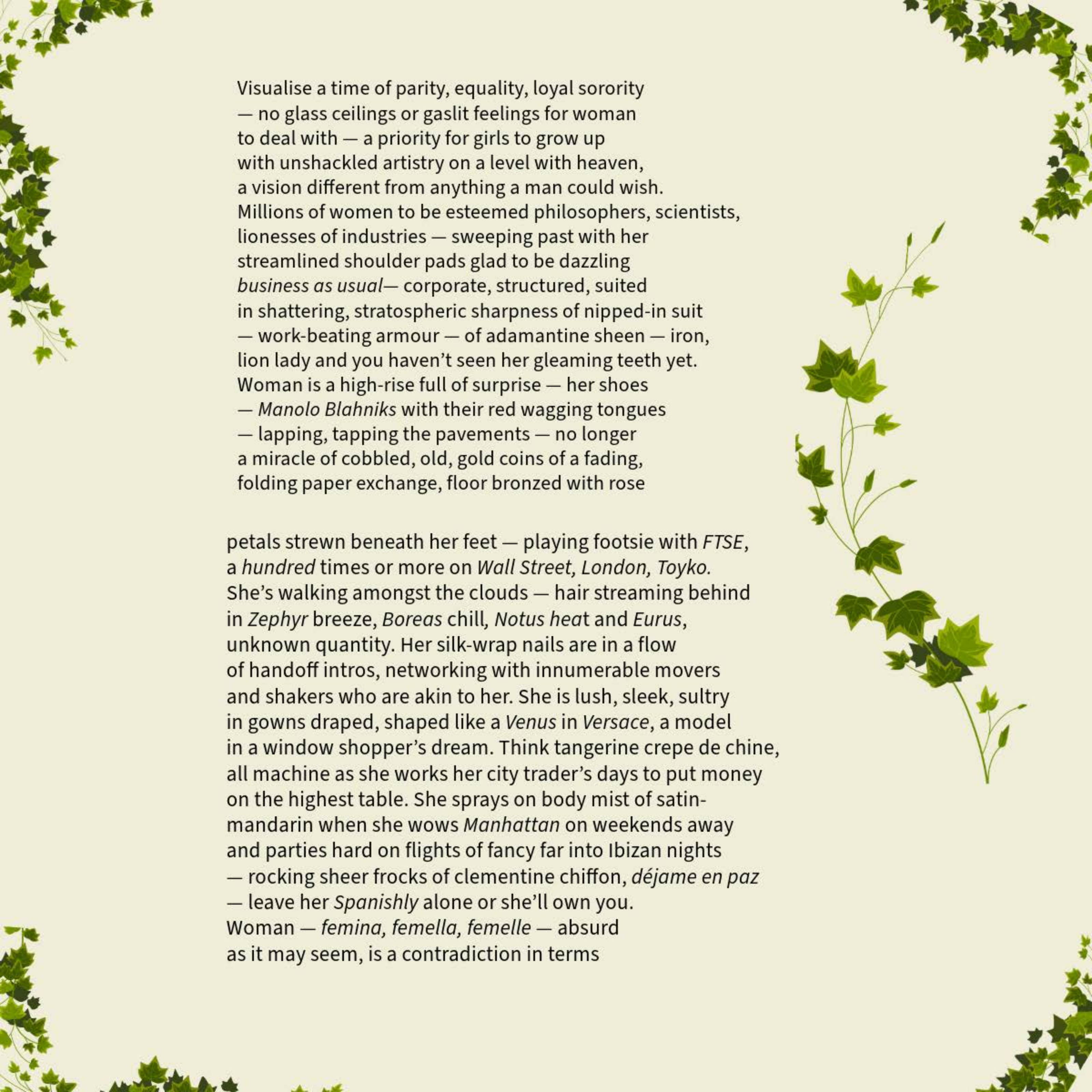
A GODDESS ARRIVES

by Elizabeth Uter

Imagine — she wears the sun's skin
— every woman present in spirit, action
— bold, ready to shine — divine — remaining
true to her vision — vast as stars outlasting the
Olympian Heights — stretching beyond infinity's
shores— endless as the grains of sands on myriad
earth strands and more. Her intuition a magnet for
happiness capturing what it means to timely be alive
-sublime — she waits for no man to form
her brilliant smile, seeks no permissions
to freestyle her laugh — her humour a welcoming
relief for those so unlike her.

Speech fearless when speaking her truth,
it soothes, is nectar, ambrosia, a harmonic
tonic for the sick, the lost, the hurt
— she nurtures each with healing words, syllables
ringing in wounded ears — she is the all-calming balm.

The Gnostics say the *First Principle*
is a feminine figure — a cosmic
mirror of the human soul — the *Ultimate Aspect*
of Divinity —The Sophia hatched from
the World Egg. She reflects the Goddess in woman
but which comes first this chicken or that egg?
Woman is free to be anything she chooses to be.
She — mysterious body, babies, deriving from
the Yin unique darkness of the mothering womb
— swimming in amniotic waters, emerging
from the deep. The die eternally cast — *Ouroboros*
— the wheel turns and the Deity arrives
weaving between being multiple forms
— artist-creative, number-crunching diva or
up-and-coming mama with her chicks in a nesting
of her own making — birthing or the ability to nurse,
changing the way you view Mother Earth.



Visualise a time of parity, equality, loyal sorority
— no glass ceilings or gaslit feelings for woman
to deal with — a priority for girls to grow up
with unshackled artistry on a level with heaven,
a vision different from anything a man could wish.
Millions of women to be esteemed philosophers, scientists,
lionesses of industries — sweeping past with her
streamlined shoulder pads glad to be dazzling
business as usual— corporate, structured, suited
in shattering, stratospheric sharpness of nipped-in suit
— work-beating armour — of adamant sheen — iron,
lion lady and you haven't seen her gleaming teeth yet.
Woman is a high-rise full of surprise — her shoes
— *Manolo Blahniks* with their red wagging tongues
— lapping, tapping the pavements — no longer
a miracle of cobbled, old, gold coins of a fading,
folding paper exchange, floor bronzed with rose

petals strewn beneath her feet — playing footsie with *FTSE*,
a *hundred* times or more on *Wall Street, London, Toyko*.
She's walking amongst the clouds — hair streaming behind
in *Zephyr* breeze, *Boreas* chill, *Notus* heat and *Eurus*,
unknown quantity. Her silk-wrap nails are in a flow
of handoff intros, networking with innumerable movers
and shakers who are akin to her. She is lush, sleek, sultry
in gowns draped, shaped like a *Venus* in *Versace*, a model
in a window shopper's dream. Think tangerine crepe de chine,
all machine as she works her city trader's days to put money
on the highest table. She sprays on body mist of satin-
mandarin when she wows *Manhattan* on weekends away
and parties hard on flights of fancy far into Ibiza nights
— rocking sheer frocks of clementine chiffon, *déjàme en paz*
— leave her *Spanishly* alone or she'll own you.
Woman — *femina, femella, femelle* — absurd
as it may seem, is a contradiction in terms

for what you see, believe is a complete illusion.
She is bottled sun fulfilling and fine as a freshly
squeezed orange, daily poured from an hourglass
bottle — she is morning juice. She is the pep in the step
of bodies shot with a *Vit' C* shock — she slaps you awake,
wake up — she shakes you into shape — she's a breakfast
cocktail — vodka not on the rocks — at any hour
— she makes her drinkers high, ready to scale the day
with her beside. This furnace makes you sweat — she's
an everlasting heatwave — kissed on the golden shores
of *Caribbean* imaginings, tanned, toned, tuned in
— she stands in no man's shadow. She is sweet but
do not get carried away — she can sour fast, be
your worst scenario if you crave the cheap *e flavoured version*
— *high in concentrate* — *think Lucazade or Orangina*
— *then she be bad for your livers* — *if you think*
she's Queen Tropicana with the bits in it, think again,

she is royally smooth — as riddling as a *Sphinx*, little minx.
Picture this — she's graceful in all matters, meditates
deeply on the meaning of life, into the spiritual hours
— working towards the best that she can be in the moments
she is given. All matters whet her appetite, she sharpens
her wisdom teeth on thoughts, on words, on acts
— she lives in quantum fields of abundance
— riding high in celestial delight, cresting the shoulders
of sisters, ancestors — worshipping her generations, thankful,
grateful for those who have gone before, kin rolled on
beyond our ken. *Here I Am*, woman says — so few
can differentiate, are on the same wavelength,
for remember — it is said woman is of and in the realms
of the Gods. She is going deeper into the deepest
thought of spiritual wisdom. Haloing the blue, the green,
the gold of it — colouring her lived experience.
Her inner landscape speaks to the higher mind,

comprehension of the *Mysteries*, inspiration, self.
Woman as creator of all possible *Utopias*
of empathy, of sympathy unbound and above all else
— love, love, she is unequivocal love — imagine.



LOVE by Gail Gerlitz

What can I say? According to Ed, I fell in love with him as soon as I fixed my Glowing Cow Eyes on him at a St. Paul discotheque. We met when we were 27 and married when we were 32. It sounds like a long time to date and live together, but we were very happy and our families didn't seem to mind. He was so bratty and hilarious (just like my family), but never mean. Throughout our marriage there were several stories that he stuck to; he was forced to date me (several of his friends at the club also wrote down my number to make a date on his behalf), he never really married me (in MN 1985 only one person of the couple needed to apply for and sign the license), he didn't like red hair and freckles (I had both), and many more ridiculous thoughts and escapades.



I come from a family that is type A (more like a triple-A) and he was a triple-Z (I made this up). It turned out to be a good combination for us because we both reaped the benefits from each other's personalities, making modifications as time progressed. I became a little calmer and he was more energetic. We experienced lots of mischievous antics, world adventures, thoughtful calm times, and love in our union. He was the Sweetheart of My Dreams! Okay, he could be a bit annoying at times. Correcting grammatical errors on love poems that I gave him, if I slept when he was awake he'd poked his fingers into my ears, he wrapped up things that I owned pretending they were Christmas presents, cooked 'Surprise Delight' (oh really?), put one bulb on the Christmas tree and then point out how helpful he was, sprayed me with water when we were gardening, and so on. Because of his devilish behaviors, at times I was forced to chase him and pepper him with kisses (a fate worse than death according to him).

As time went on, I became much more vulnerable because I loved him so deeply. I had never experienced this depth of love in any prior relationship. We agreed that this was how we both felt. We had respect, and effective communication, and would support each other in our life endeavors. He was the funniest, least judgmental, kindest, most gentle person I have ever met.

Even though caring for Ed could be difficult, it was bittersweet and I am grateful I had that experience. I had to be far more patient, could not cry in front of Ed (he already felt bad enough), reminded him how much I loved him, started every day with his favorite Cuban music (he was born and raised in Cuba), and then we'd 'danced' cheek to cheek, helped him with everyday tasks, watched comedies together, cooked his favorite foods (before he couldn't swallow). I burned scented candles, kept our environment calm, played soft music (when not 'dancing'), and had designated times for friends to visit.

As a result of my experiences, I concluded I needed a calmer environment, had to cut the strings with negative and unsupportive people and be more positive. At the beginning of Covid, Feb 2019, I finally searched for guided meditation classes. Meditation has brought out a happier, calmer, and more focused individual. I still remember all the joy that Ed brought into my life and how my experiences with him brought me to meditation. For that I'm truly grateful.



Gail Gerlitz has been meditating with Breathe Deep Within for four years as a member of the BDW community. Her welcoming and warm presence puts everyone at ease, making her a valuable addition to our community.

Breathe in
Breathe out

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Self-love Affirmations for Women

I live my life filled with purpose and value.
I love and accept myself unconditionally.
I embrace the power that comes from being authentically me.
Today is a gift, and I make the most of it.
I am grateful for the abundance that surrounds me.
I radiate strength, courage, and confidence.
Today, I embrace my inner power and shine my light.
I am a strong woman, and I am proud of my journey.
I support and uplift other women on their journeys.
I attract positive people and opportunities in my life.
Today, I am a beacon of positivity and inspiration.
I am comfortable in my own skin, and I embrace my uniqueness.
I empower myself to break through barriers and limitations.
I heal myself from generational traumas.
I am an advocate for equality, justice, and empowerment.
I am financially empowered and I make wise financial decisions that will create generational wealth.
My mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health is a priority.
I am constantly evolving and becoming a better version of myself.
I trust the natural rhythm of life, finding peace and balance within it.
I listen to my body and give it what it needs to live a healthy life.
I create boundaries that protect my time, energy, and well-being.
I am grateful for each day of living well.
I welcome change and adapt with grace and strength.
I will create safe, loving spaces for my children to thrive.
I will cherish all healthy relationships.
My life is filled with love, support, and positivity.
My self-love radiates from within, and I attract positive energy.
I am dedicated to collaborating with the natural forces, in order to assist Mother Earth in her healing process.
-So be it, so it is.

A pink lotus flower is the central focus, resting in a silver bowl. The bowl is filled with silver beads, some of which are visible in the foreground. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, serif font.

Breathe Deep Within promotes self-love, deep inner healing and harmonious connections. Our mission is to create a safe, loving space for each individual to flourish in ways that foster personal growth on their path to self-discovery.

We aim to build a healthy mindfulness community by extending goodwill to each other and opening our hearts. This platform serves as a tranquil online sanctuary where you can simply be present. Consider it a spa treatment for your mind, body, heart, and spirit. May you find peace within.

**Best Regards,
Breathe Deep Within LLC
March 2024**