

# *Breathe Deep Within*

*May 2024*

**MENTAL**  
HEALTH AWARENESS  
**MONTH**

*Sleep Is Critical For Your Health*

*Kids Have A Voice Too*

*The Journey: Take  
the Next Step*

*Finding The Light From Within*



*You Matter!*

*Welcome BDW Community*

Hello Friend. How is your mental health? Mental health is essential, affecting our emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being. It's important to lead a lifestyle that promotes overall health. In today's fast-paced world, we constantly strive to keep up, juggling our tasks while supporting family, friends, and importantly, ourselves. Often, we may find ourselves prioritizing everything else over our own needs.

Prioritizing self-care should be at the top of our list. Let's take moments to close our eyes and go inward to listen to what our bodies are telling us. Inner listening is a healthy way to reset, refresh, and recharge. It's time to normalize self-care with a guilt-free attitude. Saying "no" to what doesn't serve our mental and emotional well-being is one of the best ways to live life without dis-ease. We must get in the habit of saying "yes" to what's right for us. Choose habits that are beneficial to your mind, body, and spirit.

Make a commitment to be present for yourself to embrace the gifts of each new day. As the day concludes, unwind, exhale deeply, and whisper a word of gratitude. Drift off to sleep with the expectation that even more thrilling experiences lie ahead.

In this edition, BDW acknowledges May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Our BDW community, a diverse group of wonderful people, share their holistic approaches to mental wellness.

Today, pause for a moment with a soothing cup of herbal tea and ease your mind. Learn about the advantages of sleep, how to conquer depression with mindfulness, practice affirmations for positive self-talk, and discover simple how-to tips for self care.

BDW advocates for your holistic health. Commit to establishing an environment for rest, recuperation, and healing. As you tend to your own source of healing, remember to uplift others. Foster a nurturing environment where your loved ones can share their emotions and find encouragement to surmount challenges. Find activities as a group to lighten your mood and have FUN!

Thank you for being here. We love you! ❤️

LaDonna Funderburke, Breathe Deep Within LLC



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A group of women are sitting on the floor in a room, practicing mindfulness meditation. They are in a lotus position with their hands pressed together in a prayer position (Anjali Mudra) and their eyes closed. The woman in the foreground is wearing a grey cardigan over a white t-shirt and green leggings. She has a yellow lanyard with a badge around her neck. Other women in the background are wearing various casual clothing, including a white cardigan and a green hoodie. The room has a patterned rug and a plain wall.

# MINDFULNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

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# *Paula's Word of the Month*



***Positive Thinking:  
"A type of thinking  
that focuses on  
maintaining a  
positive, optimistic  
attitude."***

***Positive words produce powerful results....***

***"Is the glass half empty or half full?" Before practicing positive thinking, I looked at the glass with a half empty attitude. That age-old question made me keenly aware of my negativity. I realized I needed to alter my perception to experience a more satisfying and fulfilling existence.***

***Cognitive restructuring takes time and practice. Periodically during the day I stop and evaluate what I am thinking. If my thoughts are predominately pessimistic, I try to find a way to put a different spin on them. Positive thinking enables me to better cope with stressful situations that can negatively affect my physical, emotional, and mental health.***

***Building new healthy habits is difficult. Realistically speaking, I do not expect to become an optimist overnight, but I am conscious of how emotionally lighter I feel given the progress I have made thus far. I am optimistic my goal can be achieved with positive self-talk and determination. A Chinese proverb states, "To get through the hardest journey we must take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping." My journey continues as I strive to cultivate happiness by focusing on the bright side of life.***

**“Colorful artwork  
can trigger the  
release of dopamine,  
a neurotransmitter  
associated with  
pleasure and reward,  
leading to feelings  
of happiness  
and well-being.”**

**—Dr. Shivani Khetan,  
expressive arts therapist**

**Submitted by David Kish**

Namaste



## Breathe Deep Within

Breathe in peace... Breathe out love...



Be Transformed By The  
Renewing Of Your Mind.

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# kids Have A voice too

by Joseph J.F. Simmonds



A few months ago, my health class talked about mental health. I didn't know what to expect because I hadn't thought about it. All I knew was that I have my good days and bad days. Good days are the best days because I can reflect on my accomplishments, and how I connected with my peers. I'm grateful for my positive experiences. When I have bad days, I'd find ways to get over it. I felt that good or bad, there's always a lesson.

During our class discussion, I was struck by the honesty of students who shared their feelings about depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. The more the students shared their feelings, the more I could relate to the challenges of being a young person.

A lot goes on in a young person's life. We're faced with the expectations of doing our best while growing up and adapting to different environments. Whether it's our family life, hanging out with our friends, spending hours in school, or our involvement in social activities, kids can go through a range of emotions based on situations.

No matter what happens in our daily lives, kids want to be seen, heard, and understood. We want to feel safe being ourselves. This makes us feel loved. It's important that adults give us a loving space to explore and create. Each of us is unique and we (kids) have our own form of communication even if what we say isn't always clear. We also know there are plenty of opportunities for us to be seen and heard. We seek those opportunities because kids have a voice too.

When we are misunderstood it can lead us down the path of isolation and shutting down. Adults might see a disagreement with a child as being disrespectful or talking back when it's just our way of trying to communicate and emote our feelings. We need guidance from adults on how to process our emotions.

It hurts us when we are told to be quiet. This shuts children down and we can feel a flood of emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, and deep sadness, just to name a few. The worst is when it feels like our freedom of speech is being taken away by the people we love and respect.

We do our best to get over difficult situations but not in a healthy way. Kids will stuff their feelings inside only to carry around heavy hearts from day to day. It's too much for us mentally and emotionally. It dims the light inside of us. Even with two loving parents I sometimes feel we speak a different language.

I am grateful that both my mom and dad will take the time to check in with me and give me a safe space to respond when I'm ready. They don't try to change me. I can be myself. I can respectfully speak my mind and I'm not judged for it. My mom says it is her way of getting to know me better because she loves me so much. My dad and I have our "guy time." We go on walks and have heart-to-heart conversations. We're not perfect but we learn along the way.

This is not always the case with other kids. It can be hard for us to understand our parents, teachers, and grownups. I think it is the adults' responsibility to teach us proper social skills and healthy ways to communicate.

When the teacher asked my classmates what adults can do to support our mental health and well-being, we collectively shared this:

- Be present. It takes courage and trust for kids to ask for help. We need your undivided attention.
- Hug us! Tell us you LOVE us! We need to hear it so we can feel it from you.
- Practice self-care. Kids need to live in an environment where parents practice daily wellness routines. Make us a part of it.
- Listen patiently. Sometimes it's hard for us to find the words to say what we're feeling.
- Let us express how we feel, especially boys. I don't believe that boys should "man up" when we're just boys. It's not healthy for boys to hold their emotions in. Give kids permission to cry. It's good for our mental and emotional health. Help kids develop healthy relationships with themselves and others.
- Don't judge us or make comparisons. It's not good for our self-esteem.
- Heal your own wounds. Don't pass them on to us.
- Check-in. Take the time to talk to us. Find out what's going on.

The list goes on, but I think you understand where we're coming from. I realize more and more that kids need love and guidance to become healthy people. Taking care of our mental health can have great rewards in all areas of our lives. There need to be more conversations and solutions on how to cope with and overcome an illness that can be devastating to so many, especially for today's youth. I am hopeful that things will get better...for all of us.

***Article Originally Published in the BDW Newsletter May 2023***

**Joseph J.F. Simmonds** is Breathe Deep Within's youth community member. He is a loving and gentle spirit who is a deep thinker. He loves to laugh, play the piano, create beautiful works of art, stay up-to-date on current events, and eat pizza. His dream is to help make the world a better place.

***YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.***



**DON'T LET ONE BAD DAY ALLOW YOU TO LIVE  
THE REST OF YOUR LIFE THAT WAY.**

**-JOSEPH J.F.SIMMONDS**

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# THE JOURNEY



By Shelly Reed

Dear Breathers,

Some days are just a struggle. This poem was written on one of those days.

Sometimes I need to break up a goal into manageable bits, so I can feel like I'm making some progress. Even if it's taking a breath. Even if it's taking one step.

Celebrate the little things my friends, because even a tiny step is still moving forward.

## The Journey

The Mountain Looms  
Straight up  
Like Forever  
Impossible

Be Still  
Breathe  
Take a Step  
Take a Friend  
No Naysayers

Breathe  
Take a Step  
Take Another Step  
Rest  
Celebrate the Now  
Be Grateful  
Say a Prayer

So Far to Go  
So Tired  
Can't See the Top  
Is There a Top?

Breathe  
Take In the View  
Accept Help  
Accept Yourself  
Take a Step

Look Up  
Look Around  
See How Far You've Come  
Smile

Is There a Destination?

There is a Journey

Take Another Step



No matter how bad things get, the sun  
will rise again and it's light will find you.

— Rithvik Singh

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**Submitted by Geraldine Haydock**

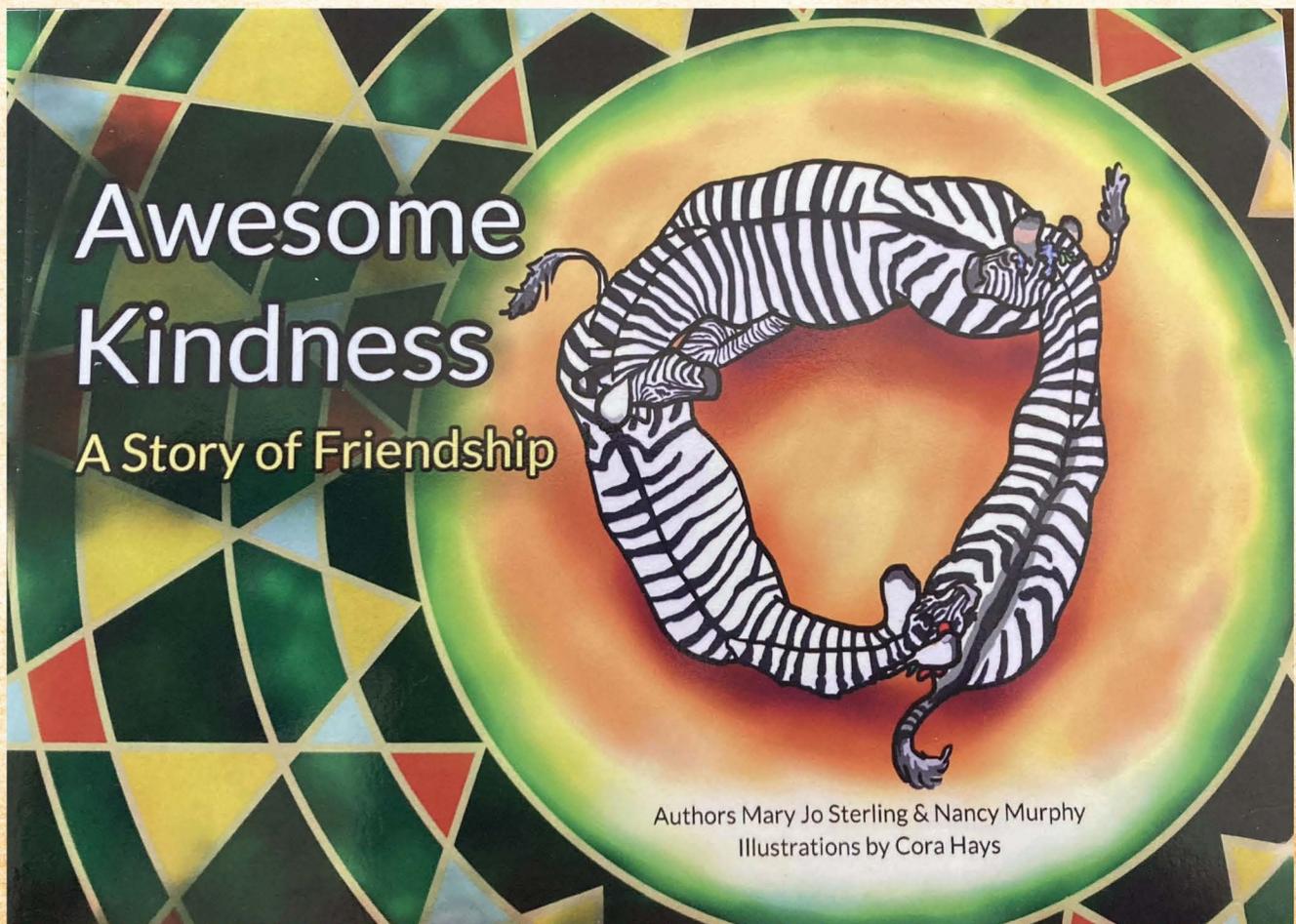
# BDW May Artist

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Mary Jo Sterling

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Children's Books



# Writing: A Tool For Self-Discovery on Life's Journey



by Mary Jo Sterling

Nobility is my birthright! I believe that we are all born noble. Learning this from the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, made me wonder - who am I? Writing became my daily exercise for personal growth and health, by asking myself lots of questions. I was thankful to God for the desire to grow and find healthy ways to relate to others. I ask God to always increase my desire about who is this Mary Jo? Journaling became my way to get out of the confusion that can come with living and experiencing others, as well as dealing with the ups and downs and the happenings of life.

My process is one of sitting with the feeling or emotion, and opening up to learn from the words that flow from the pen on the page. Often it is the same word over and over, getting deeper into the unconscious self. With the words come questions. Where is this feeling coming from? What happened to cause this? What am I afraid of? What is being called forth? What am I trying to control? What needs to be let go? What am I learning about me, Mary Jo? Questions move my spirit to new insights and understandings, often resolving the confusion within. Because I believe I am created noble, the need to be honest and truthful with others and myself is most important. This is my life work!

This work opened me to opportunities, so when a dear friend Nancy Murphy invited me to collaborate to create books of inspiration for children, I said yes. I had been teaching children for some years and had listened to them tell their stories. In fact, our animal character names and adventures in the books were inspired from our nieces and nephews. The stories address virtues children can emulate to explore the innate nobility as a part of being human.

We committed to work together without knowing the amount of time this would take to complete. Making this commitment made us accountable to each other and ourselves. I found the act of committing to the project and journaling for mental health both brought me new knowledge. This process of being open to new ideas, discerning, eliminating, bouncing and playing with words, was *work*. "Your" idea, "my" idea had no place because we were working on what would become the jointly completed story. In addition to the writers, illustrator Cora Hays brought color and expression to the stories. We were a team connecting with the Creator to be creative. Praying together for inspiration was part of the process.

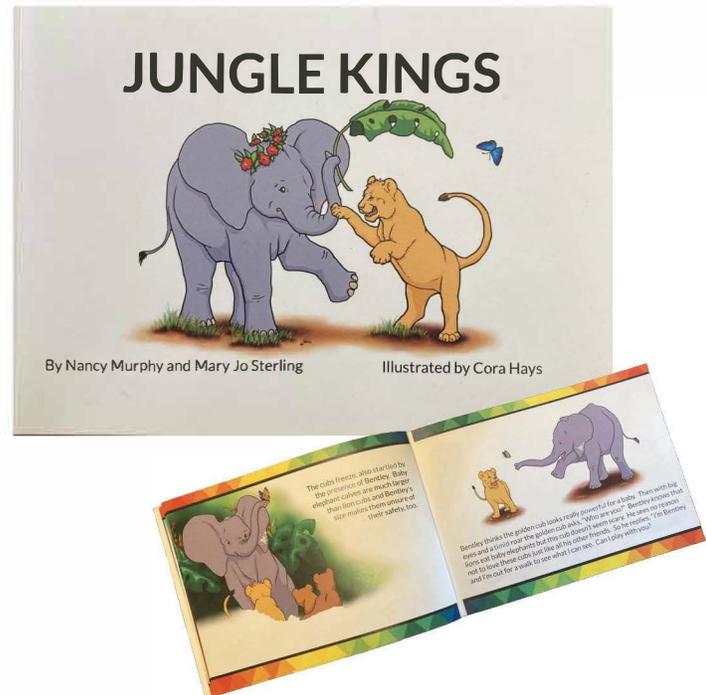
There is great joy in collaborating with creative people. The outcome is something new and brings us an understanding of how to connect with the Higher Power and work as a collective.

The words and tools of expression in speaking, reading and writing must be part of my life always. I find volunteering at the library and encouraging young readers to love books is so fulfilling.

The discovery of journaling for my mental health gives me clarity of my thoughts and feelings. This allows me to continue learning about my spiritual self which opens me to the creative power of God. The joy of collaborating with Nancy and Cora filled me with gratitude and allowed us to express the true meaning of nobility. With the books we have created, our purpose is to let children know that they have the characteristics of being noble, which include honor, truth, goodness, integrity, respect, and kindness. Children have all of this inside and are "as mine rich in gems of inestimable value" (Bahá'í Faith).

**Mary Jo Sterling** is the writer of several books, *Awesome Kindness* and *Jungle Kings* available on Amazon. She is a health consultant with Juice Plus promoting healthy nutritious living. Mary Jo has been a member of the Baha'i community for 34 years. Her commitment to her faith is her passion for serving humanity. She is grateful for her earlier years as a Franciscan Sister. She loves having uplifting conversations with people of different cultures. Mary Jo is a world citizen and a blessed woman.

If you would like to know more about Mary Jo's children's books and Juice Plus, contact her at [mjbsterling@yahoo.com](mailto:mjbsterling@yahoo.com).



# Cheers To Your Health!



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# GAIL'S PESTO RECIPE

**W**ant to make the best pesto? Grow lots of your own basil. Sweet basil is the most common. Once a stem produces flowers, foliage production stops on that stem, the stem becomes woody, and essential oil production declines.

To prevent this, a basil-grower should pinch off any flower stems before they are fully mature. Because only the blooming stem is affected, some stems can be pinched for leaf production, while others are left to bloom for decoration or seeds.

Picking the leaves off the plant helps promote growth, largely because the plant responds by converting pairs of leaflets next to the topmost leaves into new stems. Grows best with 6 hours or more of sunlight.

Nutritional Facts: 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh basil has the daily recommended doses of: 3% Vitamin A, 13%, Vitamin K, 0.5% Calcium, 0.5% Iron, 1.5% Manganese and only 0.6 calories.

## Ingredients

2 cups of pasta (enough for 2 pounds pasta)  
2 cups Fresh Basil Leaves, firmly pack – no stems  
4-6 Garlic Cloves, medium size  
1 cup Pecans  
1 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil, best quality  
2/3 cup Parmesan Reggiano Cheese, finely grated  
2/3 cup Pecorino Romano, finely grated  
Black Pepper to taste



## Directions

Process the basil, garlic, and pecans in a food processor (or in two batches with a blender), until finely chopped. Add olive oil and process again until smooth and pastelike. Add cheeses and a liberal grinding of black pepper. Process briefly to combine.

You can use pre-grated cheeses, but it is easy to buy a better-quality cheese and grate the cheese in the food processor prior to preparing pesto. I personally like more garlic and will use at least 6 medium garlic cloves. You can also use walnuts or pinenuts for pesto, but I prefer the more mild taste of pecans.

Towards the end of the growing season is when I do a big harvest of my basil. I make several batches, date/mark the freezer zip bag, add ½ cup of pesto to each bag which is enough for 8 ounces of pasta. If using with pasta, thin the pesto with a little milk for a creamier texture. Pesto is also great for pizzas, salmon, chicken, and dips.

# Pushing Through

by Mary Freerks

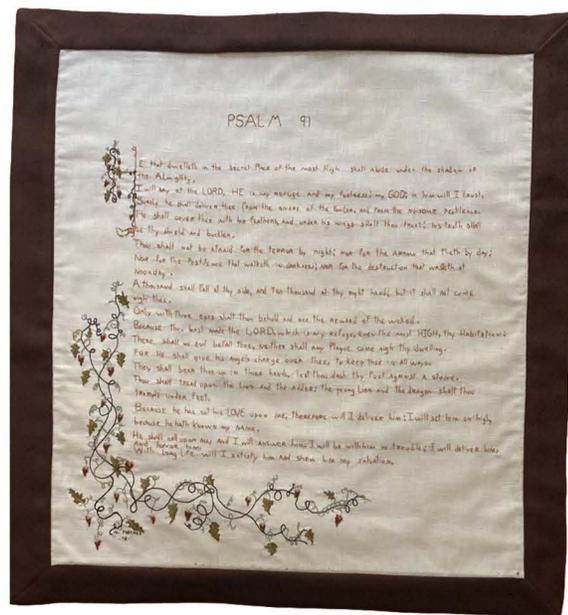


What I do for my mental health is to challenge myself to finish something I started a while ago. I try to make it better than I did before. It brings so much satisfaction to work through a new set of problems. This sewing project had two sides of mitered corners that gave me a four day mental challenge.

I enjoyed this challenge which felt baffling. Due to my arthritis, it was a serious fight to stay on the project because of my incredible physical pain to push through.

The best gift came when I finished the last corner. Upon finishing, all of my pain disappeared. It was a win for all the struggle. Yeah!!

If you repair something or remake a project despite its challenges, it can be very rewarding.



**Mary Freerks** is an artist who creates various mediums of art. She works with fabric, beads, wood, and paper, and her style is to bring dreams to reality. She is an active member and contributor to the community.

# *Finding The Light From Within*

By LaDonna Funderburke

*"You have depression"* were the three words I'll never forget when a doctor diagnosed me in 1995. I was confused hearing those words because I knew something was off, but I had no idea it was depression. I didn't quite know what depression was. I heard of it, but it wasn't discussed in my family or my church community. I was told to trust in God or pray about it. "This too shall pass."

There were sleepless nights, losing interest in the things I love, overeating to not eating for days, physical and emotional exhaustion, and shutting myself off from the world were just a few of the many symptoms I thought would go away but it didn't. I was sinking further into a very dark place where no one could hear me scream. My deep sadness was masked by smiling every day and being the life of the party. I became comfortable with the lies I would tell myself to get through the day. My biggest lie was telling people "I'm fine" when I was far from it.

I left the doctor's office that day with two things, a prescription and shame. I thought how can I tell anyone that I'm struggling and must take medication for it?

Fear set in as I tried to figure out how to navigate through the crushing weight of despair while finding the energy to get out of bed to attend weekly therapy sessions. I was faced with many challenges in finding the correct treatment for my depression. I found myself going from therapist to therapist in hopes of feeling safe with at least one whom I could trust—also, taking the right dosage of medication where the side effects wouldn't deplete my energy. My biggest hurdle was finding a therapist who could understand what I was going through as a person of color. Unfortunately at that time, there were not a lot of mental health resources for BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) communities.

Weekly sessions turned into months. I felt defeated and out of options. I felt my life was at stake. My symptoms were getting worse and I'm was feeling more isolated. That's when I turned to my roots. In my darkest hour, I got on my knees and prayed. I asked my Creator to deliver me from the depths of my emotional pain that had manifested into Fibromyalgia, causing chronic widespread physical pain and insomnia.

Shortly after my talking to my Creator, I received a phone call from a friend who hadn't seen me in a while. She wanted to come by and catch up. I was happy to hear from her but wasn't ready to entertain company because I was mentally exhausted. After talking with her for a few minutes, I was reminded of how good it felt to talk and laugh with a friend. So, I invited her over.



When I opened the door to greet her, I was in awe of her beauty. You could tell that life was treating her well. My dear friend looked at me with compassion and warmth. I could tell that she was concerned with my appearance. I looked drained. We embraced and sat down to talk.

I told her about my situation with depression and the many obstacles of trying to achieve recovery. She then reached into her purse and gave me small bottles of essential oils-lavender, jasmine, frankincense, and myrrh. I opened each small bottle with curiosity. As I slowly inhaled the oils, I was surprised at how each scent was very healing to my senses. Without a doubt, I wanted what was in those bottles. I looked at my dear friend wide-eyed and before I could speak, she said, 'I got these from a shop called Present Moment in Minneapolis.' "We should go some time." Well, for me the time was now. I grabbed my coat, and we went out the door. After many months in isolation, it was time to leave the house. I surrendered to the unconditional love of my Higher Power for relief and solace.

From the moment I walked into the shop my spirit lifted immediately. Every inch of the shop felt open and inviting. The pleasant smells of herbs, incense, and oils swept me away. The walls were lined with books on aromatherapy, homeopathic practices, and various philosophies of spiritual disciplines. Before I knew it, a couple of hours had gone by as I found myself immersed in books. One book I couldn't put down was called *Science of Breath* by Swami Rama. This book was a catalyst to improve my health and well-being.

It opened my eyes to the importance of respiratory health and helped me understand how breathwork can improve overall well-being. I learned about the connection between breath, mind, and body through ancient yogic disciplines. Additionally, I gained insight into the functions of the sympathetic (fight or flight) and parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous systems. The book also introduced me to the practice of pranayama, a form of controlled breathing, which has helped me regulate my autonomic nervous system. As a result of reading *Science of Breath*, I felt inspired to explore holistic healing practices and take control of my life.

I started attending weekly classes, workshops, and lectures on the benefits of mindfulness, meditation, and breathwork. Initially, meditating was quite challenging. I had to learn how to focus on being in the moment, something I had no idea how to achieve at that time. There were days when I believed that meditation was only for spiritually advanced people. For me, it felt like a chore every time I practiced.

At some point, I gave up and tried other activities hoping to improve my mental health such as working out at the gym, going out dancing with friends or taking long walks. It worked for a time but my inner self wanted something deeper. One evening I attended a workshop on *Superconscious Meditation*, a practice that retrains the mind to operate from a state of intense inward awareness.

During the lecture, I had a moment of realization. I noticed that when I meditated I was easily distracted by the activities around me, making it difficult for me to quiet my mind and find inner peace. This "ah-ha" moment inspired me to attend a weekend retreat focused on achieving and experiencing inner peace and stillness.

At the retreat, a wonderful teacher guided me through the principles of reaching states of intense awareness by detaching from the busyness of the physical world, along with its worries and responsibilities. I learned how to position my body in a way that allowed me to delve inward and become immersed in my superconscious mind. This also enabled me to connect with my mental and emotional state without judgment, fully accepting what I was experiencing.

I left the retreat feeling more empowered to practice mindfulness and meditation, in combination with breathwork, to heal my whole self. I decided to keep my mindfulness routine simple by meditating for only 5-15 minutes a day and then gradually increasing the duration over time. By practicing the form of discipline, I was able to reach a heightened state of awareness where I was reunited with my creativity, Imagination, intuition, productivity, clarity of my mind, connection to my spirit, and most of all, profound healing.

Every day, it felt like I was finding my way back to myself, like coming home. I could see my light shining from within. I felt a sense of freedom like I had never felt before. I found a holistic way to embrace who I am, not what I wanted. I realized that wanting something to fill my heart and mind was a form of lack. Being conscious of the blessings inside of me was and is my prosperity. By accepting who I am, my life improved, and I experienced a transformation that brought me the joy of living as the best version of myself, which changes as I get older.

Now, I go inward to find the answers, deepen my spiritual connection, and experience my true nature. My life is always evolving and changing, filled with ups and downs. Having a toolbox of knowledge helps me flourish and live a more fulfilling life.

Gradually my mental health improved and I was no longer taking medication for depression or going from therapist to therapist trying to feel alive. I was finally living my truth through the ancient practice of mindfulness, which I like to call holistic healthcare.

Many years have passed, and I'm looking back on how my self-discovery began. I am amazed at how far I've come. I have no regrets or carry shame of that mental health diagnosis all those years ago. The diagnosis sent me on a trajectory to heal. It also gave me the opportunity to teach others how to manage their own mental health. I share my toolbox of knowledge and life experiences to let people know that they are not alone and there are health alternatives to living well even if you choose to incorporate western medicine. Both can work in harmony.

I am now a certified meditation facilitator, teaching a combination of breathwork, meditation, and sound healing. For over 20 years, I have had the pleasure of teaching mindfulness to various communities and healing circles. In 2018, I started my business called Breathe Deep Within LLC, providing online and in-person sessions to both served and underserved communities.

As a practitioner, I teach students relaxation techniques to go inward and engage consciously with their innerself, allowing them to be peaceful in the present moment. It's important to know that meditation is a lifelong discipline that requires patience. During one's inner journey, you can experience different aspects of yourself. By simply being present and not struggling against conditions that cause stress and dis-ease, we can relax into who we are and accept the moment with freedom. This freedom brings happiness and enables us to find the light within.



**LaDonna Funderburke** is a certified meditation facilitator, cultural healer, owner and operator of Breathe Deep Within LLC. She is the creator of the BDW publications. Her passion is to help empower people to heal. She believes if each person can heal themselves in the community, we all can heal collectively.

# SLEEP IS CRITICAL FOR YOUR HEALTH

by Danielle T., RDH

***“I don’t need sleep; I’ll sleep when I die”*** can actually compromise your health when you’re living. Sleep is essential to cleanse and repair the tissues, organs, brain, and ALL of the systems of your body. You can’t “catch up” on sleep or make up for a sleep deficit. Your body requires this restoration every day.

There are 4 stages of sleep in a sleep cycle (3 non-REM and REM) that the body cycles through 4-6 times per night (every 80-100 minutes) during a good 8 hour sleep.

Stage 1: It is a light sleep and you can be easily woken.

Stage 2: Sleep is the beginning of deep sleep where rapid sleep spindles begin production, which help with memory consolidation and sorting of sensory input.

Stage 3: Slow-wave sleep is critical for body recovery and growth. It bolsters the immune system and other key bodily processes, including muscle repair and slowing the heart rate. Reduced brain activity at this stage contributes to insightful thinking, creativity, and memory.

Stage 4: REM sleep first occurs about 90 minutes after being asleep and lengthens in the early morning hours. This stage is associated with rapid eye movement and dreaming. The muscles go into a temporary paralysis state, but the brain is active. REM is essential to cognitive functions like memory, learning and creativity.

And while the quantity of sleep is important, the quality of sleep is where the body and brain restores. The proper brain function during sleep allows normal hormone production for emotional regulation, appetite control, metabolism, heart rate, and growth.

Poor sleep is directly linked to “dis-eases” of the following (2):

1. Depression, anxiety
2. Difficulty regulating emotions, mood swings, aggression
3. Heart/ cardiovascular disease
4. High blood pressure
5. High cholesterol
6. Pre-diabetes, diabetes
7. Thyroid dysfunction/disease
8. Poor respiratory and immune function
9. Ineffective fat metabolism/weight gain, food cravings

For good mental health, the glymphatic system is like your personal assistant that clears the central nervous system and brain of metabolites and protein neurotoxins in order to sort and categorize sensory, and memory input.

This system serves to maintain memory, cognition, reasoning/processing/clarity, and capabilities in social interactions, while preventing anxiety and depression symptoms. This system is linked to the prevention of neurodegenerative disorders, such as memory decline, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia (1).

To optimize your ability to fall asleep easily, sleep through the night, wake feeling refreshed, and optimize your mental health, practice breathwork (taught by our own BDW) by slowing your daytime and nighttime breathing, which paired with sleep hygiene is our “gateway” to quality sleep. A few sleep hygiene suggestions:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule, preferably rising with the sun and getting to bed before 10 pm.
- Get natural daylight exposure and movement/exercise.
- Watch sunsets to naturally produce melatonin.
- Avoid alcohol at bedtime.
- Eliminate noise and light disruptions 1-2 hours before bedtime
- Avoid eating 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- Turn off all screens, dim the bright lights 1 hour before bedtime.

Sleep, the secondary thing we do every day, is much more than just an end of day routine to get through the night. Quality, deep sleep daily is critical to the daily and long-term health of our bodies and minds.

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- (2) Jessen NA, Munk AS, et al. Neurochem Res. 2015 Dec. PMID: 25947369.

**Danielle T. RDH**, is a Myofunctional Therapist who owns and operates OroMyoFlo, an independent Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy practice located in the San Francisco East Bay area of California.

She began her practice in 2021 and provides treatment to patients both virtually and in person. Danielle has worked as a Dental Hygienist for almost 40 years and is also a fellow BDW Healer and community member. Danelle can be reached at [oromyoflo@gmail.com](mailto:oromyoflo@gmail.com)

# What's The Tea?

## Healing Teas For Mental Health



Healing teas contain multiple types of healing compounds beneficial for the mind and body to reduce stress and anxiety.

**Chamomile** may alleviate depression and mental stress, and could also aid in sleep. It contains an antioxidant known as apigenin, which has the potential to bind to certain brain receptors, possibly promoting sleepiness and decreasing insomnia.

**Peppermint** can aid in relaxation and digestive support, and the aroma of peppermint tea may help lessen depression and anxiety. Its sedative qualities can soothe the nerves, calm the mind, and potentially promote sleep.

**Lavender** may treat depression and anxiety disorders, and the scent of lavender can calm and soothe the mood. Lavender tea also contains antioxidants that can reduce depression and relieve digestive problems.

**Lemon Balm** may assist with stress, anxiety, and insomnia, and could also enhance mood, concentration, memory, and cognitive function. It operates by increasing GABA, an inhibitory neurotransmitter that helps alleviate stress, anxiety, and fear.

**Green Tea** contains polyphenols that can help reduce stress, boost energy, and improve mental focus. Green tea also contains antioxidants that can have a calming effect on the mind and body, which can help create a positive mood.

**Valerian** aids in promoting a restful night's sleep and treats anxiety and insomnia caused by stress. Studies indicate that valerian may help soothe the body and mind, potentially making it easier to fall asleep.

**Ginger** is known to alleviate stress and tension by calming the brain. Additionally, drinking ginger tea can enhance mood and impart a sense of freshness.

**Passionflower** helps reduce anxiety and aids in relaxation. The tea made from passionflower has a robust, herbal taste that is simultaneously calming and invigorating.

**Rosemary** can be consumed or inhaled for its compounds. Rosemary has been shown to reduce anxiety, boost mood, and improve concentration and memory.

# Queen Tea's May Forecast



The New Moon in Taurus on May 8th brings a new cycle of feeling the difference between chasing success and flowing with the ease of authentic alignment.

Planetary alignment of Saturn, Mercury, Neptune and Mars on May 8th-9th create a favorable energy for dissolving stalled communications and restoring flow in families. It's time to open the windows of our minds and make space for an abundance of great memories at home.

## Here are 3 healthy practices for mental health month:

Home repair, polishing and planning in 15 minute spurts will be productive. These actions are wonderful for our mental health. This practice manages the feeling of being overwhelmed with iterative actions to maintain progress while finding bliss in the comfort of our own sacred spaces.

Opening our homes to receive acquaintances, friends and family will extend our collective joy and produce memories.

Declined invitations are not a reflection on the quality of our being together. They are evidence of the inner work that happens when anyone overextend themselves. Sustainability isn't just good for the planet - it's good for relationships too. When all of us receive the additional capacity of space, growth can happen in our other life sectors.

Journaling about our desires brings clarity. The New Moon in Taurus is a favorable time for starting something new.

Every time we say the words yes or no, a new cycle forms. Each person's experience will be different, however, on November 15th of this year the cycle will be amplified during the Full Moon in Taurus. It is at this time when we start learning to manage all that we've created from the fall harvest.

Friends, there is a gift in savoring the middle of the inhale and the middle of the exhale - this allows us to feel our heartbeat while we are breathing—in this space all decisions can be made from the heart.

As we close, remember that opening the heart with the intention of alignment is the gateway to our efficient rest.

Peace and Light,

Queen Tea



# Healing Affirmations for Mental Health

I make my mental and emotional health a priority.  
I'm not alone in my struggles.  
I release all unhealthy habits, beliefs, and behavior for my mental well-being.  
I am patient and kind to myself.  
My emotional lows do not limit my happiness.  
My health challenges make me a warrior.  
My mind is quiet, peaceful, and strong.  
I am resilient.  
I am resourceful.  
I know when to ask for help.  
I supply my body with vital nutrients to stay healthy and happy.  
I am responsible for my mental health and well-being.  
I express myself with honesty and love.  
I will find resolutions to challenging situations.  
When I take care of my emotional and mental health, I take care of myself.  
I find new ways to overcome negative thoughts.  
My emotional scars prove my strength, not my weakness.  
I am enough.  
I breathe with confidence, and I know my worth.  
Each day I will bring value to everything I do.  
I release fear.  
I accept the whole me.  
I release all behavior that keeps me from living a purpose-filled life.  
Each new day is a fresh start.  
I will never give up on myself.  
I am here for a reason.  
Each day brings a new chance to thrive.

Breathe in  
Breathe out

1-HOUR PERSONAL MINDSPA SESSION



Breathwork

Meditation

Sound Therapy

[BREATHEDEEPWITHIN.COM](http://BREATHEDEEPWITHIN.COM)

# BREATHWORK IS THE BEST WORK

Breathe in peace... Breathe out love...

Breathing is essential for life. It's something we do automatically every day. We breathe whether we are awake, sleeping, or active. There are also intentional breathing techniques, known as controlled breathing, that offer great benefits for improving mental, emotional, and physical health when practiced regularly.

In yoga, controlled breathing is a practice to provide every cell in your body with oxygen for good health and longevity. Pranayama is a type of controlled breathing used for this purpose. "Prana" is a Sanskrit word that means life force, and "yama" means to gain control. The word "Pranayama" translates to breath control. Practice these breathing techniques for stress management and discover its healing properties.

\*When you are holding your breath during these exercises, do the best you can. If at any point you feel light-headed or uncomfortable, stop and breathe calmly until you feel better. Before starting a new exercise please check with your doctor.\*

**Box Breathing:** known as the 4-4-4-4 breath or box-square breathing is a simple but effective relaxation technique used for stress management. Box breathing is a type of paced breathing exercise that follows a 4-count rhythm to help calm your mind and nervous system.

For best results, visualize forming a box with each inhalation, hold, and exhalation. Box breathing involves focus that uses your breath as a guide. It can also improve your concentration in daily life.

Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts. Repeat for 2-4 cycles

**4-7-8 Breath:** helps to calm your nervous system, alleviate stress, decrease anxiety, control negative emotional responses such as anger, and manage food cravings. It also improves your quality of sleep.

Find a quiet, comfortable place and simply relax. Sit up straight in a chair with your feet softly planted on the floor. Close your eyes ground and center yourself.

When you are relaxed think of something pleasant to soothe you.

Slowly breathe in through your nose for 4 counts, hold your breath for 7 counts, and breathe out from your mouth long and slow for 8 counts. Repeat this method for 2 cycles, rest, then repeat 2 more cycles.

**Sitali Pranayama (Cooling Breath):** *Sitali* means cooling. It clears heat from the body if you are overheated from exercise or hot weather conditions, improves your mood if you are feeling irritable, reduces anxiety, improves mental clarity, calms the nervous system during times of stress.

Sit in a comfortable position. Roll your tongue until the outer edges touch forming a tube or taco shape. If you can't curl your tongue, make an oval shape with your mouth keeping your tongue flat. (Imagine you are sipping through a straw.)

Slowly inhale through your tongue or mouth and feel the coolness of the inhalation. Inhale as much air as you can. The air flowing in has a soft hissing sound. After inhaling, unfold your tongue and bring the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth, press your lips together, and slowly exhale out of your nose.

Repeat for 2-3 cycles or as needed until you feel cool and calm.

**NAMASTE'**



# *Free Meditation Classes*

w/ LaDonna Funderburke

Sponsored by the  
Community Health Hub &  
The Cultural Wellness  
Center



Every Monday & Wednesday  
at 5 PM (CT)  
Saturday 4 PM & 5 PM (CT)

# *Your Mental Health Matters*

Self care check list for your mental and emotional health

- Be empowered to make healthy lifestyle changes.
- Make sleep a priority.
- Eat a well balanced diet.
- Spend time outside.
- Maintain healthy relationships.
- Be mindful of your thoughts.
- Use positive self-talk.
- Ask for help.
- Drink clean water.
- Exercise-MOVE YOUR BODY!
- Listen to healing music.
- Practice meditation, yoga, and breathwork.
- Give yourself permission to feel. Don't keep negative feelings inside.
- Be patient. Give yourself time to heal.
- Hold space for others in need of support.
- Find a qualified therapist, life coach or practitioner to give you a fresh perspective on life.
- Do your work.
- Be open to trying something new.
- Give yourself something wonderful to look forward to.
- Create a mental health toolbox such as a healing plan.
- Find a positive support group. Do not isolate yourself.
- Live each day with gratitude.
- Remember to BREATHE!

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.

***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 with open hearts. This platform serves as a tranquil online sanctuary where you can simply be present. Consider this platform as a mindspa for your mind, body, heart, and spirit.

Peace be with you.

May 2024