



Natural Living Journal

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

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FREE

November-January



Our True Gift to Share

Enjoy Winter Outdoors

**Let's Tame the
Sugar Dragon**

**Sugar Free Banana &
Oatmeal Cookies**

Healing Our Communities

Why Composting Matters

Gifts of Al-Anon

**Spiritual Basis of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

**Holidays to Warm Your
Heart and Soul**

**Getting Through the
Holidays – Sanity Intact**

Deep Peace and Hope

Vegan Beef Crumble

Short Story:..

**Easy Going Holidays
This Year**

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In Every Issue

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

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OUR TRUE GIFT TO SHARE

by Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

Life is not a ready-made gift on a plate, though the Creator gives us the potentials. Our life is something we create. Some people realize that early, and some people take longer to understand that fact. The

where you are - - with the contacts that you have already developed.

Life isn't meant to be boring. Search in your own heart for what has great meaning to you! That is the key, and it will bring your life into focus. Don't let your own special potentials languish not used. That can create depression. Our true joy can come from living from our heart's call for doing what has great meaning to our self and is a gift we can share with those around us.



Our gift to the world from our heart may or may not make any money. That isn't the most important point. We may make our money doing something else. Maybe later we can combine our heart's call and how we earn a living. Express yourself and use your gift—whether it is through music, playing or teaching sports, arts and crafts, organizing special community events, serving on community or church or school committees, teaching classes

Creator gives us all the materials that we need from which to create our life, though it is up to us what we do with it all. We can't just wait for things to happen, they may or may not manifest in a way that pleases us.

Dream and meditate and pray. Reach to the stars for your vision of how you choose to utilize your God given potentials. Feel in your heart. What do you love to do? It's valuable to think local, not national or global. Where you are locally is where things can develop most readily. If your mission is destined to develop on a larger scale than local, leave that to the future. Focus on the moment where you are and create the foundation of your vision and life purpose. The needs are great everywhere, though most accessible

through community centers, writing, or something else. Do it! Follow your heart and never give up! You can make a positive difference in your world. All together we can lift our planet! Feel within you the power of a pure white stallion galloping free and leaping high!

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Larry Bird, Pro Basketball Player



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LET'S TAME THE SUGAR DRAGON

By Dr. Lisa Tostado, ND

The holidays are a time of great festivity. A time to gather with family and friends, celebrate the season, and eat, drink and be merry! However, for many of us, it is also a time when we overindulge and fall off track from our healthy eating and drinking. Desserts are plenty, from pumpkin pie to fruit cakes and cookies. Studies show that on average, Americans gain some weight during the holiday season, even if only a pound. We are tipping the scale at an exponential rate. Obesity rates continue to rise in the U.S. Currently, 25 states exceed a 30% obesity rate, including our very own Commonwealth. Kentucky has the 5th highest obesity rate in the nation.

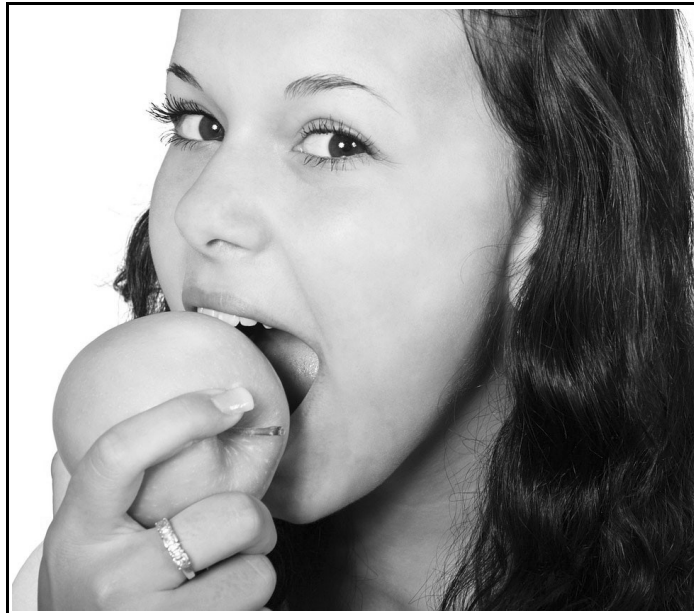
Although our genetics play a role in our metabolism, we now know that our lifestyle has an even bigger influence on our body chemistry. The Standard American Diet (S.A.D.) is full of processed foods and refined sugars. According to the U.S.D.A. in the year 2015, Americans consumed an average of 128.9 lbs. of caloric sweeteners per year. This equates to roughly 32 teaspoons of sugar per day, which is equivalent to drinking two 12 oz. soft drinks (20 tsp), a bowl of sugary cereal (4.5 tsp), and 2 pop tarts (8 tsp). Americans eat 200 more calories a day than they did 20 years ago.

Instead of downsizing, we are now supersizing. In 1957 the average fast food soda was 8 ounces. Today, we now see 32-64 oz. servings. Wow!!! How has this affected our health? If we look around us and listen to the newscasts, we know there are serious problems.

The over-consumption of processed carbohydrates and refined sugars impairs the body's ability to metabolize glucose efficiently into energy. Foods that fall into this category include white bread and any product made out of enriched white flours or less than 100% whole grain flour. Refined sugars include high fructose corn syrup and any chemically produced sugar such as white or brown sugar. When we eat these products, our pancreas releases a hormone called insulin to get glucose into our cells for fuel.

However, insulin is a fat promoting hormone! It is very difficult to lose weight when you have high insulin levels. High insulin levels also cause many to experience reactive hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. This is the crash and burn you feel after eating a high carbohydrate and/or sugary meal. With repeated sugar spikes day after day, and increased insulin levels, the pancreas becomes tired, and the beta cells which make insulin start to burn out. Furthermore, the insulin we do produce, can become less effective at lowering our blood sugar, with cells becoming resistant to hormone signaling, resulting in insulin resistance or pre-diabetes. When this pattern continues long enough it progresses to adult-onset diabetes. Consistent high blood sugar levels also causes weakened adrenals, an overworked liver, increased inflammation, increased cholesterol, poor immune function, cardiovascular issues and overall declining health. This is so sad! We can make healthier choices!

So are all sugars bad for us? Although most sugars and carbohydrates are eventually converted into glucose in the body regardless of source, the pace at which it breaks down matters and will determine how it affects our health. Natural sugars from fruit are metabolized differently, and do not spike insulin levels as rapidly as chemically produced sugars which have no nutritional value. Fruit has vitamins, minerals and fiber, which slows down its conversion into sugar. Similarly, complex carbohydrates like whole grains and vegetables convert into sugar more slowly, and are an



important source of fiber, and other phytonutrients. Pairing up your carbs with high quality protein, and healthy fats, will also slow down its conversion into sugar and prevent a rapid insulin surge.

For baking foods, I recommend natural sources of sugar such as raw local honey, 100% pure maple syrup (not the kind that is mostly corn syrup with a little maple flavoring - - please read the label), dates, or fruit such as bananas. Keep in mind these will still raise your blood sugar but they do not contain chemicals and they do have nutritional value. For my diabetic patients and for those who wish to lose weight or avoid gaining weight, I often recommend stevia because it is a natural sweetener that does not raise blood sugar. Regarding the health effects of

artificial sweeteners, I encourage you to check that out on-line and keep in mind that they are artificial.

There are so many tasty healthy alternatives rather than sugar if one is really hungry or thirsty between meals. These might include a juicy crisp apple, or a handful of organic berries and raw nuts, or carrot sticks. If one doesn't care for plain water when thirsty, try pure filtered water flavored with a little grape juice - - delicious!

Sometimes people eat sweets because they feel stressed or bored or sad. If that is the case for you, do something to support your emotions rather than attempting to mask or distract them with sweet foods or drinks. What do you love to do? What helps you feel more relaxed and less stressed? You may wish to enjoy taking walks in nature and start attending yoga classes. What is a craft you enjoy? Maybe talk about your worries or concerns with a trusted friend or counselor. You can do it!

Ask about our 10-Day Blood Sugar Balance program to jump-start your insulin control system today! If you or someone you love is suffering from a blood sugar problem, it is important to seriously think about the ideas described in this article for restoring health. Consider setting up an appointment for a free screening in my office. You can bring your health into a better balance, feel better, and optimize your energy naturally!

Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D. earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Biology from California State University, Los Angeles. Her passion for the natural sciences and helping others influenced her decision to follow a path in Naturopathic Medicine. She graduated from Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, in Tempe, Arizona; one of the leading accredited naturopathic medical schools in the U.S. She has been a resident of Louisville, KY for the past 8 years where she has helped others achieve better health naturally. Currently she has two office spaces, one at the Rainbow Blossom Wellness Center at Springhurst, and one at Sharp Chiropractic in Fern Creek. She loves animals and enjoys spending time with her two cats. She also loves to garden and spend time in nature.

Blueberries, strawberries and blackberries are true super foods. Naturally sweet and juicy, berries are low in sugar and high in nutrients - they are among the best foods you can eat.

Joel Fuhrman

Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.

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Delicious Sugar-Free Oatmeal Banana Cookies

Gluten, dairy, egg and sugar free



Ingredients

- 2 very ripe peeled bananas
- 1 cup rolled oats (old-fashioned or quick, not instant). Gluten free rolled oats can be purchased if desired.*

Optional Add ins

- sea salt, a pinch
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice (or other spice as preferred)
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts (or other kind of nut)

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or lightly grease.
- Mash bananas until smooth (they may become practically liquid if very ripe).
- Mix in vanilla and salt and cinnamon (or other spice) if using.
- Blend oats into mashed bananas. (Let sit for 6 minutes)
- Gently fold in chopped nuts if using.
- Drop by rounded teaspoonful onto cookie sheet about 1 1/2 inches apart.
- Bake in preheated oven for 13 to 15 minutes
- Remove from pan to wire rack
- Cool and enjoy!

*Oats are normally gluten free, except cross pollination in growing fields has caused there to be a little gluten in many oats. Prepacked gluten free rolled oats are often available in whole food stores. One brand is Bob's Mill.

Adapted from a recipe by Camilla V. Saulbury

WE CAN ALL HELP HEAL OUR COMMUNITIES

Interview with Dr. Renee Campbell

Renee: I feel that everyone has skills and gifts to share with the world around to help make it a better place for all. We're all different and have our own unique abilities. We're all needed to help create a more compassionate better community that meets everyone's needs.

NLJ: You've been President and CEO of Wesley House for seventeen years. You've done a huge amount of public service work. Before we explore more deeply how everyone can contribute, tell us a little about the services Wesley House offers.

Renee: We provide computer education and "English as a Second Language" for low income men and women who are seeking work. We support them in applying for jobs, and provide appropriate clothes for job interviews. Wesley House also teaches "Spanish as a Second Language." It provides at-risk-youth with academic tutoring, after school supervision, and educational field trips. Wesley House also provides education and training for dealing with family domestic violence and abuse, and provides child care for low-income working mothers. These services are very affordable, and childcare is on a sliding scale.

NLJ: That is awesome work. What do you feel are some ways we can all encourage and inspire others and help create more peaceful just communities?

Renee: What I'm thinking is that you don't have to be in a leadership role in an organization to reach out in a helpful way. One of the things that I remember growing up was that my grandmother who had eighth grade education always helped take care of some of the community children whose parents were not taking sufficient care of them. She would comb their hair, wash their face, and feed them. She did that because she saw that there was a need and that she could do it. No matter how small or large one's contribution, you can make a difference. Realize that you do have something to offer even if it is sometimes just a smile. There are times when people just need you to acknowledge them, and that makes their day. Many people go around thinking that they aren't important, that nobody notices them. They may have

all kinds of discouraged thoughts. Just that smile may really brighten their day.

NLJ: That's so true. Regarding helping to heal our communities, a lot of people work very long hours and on top of that need to take care of their families. I hear many people say that their time and energy feel over-stretched.

Renee: I know there are a lot of people who are working long hours trying to support their families. That is often a big challenge. It was for me when I was a single parent with my oldest son who is now thirty nine. When he was a baby I worked two jobs so I could take care of him and give him what he needed. I knew that if I didn't take care of him and me, nobody else was going to. At the same time, even as a single parent there were still opportunities



for me to impact people's lives even if I was just saying something positive to somebody. Some people didn't have anyone to talk to. I was a person who listened, understood, and was able to give useful feedback. I was able to recommend a book I felt would be helpful for them. I always want to encourage people to learn. I'm like that because I always wanted to learn and I had people who gave me

resources that influenced my thinking. Then because my thinking evolved - - I became more educated and I was able to actually believe in myself. It was because of other people helping. They weren't necessarily in leadership positions, yet they cared enough to say, "Hey, have you ever thought about this? Or "This would be a good book for you to read," or "have you listened to this audio tape?" It doesn't have to be huge. There are a lot of different ways that you can influence people's lives for the better.

NLJ: What are your thoughts for people who do have a little time and energy to volunteer? Certainly there are many opportunities in after-school programs, teaching Sunday school, city governmental committees, leading Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, Big Sister or Big Brother, community service centers, neighborhood associations, teaching in adult education, and more.

Renee: In my Ed.D. Dissertation which was "Factors Which Influence Success of African American Women," one of the things that I acknowledged is that anyone who believes that they have "made it, or that they have succeeded," should reach out and help someone else along. I think that we have a responsibility in that way - - and to

volunteer. I also think that we have a responsibility to give of our money and/or of our time. We have a responsibility to be the example for the generation that's coming and for those of our own generation who are facing certain challenges. Everyone has some type of talent that they can volunteer. I talk to a lot of people who say "I don't have any abilities that I can volunteer to do." Or they say, "Do you think that I could do that?" Then I say, "Yes, I think you could do that. But you have to believe that you can do that."

Wesley House has a lot of volunteer possibilities for people. We need people who can work in our child care program - - people who can nurture the babies and read to the children. We have committees that people can work on and contribute their expertise especially in marketing our programs. At Wesley House we need people who can cook good food to help out in the kitchen, and we need help with our fund raisers. We need people in our gently used clothing store. There are so many ways that people could volunteer to help.

Individuals can speak up when they see things that are wrong. Sometimes when I'm in a store I see a parent who is being terrible to a child. I look at that parent and say, "That is such a sweet little girl, she's so beautiful." What that does is break the negativity that's going on. Another example of a way to help is that we can buy somebody's lunch. We can do something like that for someone without their even knowing that we're doing that for them. "Random acts of kindness" help us as much or more than the people we're doing them for. There are studies about that. It makes us feel good in our heart when we help others.

NLJ: Those are all excellent ideas. Everyone truly has ways to be supportive to others, and something to contribute to help heal and lift our communities. We can all be a part of the solution.

Dr. Renee Campbell: I am a Daughter, Aunt, and Mother of three adult children, and three grandchildren. For more than 40 years I have practiced in the areas of education and social work. In the last 17 years of this experience I have served as President/CEO of Wesley House Community Services, a human services organization which 'helps people help themselves.' My experience includes teaching experience at numerous Colleges and Universities.

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Helping People to Help Themselves

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Enjoying Outdoor Adventures In Winter

Interview with Mark Steiner of **Cultivating Connections**



Mark: In the winter there is a very different visual experience of our world. There is a starkness that reveals things that we might not see in mid-summer when the leaves are lavishly abundant. So there are special delights for us if we'll get out there and explore places that we might not notice in other seasons. I've found when we look through the eyes of winter special treasures are revealed.

NLJ: I love looking at the enhanced dark light contrast of the tree limbs silhouetted against the sky or contrasted with the snow. That can create beautiful photographs, too. - - And birds are more visible in the trees in winter without the tree leaves.

Mark: When out hiking in winter, one of the ways that we learn about the creatures that we are sharing the planet with is by paying attention to what they leave behind. Unlike humans, they don't leave much. One of those rare things is their poop. When there is snow it is a really easy thing to see who's been pooping around- - what animals have been there. This can be a really fascinating nature connection for young ones.

NLJ: I am aware of that aspect of nature study. Animal droppings are sometimes called scat. People can look in nature guide books and see what the scat of different animals look like. They're very different. Another interesting thing to see and learn to identify in snow or mud is, of course, animal tracks.

Mark: I encourage people to check out Richard Louv's book *Vitamin N*, *The Essential Guide to a Nature Rich Life*. (The Vitamin "N" is referring to nature symbolically as a "vitamin.") It is a handbook with all sorts of activities for children and adults to explore outside year around. It doesn't matter what time of year it is -- there are outdoor activities that are enjoyable during all four seasons. One example: you

can create nature "treasure hunts." In the fall you can look for the different types of nuts that hit the ground. You can create all kinds of "treasure hunt" focuses.

Part of what is great is that no one has to take anything away. You don't have to walk away with the items you are "hunting," instead you can take a picture! People of all ages enjoy that! A camera can lend an accent of fun and anticipation. There is some advantage in helping kids realize that they can use modern digital technology in ways that help them engage with the natural world.

You could really go far with that treasure hunt idea. You could create treasure hunts around different themes. There could be one that is seed related, there might be one that is bird themed. Other themes could be plant related where you try to find certain types of trees or medicinal plants, or springtime wild flowers. There are lots of ways that you could keep that game going and keep it interesting and exciting.

NLJ: Observing and identifying different types of tree barks is fascinating. That could be a good theme particularly in winter. There is a great variety of appearance in types of tree barks. These types of treasure hunts can be a lot of fun for adults as well as children. Birdwatchers sort of engage in treasure hunts when they make lists of the different kinds of birds they see when they're out. A person doesn't need to be an expert in nature and wildlife, just take a wildlife guide book along. It's fun looking up what you find as you go along. I've enjoyed learning a lot about nature in that way over the years.



Mark: I feel that once we get outside during the colder months, the wonder and the beauty and the unique experience of the landscape and the places that we visit can inspire enough of our attention that a little temperature based discomfort is not a problem. Every time it snows we are offered a great opportunity to get outside and experience this special

wonder of nature -- rather than just watching from climate controlled homes. The opportunities are amazing to experience this unique natural phenomenon that is frozen precipitation. Traditional snow play includes creating snow angels by lying on the ground and waving our arms like wings, catching snowflakes on our tongue, and making snow people.

NLJ: When there's enough snow we can, of course, sleigh ride on local hills or cross country ski. I lived a major part of my life in New England where it gets really cold for a lot of months. Actively moving when outside during winter helps one stay warmer. Also, I think that a very important key to enjoying getting out in cold weather is dressing in warm layers. If it is cold and we're going to be outside for a while we can wear warm boots (waterproof for snow), double layers of warm socks, maybe double mittens, thermo long johns, warm jacket, and a nice warm hat that comes over the ears. That's how I dress for extended outdoor activities when it is quite cold, and I am generally comfortably warm.

Mark: Certainly dress appropriately for your outdoor adventure. Winter is a time when there is a tendency for some people in the northern hemisphere to draw inward. When we experience nature's withdrawal, there is a tendency as humans to mirror that phenomena and withdraw as well. I feel that it is important to get outdoors all year round. It's important to continue doing things we normally like to do such as taking walks or hiking -- things that are beneficial for our health and for staying in touch with nature.

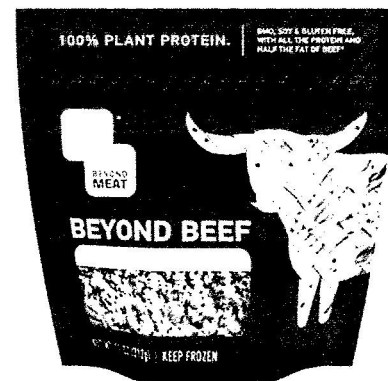
NLJ: Yes, It's vital that we stay in close touch with nature so that we deeply love our beautiful planet and take responsible care of it as wise stewards.

Mark Steiner has facilitated classes, workshops, ceremonies, and lectures around *Environmental Spirituality and the Universe Story* for over 25 years. He serves as a facilitator for deep ecologist Joanna Macy's "Work that Reconnects" and is a co-founder and director of *Cultivating Connections*, a Louisville, Kentucky grassroots not-for-profit focusing on "Nurturing and Celebrating Our Connections with Each Other and with Our World."

Vegan Product Review: 'Beef Crumble' from Beyond Beef

by Wendy Johns

If you are a Vegan or Vegetarian, you may struggle with finding healthy and tasty options for meat substitutes. I recently stumbled upon a new product called Beyond Beef from company 'Beyond Meat.' It was an 11 oz. bag of crumbled pea protein that looked and tasted like real ground beef. Of course without the 'animal flavor!' LOL!



This pea protein packs 13 grams of protein per serving and is gluten free and non-GMO. It is great for soups, chili, tacos and spaghetti sauce – it's up to your imagination. Whether you miss meat, or just the texture of meat, this could be a great alternative for you. For a complete list of all Beyond Meat products, please visit the website: <http://beyondmeat.com/products>

This product can be found locally at Fresh Market and Rainbow Blossom stores, as well as Amazon.com here – <http://amzn.to/2eoQMBk>.

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EASY GOING HOLIDAYS THIS YEAR

by Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

(Ongoing story of five friend's intertwining life journeys: Crystal, Vic, Janis, Nathaniel, and Nallie)

"I want my holidays this year to be easy going - - not stressful! You know? I really want to keep it peaceful and full of love. That's what it's all about, right?" Janis has met with some of her good friends for a snack after work. "Do you remember that I was sick in bed when Crystal had her annual New Year's Eve party last year? I'd been pushing myself too hard trying to find the perfect gifts for everyone. Then on top of my teaching work, I was doing mega cleaning and decorating the house inside and out for entertaining and for out of town visitors. I did my best to be a really good hostess. It was fun, though exhausting. I truly want to slow down this year." Crystal responds, "I'm with you. Let's keep it simple. - - No guilt trips about being the perfect hostess. I'm for just sharing quietly with people one is close to."

Janis says reflectively, "I've been talking with my son and daughter about the spiritual meaning of the holidays. They're eleven and thirteen years old. They're old enough so we can now have some really meaningful discussions. We've been talking about being thankful for what you have and about sharing joy and caring and friendship - not costly gifts." Nathaniel joins in, "That is so good and so important. My son Mike is six and I'm starting to talk with him about these things. He'll understand in more depth as he gets older, though we're planting the seeds now."

Nathaniel continues, "Speaking of gifts, during the holidays I like to give myself the gift of extra time for doing things I love to do. Playing my guitar and singing is my passion. I'm not all that good, though

sit me down anywhere with my guitar and I'm happy singing. Ellie likes to sing with me. Mike is getting pretty good at keeping a soft steady rhythm on his drum. We have fun!"



"Something else we find meaningful during the holidays is helping to serve meals for homeless and needy people at a near-by community center on Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's a nice feeling to share in that way. We get as much out of it as the folks coming for free meals. It helps all of us keep perspective on life and what's important. Any of you want to join us for Thanksgiving?"

Vic replies, "I will, I'd feel good about that. You've spoken of that in previous years. Sometimes I see people huddled in abandoned doors or under overpasses, and I want to do something to help."

Nathaniel responds, "Believe me, I understand. It's sad. We'll pitch in, and we'll have fun, too. Why don't you come to my

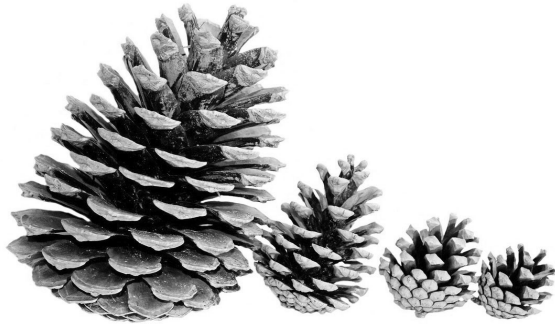
place before we go to the center, Mike would love to show you some card tricks he's been learning - - and I think Ellie would like to show you some of the beaded jewelry she enjoys making. She just finished a special one for her mother."

Nallie picks up the conversation, "Speaking of what people love to do during the holidays, Stan and I like to go hiking with our two sons when we have days off. When it's cold out, we just bundle up more layers of warmth. It can be so very quiet and peaceful in the woods. Sometimes it feels like nature's cathedral to me. I love the peace of nature. Without all the everyday sounds of traffic and electronics, it's like there's a holy hush in the woods when you walk quietly. Have you ever felt that?"

Crystal responds, "I've felt that, I know what you mean. It's like it helps you reconnect to your source. I think that my daughter Amy and I would enjoy that."

“Good,” says Nallie, “we’ll call you next time we plan to go.”

“Something else going on for me” continues Nallie, “is that Stan and I have discussed, and have worked out, an agreement concerning holiday spending this



year. Can you believe it? Normally he really does like to make a big show of gifts for the kids. We talked a long time about this recently. We’ve created a budget for the holidays that we can both agree on that won’t break our piggy bank. Wow! It’s so hopeful.”

Janis responds, “Good for you, Nallie.”

Janis notices a sort of faraway look on Vic’s face and gently inquires, “Vic, how are you feeling about the holidays?”

Vic looks out the window at cars passing by and says carefully, “Sometimes I don’t really feel that I quite fit in with the holiday scene. I don’t buy a lot of gifts, or travel far away, or decorate my home, or have close living family members. My ex-wife and I never had any children. You and a few other close friends are sort of my family, to tell you the truth.”

Nathaniel responds, “We love you, Buddy, you know that!”

Janis says “You’re such a special friend to us, Vic.”

Crystal and then Nallie express their support, “We’re here for you, Vic! You’re an important part of our holidays.”

Vic gazes at them gratefully and says, “When my wife and I finally broke up about four years ago, as you recall I started drinking a little too much. It never got totally out of hand, yet it *was* too much. It was a crutch that didn’t really work anyway. The pain was just numbed, it didn’t go away. Sometimes it has been hardest at the holidays. AA has really helped me. So I’ll be attending AA more often than usual during the holidays, and feeling really grateful for what I do have. I’ve been sober three years now. I have a good job and wonderful friends. That’s saying a lot.”

Crystal says, “Yes it is, for sure!”

Nallie reaches for Vic’s hand and says with feeling, “Come be with my family for Christmas, if you will.

We’d love it. My sons have adored you ever since you brought your portable telescope over and they got to see the craters on the moon and Mars. They’ll be delighted, and so will Stan and I. Stan had already mentioned the possibility to me.”

Vic responds with a smile and gives Nallie’s hand a gentle squeeze, “Sounds good. I’ll come on my own. I’ve been dating a little recently, but the woman I’ve been seeing is going to be out of town that week.”

Crystal speaks up, “I know that we’ll all need to head off shortly, though let me catch you up a minute with some of my holiday plans so far. “Amy and I are enjoying making holiday decorations. She really has fun with it and is quite creative. We’re keeping it simple. Another thing - - Amy’s friend Stacy stays with her father every other weekend. He lives near me. He and I have been getting to know each other somewhat in recent months, when we have happened to be out doing lawn work on the weekends at the same time. He is really kind and considerate and has a good sense of humor. So Stacy and her father are going to come over to make decorations with us this weekend and fix dinner together.

Hum-m-m-m-m-m, I’m looking forward to it.”

Janis responds, “Sounds like fun, Crystal. He sounds nice. Please take it slow though, Precious. Do you feel pretty well recovered from Arnold? Oops, look at the time! I’ve got to run! Bye everyone! See you soon!” (To be continued next issue)

Celebrate the Gifts of Spirit

• Sunday, December 4 12:30 pm

Youth & Family Christmas Program

• Friday, December 16

Oils of the Bible Class 6:30 pm

• Saturday, December 24 5:00 pm

Candlelight Service

• Sunday, December 25 *Christmas Day*

9:00 am Prayer Service 11:00 am Worship Service

• Sunday, January 1, 2017 11:00 am Service

Burning Bowl

• Sunday, January 8, 2017 11:00 am Service

White Stone Ceremony

Sunday Service: 9:00 and 11:00 am
Youth Sunday School: 11:00 am


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Al-Anon Brought Many Gifts Into My Life

~Anonymous

For many years Al-Anon was my main emotional support and guidance because my family lived far away in other parts of the country. Serious alcohol addiction of one's husband is so overwhelming. It seemed to consume every aspect of my life. Thoughts kept going in circles over and over again with no end in sight. I was planning my escape with a divorce after little more than a year of marriage. This would be a second failed marriage, but better brief than lingering for years.

In the beginning, I only went to Al-Anon because a wise counselor told me to go or I would carry all my co-dependency with me. A divorce would not save me or even help me. So, under protest I began two meetings a week. My promise had been for a year which seemed like a cruel option since I felt innocent and he was the guilty one. Two years earlier, divorce from my first marriage had been very difficult for me and my children. At this time I was in a graduate program in Expressive Therapy which demanded rigorous self-examination and I was slowly piecing myself together. Now, I was falling apart again. I knew I needed to do everything I could to become stable, even Al-Anon. I wanted to become whole again. Also, I realized in the graduate program that I was helpless when working with addictions. So, I was motivated personally and professionally.

Gradually while I was active in Al-Anon, I noticed that my husband was beginning to realize that I was changing. I was not so obsessed with him. I was working my program! While I was on a trip with students, he checked himself into an alcohol rehabilitation facility for a month. He went for help. Somehow he knew that I was leaving him. At that time, he began working his own program in AA.

For many years he went to AA and I went to Al-Anon. These groups became our life. They were our



support, our social life, our family. We lived in that cocoon of love and caring for over 22 years. Gradually, my husband began joining me in Al-Anon. He was able to share with new members how the AA program worked and could answer questions that naturally came up. He felt that he had heard so many AA stories that his being in Al-Anon was helping him more and others too. I felt that having him there sometimes made it harder for me to share some of my story, though I could do that in other situations. We were a team supporting each other and a lot of other people.

The amazing thing is that being in the program helped him work through his addiction to alcohol, then smoking, and finally losing weight. It helped me to become self-confident, to know my mind, and to speak from my heart. The program helped me find my own spirituality. Those are a lot of gifts when I

began under protest for a one year stint. I smile with tears in my eyes.

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(One Day At a Time in Al-Anon, pg-94)

Reflections On the Spiritual Basis Of Alcoholics Anonymous

Why Does AA Work For Some And Not Others?

~ Anonymous

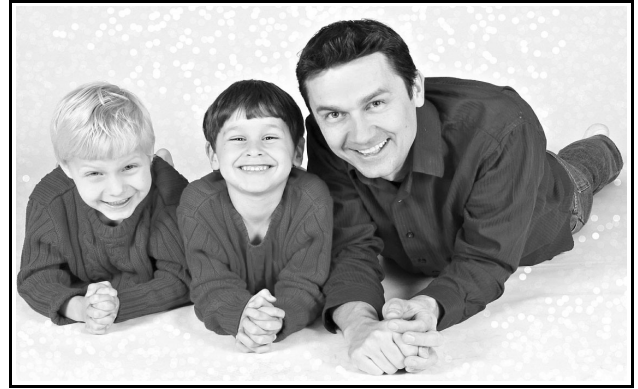
All addictions affect the individual in all aspects of his/her life, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Various treatments for addictions will address one or more of these areas. Bill Wilson, one of the co-founders of AA, was powerfully drawn to the spiritual. His attraction to spirituality as a major aspect of recovery was reinforced by his study of William James' *The Variety of Religious Experience* and his personal correspondence with Carl Jung. Many people will refer to Alcoholics Anonymous as a spiritual program. And they will also emphasize that



spirituality is different and distinct from religion. There is a section in what is called the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous which is titled "How It Works." So I am not going to attempt to improve on that eloquent explanation. A question however that many people ask who might not be closely associated with the program is "Why" does it work and why does it work for some and not others?

I do not intend to definitively answer those questions, however I do believe I can share a few thoughts and reflections that can aid in the exploration of why the AA program of recovery works for many people. The first thought I would like to offer is a possible explanation why the program works for some and not for others. The answer is simple. Essential to recovery is not only a drastic alteration of behavior but a fundamental change in the individual's goals and values. Anyone who is not willing to do that kind of work will probably balk at the directives of the

program. In the vernacular "you gotta wanna," and not just that, you have got to be willing to do the work of transformation. That challenge can be a stumbling block for many, because most people are looking for what the program calls "an easier softer way."




Now, the spiritual aspect of the program is more complex and subtle. What are referred to as the 12 Steps are the cornerstone of the AA program (and all of the other many 12 step programs as well). To begin to answer the question of "Why does it work?" we would need to take a deeper look at the wisdom behind the 12 steps. Years ago a teacher of mine laid out what she called the "Seven Aspects of a Spiritual Path." A spiritual path that works will give the practitioner a sense of peace and unity, along with freedom, compassion, wisdom, and a deep awareness that each one of us is much more than a struggling, contentious ego. Certainly a concept of God, Higher Power, Universal Source and our relationship with It evolves from this transformation.

It is my understanding that any spiritual path that works, no matter what its origins, will contain all seven of these principles, stages or steps in some form or another. The essential elements of a spiritual path are: Surrender, Purification, Right Relationships, Living in the Here and Now, Comprehension, Living and Loving Wisely, and Authentic Being.*

Simply put the reason why AA works is because the 12 steps embody these basic stages of a spiritual path, and of course, this presumes the alcoholic is willing to do the work using these 12 Steps and/or these seven stages as guidelines and directives for the journey.

*From the book by Jacquelyn Small: *Transformers: The Artists of Self Creation*

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HOLIDAYS TO WARM YOUR HEART AND SOUL

Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

Life is a journey through valleys, rolling hills, and a few mountain tops. Adventures abound. We make choices. Some choices are easy, some are harder. Some may be downright painful. We keep going, though, as well as possible. We love, we laugh, we cry, we hug, we mourn, we endure, and then we hopefully renew and rejoice again. This is the rhythm of life. Most of us probably know it well. Something that can help sweeten life's journey at regular intervals is holidays. That is perhaps an important part of how and why holidays have evolved in their present timing and forms. The important thing is to allow the holidays to work for you, not you work for the holidays. That's not just a play on words. It is profoundly important and can change the holiday experience for many people (maybe you?).



You have choice as to what aspects of the holiday feel nurturing to you, and which may seem to exhaust or drain you. You may have a pretty good idea which are which. There's no guilt, there's no need to explain. Everybody's different. I love to sing, do you? Maybe yes, maybe not so much. What is your holiday pleasure? What is your passion? Focus there!!! Invest some time and energy in doing what you love to do during the holidays. Minimize whatever feels like drudgery as much as possible: give yourself permission.

Consider the following idea. Within your free time: for every hour of what may feel like unavoidable dutiful obligations, give yourself maybe two hours of enjoying something you love to do during the holidays. What do you think? How does that feel in your heart? It may be that some other people you are close to may feel the same way. Talk with them heart-to-heart. Listen to your own heart and soul. Perhaps create new holiday traditions for yourself, and perhaps with those you are close to. Please linger with the following questions. Reflect on them, discuss

them with people you love and care about, perhaps journal write on them. It is well worth the investment.

1. During the holidays, if you have two hours periodically to do whatever you want to do, what will that be?
 2. How does that activity feel in your heart? Does it feel fulfilling?
 3. Is that something you do by yourself or is it something that needs to be enjoyed with others?
 4. What is the significance of the holidays to you?
 - (a) Is it mainly spiritual? (b) Is it mainly fun celebrations and social occasions? Family gatherings? (c) Is gift exchanging of great importance to you? (d) Are the food and/or drink of significant importance to you? (e) Is traveling to visit distant relatives or friends or special other locations of great importance to you? (f) Is peace and quiet and extra time to reflect or read or rest at home of significant importance to you? (g) What about extra time to pursue your special interests such as playing a musical instrument, creating art or a craft, a hobby, or other? (h) What about a sport or hiking? (i) Maybe there's something else you love to do during the holidays? Write down some of your insights.
 5. Which of those are really important to you and nourishing to your heart and soul during the holidays? Take a moment and rank them in order of how you love those activities and their importance to you during the holidays. Give yourself permission to feel that way.
 6. Talk with people who are important in your life such as family members, significant other, or close friends who you tend to spend a fair amount of time with around the holidays. How do they feel about those different approaches to enjoying the holidays? Which are most important to them? Within your heart, without judgment if possible, give them space to feel that way.
 7. Are there areas of agreement that you can enjoy pursuing together or at the same time (even if in separate locations)? Great! Enjoy! Are there areas that are of very little interest to you or someone else that you can agree to let each other off the hook for (or at least minimize greatly) during the time you spend together? This can be a great relief for both people when approached sincerely and compassionately.
- I encourage you to choose to invest your holiday time, however much time it may be, in ways that truly warm you heart and soul - - and bring you close to those you love in peaceful ways not stressful ways. Keep in mind that you don't have to serve elaborate feasts unless you want to (simple might even be healthier). You don't have to give expensive gifts unless you wish to (you and your loved ones can set limits). You don't have to do mega decorating of your home unless it gives you pleasure (a little can go a long way). You choose what nourishes your heart and soul - - and minimize the stress. I wish you joyful and peaceful holidays.

Composting – the Greenest Thing We Can Do For Our Planet.

~ Sybil Watts

Compost to plants is like a healthy gourmet dinner would be to us. Compared to preparing a snazzy dinner, however, making compost is easy, easy, easy. Composting means transforming kitchen vegetable or fruit scraps plus grass and plant clippings and other natural substances into VERY rich organic soil.

Reasons to Compost

- Composting reduces landfill waste and incineration, and therefore emissions. The amount of methane emitted through a well-managed compost heap or bin at home? ZERO.
- Composting reduces dependence on fossil fuels.
- Home compost is always superior to commercial compost because through the slower and more traditional method of composting at home, there is more assurance that everything has been well-broken down by the fungi and bacteria and you know what has or has not been sprayed on the materials that went into your compost.
- Composting is good for the land. Composting helps you to embrace the natural cycle of life and decay. Environmentalism is, at times, heavily focused on the idea of 'waste,' because it is such a key issue to the health of the planet. However, 'waste' is a human concept and also a human problem. In nature there is no waste, as every living thing serves a greater purpose than its own lifespan, and contributes to the growth of something else. It's easy to forget this crucial fact, yet when you delve into composting your own 'waste' you learn to appreciate the cycle of life which involves decay and new growth in equal measure, and you come to understand that everything has a place in the world.

What to Compost?

*You Can Compost Nearly Anything
That Has Lived or Grown Recently*

- **Good things** you can compost include vegetable peelings, fruit waste, teabags, plant prunings and grass cuttings. These are considered "greens." Greens are quick to rot and they provide important nitrogen and moisture. The best compost is made of 50% greens and 50% browns. And don't obsess over the percentage. Browns include cardboard egg boxes, scrunched up paper and small twigs.
- **Skip meat, fish and dairy** for outdoor bins because they tend to attract pests like mice, raccoon and dogs. If you can't bear the thought of sending your leftovers to the landfill, there are clever systems that turn them into superfood for your plants. <http://bit.ly/2ej5Toa>
- **Also, skip the weeds.** If you add weeds with seeds to your compost pile, you will be planting weeds along with

composting. Put weeds that have gone to seed into the yard waste collection bin.

In addition to the items listed above, here is a website with a list of **163 Things You Can Compost**. <http://bit.ly/2ej296b> Everyone of these items that goes into your compost pile or bin helps your garden grow, and did not end up in the landfill.

How to Select a Compost Bin

Clean and effortless, the most efficient compost bins deliver nutrient-rich "garden gold" without all the mess and fuss of traditional heaps. Not only do they keep your organic materials contained, they keep rodents and other pests out. Of course, you can build your own compost bins. Or you can purchase one online. They are available at most Home Supply stores, or from Amazon.

- Get the largest bin you can use. Think about the types of material you plan to compost. Will you be composting yard and garden clippings + plus kitchen scraps? Or only kitchen scraps?
- The best bins are well ventilated with easy access to get to the finished product. Venting is VERY important. The materials won't compost without oxygen. The more air your compost is exposed to, the faster the process. Too little air creates a clumpy, smelly mess. Choose tumblers that are well ventilated.



- Tumblers can be heavy and thus difficult to turn. If you have upper body strength issues, you will want to get a bin that is easy to turn when full. Make sure the bin you purchase fits your personal needs *and* physical condition. Always give a back and forth swing before attempting to turn it all the way round. Turn several times each session to insure all the materials are being well mixed. Paddles or a bar through the drum help with stirring the compost so it is thoroughly mixed with each turn. Turn two or three times per week to aerate and bring in oxygen which helps your ingredients more quickly turn into super food for the garden.

- Consider how high off the ground the opening is. The closer to the ground your tumbler's lid, the easier to load. Some tumblers load and unload from the same access areas, while others load from top and unload from bottom. Consider what works best for you when making your purchase selection.

- Assembly should be easy, requiring only a screwdriver and possibly a pair of pliers. Make sure all the screws are tight, otherwise your tumbler will leak and make a mess.

This page explains the different types of bins, how they work, and the types of use they work best for. <http://bit.ly/2e6bZgO>.

Compost bins have a large price range. The size you need, and what you plan to compost determines the price. Turning bins, like the one displayed on this page, start at around \$100 and go up from there. A gallon bucket for under the kitchen sink starts at around \$12. Once you determine your compost needs, you will be able to work out a budget for purchase.

A Chance to Bond with Our Beautiful City

By: Faith Grady

The great thing about our beloved Louisville is that there is always something exciting to do on any given day! As you may know, downtown Louisville is rapidly expanding and bursting with plenty of art galleries, restaurants, boutiques and more. Every first Friday of the month Republic Bank sponsors an event called the First Friday Hop, which offers you the perfect time to check out all of the hot spots!



Participation in the hop is fun and easy. The Zerobus offers free rides from 5pm to 11pm; all you have to do is head downtown and look for the specific stops marked by a Green Z. First Friday events and participating businesses can be found on Main St. from Museum Row to Nulu and on Fourth St. downtown. Look for printable maps and a list of participating locations online at:

www.firstfridayhop.com

I rounded up a couple of my girlfriends and we headed to 6th and Market Street to hop on the first Zerobus we saw. While we were waiting on the stop, we quickly befriended a few other “hoppers.” We all chatted with excitement about the different boutiques and galleries we wanted to visit, and how thankful we were for the extended hours they provided specially for The First Friday Hop.

As we were talking, our bus arrived. We were greeted by a friendly driver. There are several Zero buses that run on schedule so if you miss one, another one is on the way! Once you board the bus, there are maps available of all the participating locations as well as Zero Bus stop locations. Now the fun begins!

We perused over the map and decided to start at 21C Museum, a museum hotel that I had never been to before. We entered through Proof On Main, the chic, upscale restaurant on the first level of the hotel. The lighting was low, with a red tint and the

atmosphere was very laid back. We found seating and ordered a dessert plate, Poached Pear served with sorbet and flan over a linzer cookie. Absolutely divine. You can actually enter the 21C Museum through Proof, so after dessert, we headed on over.

We were greeted by bright white walls, music and an assortment of eclectic art. The high frequency energy made the experience feel very alive and vibrant. There was bubbly chatter among the guests as we all marveled at the array of portraits and sculptures. I would definitely recommend making Proof and 21C Museum a destination on your hop!

Next, we hopped over to the trendy South 4th Street area and visited Block Party Handmade Boutique. If ever you wanted to find local, handmade artwork in a trendy space, this is your place! I could easily spend hours in this store looking at the prints and handmade jewelry made by local artists here in Kentucky. Before we left, I did manage to buy a cute pair of wooden stud earrings. I love supporting local businesses and I believe that the First Friday Hop gives a great opportunity to do just that! We ended our night by just walking the bright, busy streets of downtown and one last ride on the Zero Bus. The night was truly enjoyable.

The First Friday Hop is a great chance to get out and explore what Downtown Louisville has to offer and it also provides the chance to meet new people and try new things! It's the perfect activity to do with friends, your significant other or even solo! And if you're like me and are big on putting money back into the city, this is an awesome chance to do so!

Faith Grady is a local freelance writer and a graduate of Tennessee State University with a major in Communications. She loves exploring and sharing about interesting places and opportunities in Kentuckiana.

♥ *We didn't realize we were making memories.* ♥
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Getting Through the Holidays – Sanity Intact

by Sybil Watts

The holiday season is here. For most of us, this means a happy, joyful time of gatherings, celebrations and traditions with family and friends. For many, those celebrations and family gatherings brings up intense angst and send us spiraling into a state of anxiety. Many of us experience extreme anxiety around the holiday season exactly because of those family gatherings. So not wanting to have the family upset with us, or lose connections to our family of origin, we force ourselves to attend, even though being with some members of the family may not be the best thing for our own personal well-being.

Alcohol is often a part of these gatherings. Most of us can have a couple of drinks, have a good time and create good memories of the good times. However, there are many people for whom good memories and family gatherings just doesn't go together. That seems like an oxymoron to them.

Many families have an Uncle Joe who just can't let go of old emotional baggage, and who seems to always be offended about something from that bag. He is the one who always has just one drink too many then manages to start an argument with someone over something over one of those old wounds he has not healed. Once has had had that one drink too many, he fights with everyone. People are then stressed out, upset and leave hurt and confused.

Then there is Aunt Mame. She never has a kind word to say to anyone. It seems she is only happy if she has set two factions against each other—seems the more upset everyone else is, the happier she acts. What is up with her, anyway? Some family members think perhaps Aunt Mame was correctly named, as it seems that her life goal is to ruin the emotional health and well-being of anyone who comes near her.

Sigh. Aunt Mame is the mother of the hostess, so she has to be invited. While Uncle Joe is Dad's brother, so he has to be invited—may as well invite him, he will show up anyway. Sober, he is a nice enough guy. The problem is with his aggressive, combative attitude once he starts drinking. He just can't seem to stop himself from starting an argument.

Then there is the newly recovering alcoholic, who really just wants to experience peace and love around the holidays with no alcoholic beverages. This one has

expressed a concern about having the strength to say “no” when pressured to “have just one.” Because, honestly, we know there are family members who just won't understand and won't let up the pressure, insisting that everyone should just “have a drink and enjoy yourself.”

What is a sane person to do?

The first thing, of course, is to realize that each of us is responsible for our own well-being, 100% of the time and no one else can “make” us feel anything without our permission. We are responsible for our speaking, and our reaction or response to the environment and people that we come into contact with. I'm not saying this is easy, only that it is the necessary, first step in maintaining your own peace of well-being. We must each learn to regulate our own anxiety.

The second thing is to realize that we are NOT responsible for the way that others respond or react to the world around them and the people they are in contact with and the words those people speak.

What Does 100% Responsibility For Self Look Like?

One thing we could do is to think that perhaps life has brought Aunt Mame to the state of bitterness where as she is so unhappy, she wants everyone around her to also be unhappy. It is possible there is nothing that can be done to change her outlook on life. However, there is also the possibility that kindness and compassion could cause her to change her own way of speaking. Maybe some family members could send Aunt Mame a card saying how much she is actually loved and respected. Mention something she does that they like.

I had a neighbor who grew beautiful roses. If she was in the middle of a bitter diatribe, the mention of her beautiful roses would change her from a bitter old woman to a gardener, glowing with pride in her garden, and gratitude that others noticed.

Perhaps you could do an experiment. Ask all the family, in advance, “When you get to the party please immediately look up Aunt Mame and tell her how fabulous she looks today.” Maybe they could find out what dish she brought to share, and say how delicious it looks. Even if this tactic doesn't reduce her level of bitterness, it is likely this kind comments would discombobolate Aunt Mame to the extent that she would be so busy wondering “*What are they up to?*” that she would have no time to say mean things that f upsets everyone.

Another thing that one might do is to speak to all the family about Uncle Joe. “Ya know, we all like a sober Uncle Joe. He just has all that old emotional

baggage he carries around and when he has a drink, he cannot seem to stay in the present moment and all that old pain just has to be expressed. Maybe, this year we could have the family holiday gathering and skip the alcoholic beverages? Or maybe we could have just one glass of wine with dinner, and no pre-dinner or after dinner drinks.” If the family loves Uncle Joe, they would probably agree to this, they just had not thought about this before because the alcohol was such a long-standing family tradition—and who wants to be the one to break tradition.

As Uncle Joe and Aunt Mame were the points of contention, and if the family agrees to do these things this year, we don't even need to mention to the rest of the family the recovering alcoholic, leaving their anonymity and dignity intact.

As to the recovering alcoholic, a way that they can take responsibility for self is to realize if there is a drink in hand, no one will be offering another drink. This could look like sparkling juice; a fruit juice; soda; or even just water. This is from my own personal experience. I learned very early on, after I stopped drinking, that as long as I had a drink in hand, no one felt compelled to offer a drink, and the contents of the drink was irrelevant. I felt no requirement to tell anyone “I don't drink”, or to tell the contents of my drink. Thus I could maintain my own peace and well-being and not make others responsible for me.

Holiday Stress Busters

Simplify – cut your to-do list in half, remembering your well-being is YOUR responsibility at all times.

Prioritize – One individual is NOT required to give every guest to their home a gift. If a gift exchange is part of your family tradition, perhaps you could draw names so that each adult only buys one gift for one other adult. In my family, anyone who is working participates in the gift exchange. There are lots of ways a gift exchange could play out – get creative.

Stay Flexible – One thing I have learned about holiday “doings” is change happens. Go with the flow of change and learn to live from the thought: “At my core, I am peace.”

Manage your time – be careful not to double book. Triple booking is prohibited. You can only be one place at a time. Choose early on which one is most important to you. It helps to also know the reason that event is so very important to you that you can't change it. This will reduce stress when there is a need to consider not attending something else that is scheduled at the same time.

Get help – Learn to delegate like Santa. Remember all those elves in the workshop?

Protect Yourself – Pay no attention to the judgment of others who can't even manage their own life. Build an imaginary bubble and spend your

Holiday season inside it!

Allow Cracks – A crack in any relationship during the holidays is possible / probable, and generally fixable after the holiday stress is passed. As Leonard Cohen says: “*There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.*”

Self-Care – Stop believing that you can control how others think, feel, believe about you or your actions. This empowers you to stand in your own power and do what you need do for you.

Keep a Journal – Dr. James Pennebaker, has concluded that writing about painful feelings and emotional events relieves stress and promotes healing on many levels. So keep a journal as you have the opportunity and need.

Get Support – When you feel overwhelmed beyond what you can correct on your own, get someone to talk to – an AA mentor, or a therapist, or a coach, or a best friend. It doesn't matter. Just talk to someone so you don't explode and return to the old you that is stressed out and “just done with everything.”

Be Gentle – This is the most important advice I can offer to anyone. Be gentle with yourself. Don't scream at or berate yourself. Speak to yourself with loving, gentle kindness, the same way you would speak to your dearest friend who was just dealt a big, fat, life lemon; or the way you would speak to a baby.

If you have no one to talk you through the *rough waters*, text or email me for a session. I offer one 1/2 hour session to anyone in need of a friend to “talk them down or help change directions” during the holiday season. You don't have to go it alone. This is a form of kindness to oneself that is important – talking through the overwhelm.

Remember: Kindness to oneself is the first and last step in getting through any time of '*rough water*' with your sanity, and your well-being, intact.

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

Feeling Stuck? I can help. Call today for an appointment

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Community Room - 2nd Floor

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Louisville, KY. 40222

Barbara Bloecher. 502-261-9863

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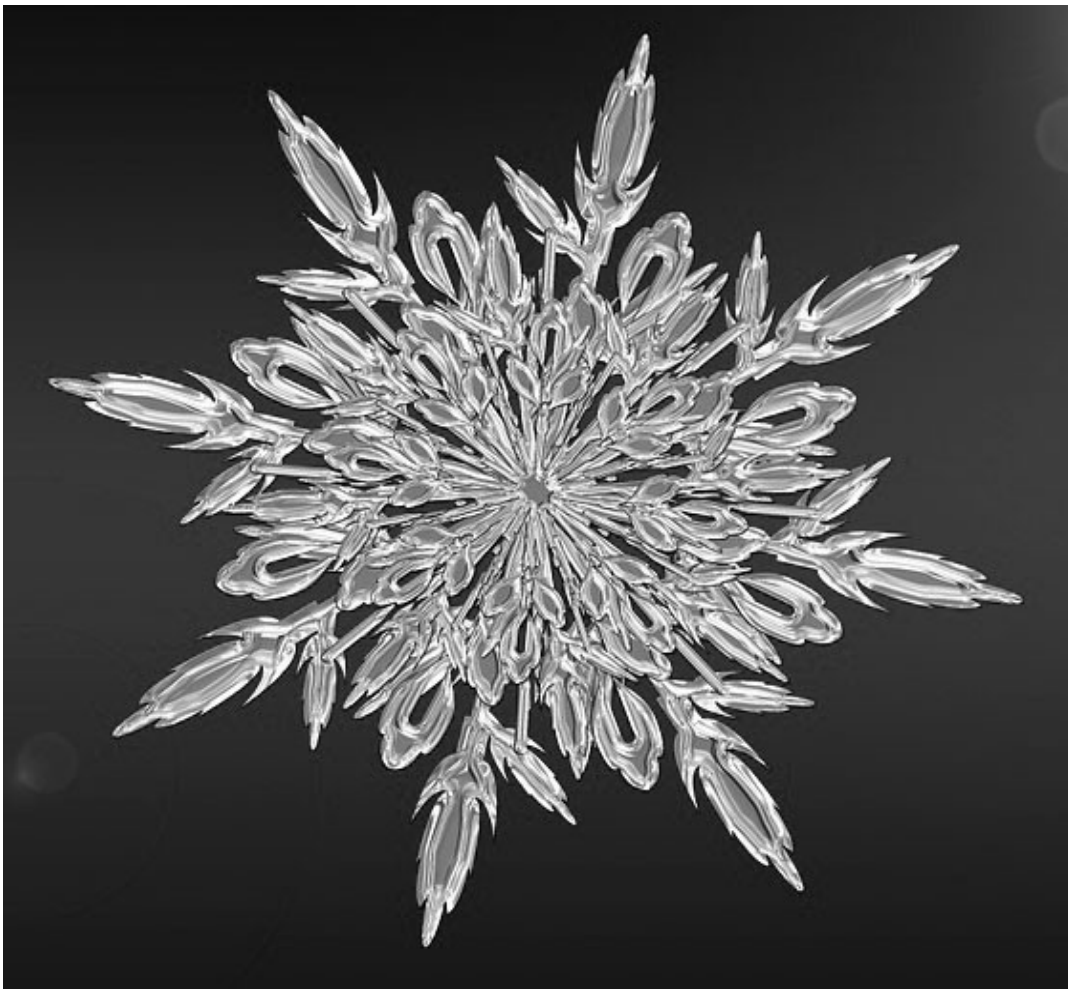
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"Trust the still, small voice that says,
"this might work, and I'll attempt it."

Diane Mariechild



CHOOSING DEEP PEACE AND HOPE

by Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

We can be a source of peace for those around us.
We can choose to be a beacon of hope for our friends.
Expressing hope and peace doesn't necessarily mean that
We permanently dwell therein - - and have achieved ongoing grace.
It may mean that we choose to keep reaching for that blessed state no matter what.
How do we achieve profound peace and hope? What is the secret?
It is trusting in our understanding of Divine Higher Power.
May we put our faith in the Divine and allow our self to be lifted thereby.
May we pray often or keep silently repeating our affirmations or mantra.
May we focus in our breath as it flows peacefully in and out.
May we be a citadel of courage and faith that nothing can shake.
Before long we may well find we are blessed with ongoing deep peace and hope.
We can flow in the awareness that our dwelling therein helps nurture and support others.
We can all help create a web of peace and hope around the planet.