



# Natural Living Journal

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

Vol. 2 Issue 1 **READ FREE ON-LINE** [www.natural-living-journal.com](http://www.natural-living-journal.com) Feb.- March



**Letting Love In**

**Enhancing Joy with  
Laughter Yoga**

**Co-Creating Your Life**

**Pure Love and  
Compassion**

**Creating Photography as  
Art**

**Musical Waves**

**Growing Herbs Indoors**

**Healthy Oils and Fats  
are Incredibly Important**

**Nia - Everything I Do  
Feels Like I'm Dancing**

**Simple Tips for a  
Healthy Back**

**Storytelling**

**Finding Strength & Self  
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**Taming a Habit with  
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## Natural Living Journal

P.O. Box 1506, Louisville, KY 40201

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**Publisher and Editor, Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.**

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## ***Letting Love In! How Much Do You Love Yourself?***

**Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.**

How compassionate are you to yourself? Does that sound like a foolish question? It is important to love others, yet it is important to love our self, also. Let's look at this a few moments. I'll ask you a few questions, and you feel those questions in your heart if you will. Let's leave your head out of this for a few moments. It's not what you think you should say, this is a matter of what you really feel deep within your heart - - in that spot where you truly dwell with your self - - where there is no place to hide from yourself - - where you connect to God - - to the Divine as you perceive it. Please take a moment and focus in your heart. As you breath in your nose, imagine that you are breathing in love and light into the center of your chest - - into your heart center. Please go ahead now for a few moments.

Good! Now please put both your hands to your heart center and imagine that you are sending love and light through your hands into this sacred center in your being. With tender feeling, please silently (or out loud) tell yourself how precious and Divinely beloved you are. Please tell yourself you are very special and that you have unique gifts to share with the people and the life around you. Your unique qualities can only come from you, just like your finger prints are unique and unlike anyone else's. You are Divinely created, and your soul can never be duplicated. Feel that for a few moments and know that it is true - - so true.

How does that feel??? It is very important that feels good. It is crucial that you repeat that often and allow it to sink deeply into your psyche. I encourage you to choose a mantra or phrase to repeat often silently whenever you think of it or when you feel you need some encouragement. The mantra might be one of the following. "I am Divinely blessed and Divinely worthy." "I am needed here on planet Earth for my unique qualities." "I am a significant part of the whole." "I love myself."

Then take a few moments and think what "gift" you can give yourself today. This might be to gently

touch a plant or tree and sense its innocent essence connect with your innocent essence. It might be to pull over your car for a few moments, gaze at the sky, relax, and feel your breath slow down and flow more easily. Maybe it could be to give yourself a fifteen minute nap even if you think you don't have time. Things may flow more easily after that. What special gift comes to your mind? It's good to give yourself these special little gifts of love and appreciation



often. Lovingly touch your face.

Your heart of heart has feelings and inspirations that need to be heard. Do you listen????? Please take time to listen. Don't shut yourself out. That is very important. Listen, listen, listen, and love. Love yourself and know that you are worthy. You are Divinely created and you matter. I encourage you to choose some way to express your inner feelings if you don't already. This might be journal writing now and then (or daily), or drawing, or playing music in your room and moving from your heart. Blessings to you in your sacred journey of life. As you truly love and honor yourself more and more deeply and completely - - you'll be able to love the people in your life more and more profoundly and deeply. Share the joy! May profound peace dwell in your heart.

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## ENHANCING OUR JOY WITH LAUGHTER YOGA

By Melanie Rudolph, M.A., M.A., CLYT

Laughter helps reduce stress and allows us to feel better. There are a lot of benefits. It activates the feel good hormones when you laugh. It helps our muscles relax. We're getting more oxygen circulating throughout our entire body. Essentially what we are doing is that we are exhaling more when we laugh. When you are exhaling more, you are inhaling more. It is enhancing the circulation of oxygen. The body doesn't know the difference between laughing at a joke and Laughter Yoga, you get similar physical and emotional benefits.

In 2007 I saw Laughter Yoga being highlighted on the Oprah Winfrey Show. It really spoke to me and resonated with me, so I did research on the internet. I saw that there was a training coming up in Dallas, Texas, and I decided to go. At the time I was in a job that was not very fulfilling to me. I have a Master's Degree in Wellness and Gerontology, and I wanted to get back to being more fully connected into wellness than I was. The two day training in Dallas was life changing for me. It was a great shift in my joy. It helped me to give myself permission to really laugh. I continued pursuing training and learning about the essence of Laughter Yoga. That took me on a longer journey and a year later I actually flew to Mumbai, India and got trained in being a Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher by the founder Dr. Madan Kataria. Dr. Kataria actually is a medical doctor. He was doing research on the benefits of laughter and humor. Laughter Yoga started when he and four others were laughing in a park telling jokes. When they ran out of jokes he told his friends, "give me twenty four hours and I'll create a way that we can laugh together without jokes." What he did was combine laughter and pranayama yogic breathing.



(Photograph of Melanie in India at Laughter Yoga Training.)

In Laughter Yoga we come together in a group and we give ourselves permission to tap into our childlike playfulness. Laughter that we stimulate in a group setting often becomes natural and authentic. We do what we call laughter exercises. These laughter exercises are playful with the intention of helping people bring more play into their life. There are two phrases that we often use in Laughter Yoga. One is "Very good, very good. Yeah!" Everyone

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claps their hands together and then put their hands up in the air like the letter Y. And we also do another chant which is "Ho, Ho, Ha, Ha, Ha." After years and years of research they have found that those cheers not only created joy -- but also created laughter. We also combine other elements of dancing, singing, child-like playfulness, and fun.

Many times people are strangers when they come together to laugh. Often times they don't even talk with each other because we get started with our Laughter Yoga -- and yet this bond and chemistry happens when laughing with people. There's this neat connection even if no words were exchanged, or very few words. With Laughter Yoga we are creating a space where people can come together and laugh. The founder Dr. Kataria says it's not that we make people laugh, we create a spontaneous situation where people want to laugh. Sometimes when a person is telling a joke, we actually laugh before the punchline. We do all kinds of different laughing exercises. There are thousands of laughter clubs all over the world, so all these laughter clubs are creating their own laughter exercises in different countries and in different cultures. Laughter is universal. When we are born as a baby our first language is laughter. For the beginning of our life, we cry and we laugh. The concept of Laughter Yoga is returning to that child-like self where we can create our laughter and also our joy. There are laughter clubs in prisons. There are laughter clubs in special needs centers. Laughter Yoga is also a world peace movement.

I had a challenging childhood, and I don't remember laughing a lot as a child. My biological mother passed away from suicide when I was eight years old. I was put in a foster home where there were nine of us children. It led to a lot of challenges for me on a lot of levels. I grew up thinking that life is serious and significant. I have now trained myself to know that I have laughter as a life tool which brings me joy every single day of my life. My life purpose now is to share laughter with others including people who feel very far apart from their laughter.

Editor's note: Melanie's laughter is rippling, gentle, captivating, and delightfully contagious.

**Melanie Rudolph** :Master of Arts Degree in Wellness Management, Master of Arts in Applied Gerontology, Certified Laughter Yoga Leader and Trainer. Individual sessions, classes, and trainings available. Call or text her at 502-424-2252. [www.facebook.com/laughteryogamelanie2016](http://www.facebook.com/laughteryogamelanie2016). E-mail at [Melanie.tmlp@gmail.com](mailto:Melanie.tmlp@gmail.com).

# CO-CREATING YOUR LIFE

by Catherine Oliphant, M.Div. M.S.S.W.

**“Remember, you are co-creating your life with the energy of your own intentions.” Oprah Winfrey**

Have you thought about being a co-creator of your life? Do you believe life just happens to you? Or, do you think you have the ability to control it all? While most of us would like to control every aspect of our lives, most of us know that we can't control everything. The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu wrote 2500 years ago in the 29<sup>th</sup> verse of the Tao Te Ching:

Do you think you can take over the Universe  
and improve it?

I do not think it can be done.

Everything under heaven is a sacred vessel  
and cannot be controlled.

You can, though, live a life of your dreams. The key is to learn how to work **with** the Universal laws to manifest results. It is a multi-dimensional process in which we are co-creators. It's really pretty cool. How do we get this to work, exactly? First of all, setting up a practice is part of the process. Here are some techniques to help manifest results.

**1. State your intention.** In quantum mechanics the observer affects the outcome when viewing particles, this effect is created by how intensely they are visualizing the process. We operate under the same Universal laws as physics. Once we set our intentions, they're simultaneously manifesting in the future.

**2. Visualize your intentions.** Our imagination is a powerful tool. With your imagination you can materialize your dreams. To utilize your imagination effectively, try using all your senses. When you visualize, imagine that you: **Hear** what positives others are saying about you. **See** yourself achieving your goals. **Touch** something you've helped manifest, like a new friend, a book you wrote, etc. **Taste** something in your new life like eating dinner with your new friends. **Smell** something in this picture like smelling the ocean while you're vacationing at your dream destination.

**3. Feel intensely.** This is a crucial step. In order for it to get translated into your subconscious as a belief, you have to imagine how you would feel when it becomes reality. Start a practice of feeling as if it has already happened. Once you practice feeling this state every day, your subconscious will accept it. **Then, you will be aligning with your intention.**

**4. Use a recording device to record and play back your vision.** State your goal. Next, state four or five sentences about what you are doing. Say these statements eight to ten times each day. Feel the joy as if these goals have already happened. Play this recording three times a day. Keep visualizing them, until they become reality.

**5. Align your intentions with your Higher Self.** Your Higher Self is love, compassion, honesty, and anything positive. A few months after I began meditating, my values started changing and I had different goals. Be flexible to listen to your Inner wisdom. If you are creating more financial abundance but feel guilty about having money, your dream will have difficulty materializing.



**6. Just flow.** Tao means the way in harmony with the Universe. As Lao-tzu says in the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse of the Tao Te Ching:

Open yourself to the Tao  
And trust your natural responses.  
Then everything will fall into place

Have a mantra that you say when things seem out of control. For example, "This situation is temporary, I choose to align myself with my True Self and trust the process."

**7. Write in a gratitude journal every day.** The best way to be open to your highest good is to have an attitude of gratitude.

**8. Watch for synchronistic events.** Once you send out an intention to the Universe, be open to receive messages however they may appear. When you pay attention to synchronicities, more of them will occur.

**9. Love yourself.** Love yourself unconditionally. This commitment aligns you with your Highest Self, because it puts you in a positive vibration. Find exercises that will help you practice this behavior.

**10. Practice Meditation.** This practice is a must. You will retrain your ego or monkey chatter to lessen, so you can be an open channel to your Higher Self. Sit in a comfortable chair with your eyes closed or open. Breathe in on "ho" and out on "hum." Start out with five minutes and increase it at your discretion. When thoughts come in, notice them and let them pass by as though they are on clouds.

In conclusion, as you practice you'll start to "go with the flow" naturally. Divine energies will support your flow. Remember as you practice these techniques, to continue to work on your practical skills related to your goals. Enjoy your journey, you deserve it!

**Catherine is a Spiritual Life Coach.** She partners with you to help you stretch yourself into a potential you may not have realized. She has been a licensed clinical social worker, and is now coaching - focusing on mindfulness techniques.

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## CREATING PHOTOGRAPHY AS ART

by Joshua McNally

Josh: I've been a professional photographer for twenty seven years. I travel around all the time doing my photographic work. I get to go and do and be and see in some unusual and special places like the Olympics, Super Bowls, and twenty seven years in a row working the Kentucky Derby. I go to different cities all the time and I get to interact with celebrities. With my photography I've done every kind of job you can imagine, and I've taught photography classes various places including some colleges.

NLJ: Please share some of your photographic insights for creating photography as art.

Joshua: What I've about to share is for photographers of all levels of experience including semi-professional or professional - - the biggest thing is that you need to constantly experiment with your camera. New technology is supposed to make it easier for people to learn photography, but in actually for most people it is more of a crutch. The digital cameras out there do everything for you. That's great if you want a "conventionally perfect" picture every time. But if you want to be able to add your own flair or your own style to an image you really have to be able to turn off all the auto options on the camera and force it to do the stuff you want it to do. With digital you can take thousands of pictures, and eventually you're going to get the one that **you** want. But you're going to have a lot of "conventionally perfect" images up until that point if you just leave it on auto. (Photo shown is by Joshua McNally, Solitude)

The cameras these days will fight with you in order to make the image whatever the programmer of the camera considered "perfect." That was my most difficult transition from the old style of photography with developing your own negatives and all that to the digital. You know, I had to very firmly tell the camera "no I don't want you to do that. No. I want it to be overexposed. I want to have the image out of focus." The biggest thing that turns people off who are seeking to turn photography into "art" is that you are much of the time arguing with your camera.

NLJ: So is it possible to turn off all the automatic features on today's cameras?

Joshua: Yes. You need to delve into the menus. But also try the camera before you buy it. I myself bought a camera without trying it. After I got it I found out that the memory stick processing was limited. So I figured, that shouldn't be that much of a problem. But you have to do your research on what makes the camera good for you. Can you turn off the auto-focus? Can you turn off the aperture so that you can manually adjust it? Can you turn off the white-balance or the black-balance on your camera? It's important to pick a camera that allows you to do those things if you want to be

an "art photographer." If you are strictly a wedding photographer or are just taking candid photos where the image has to be in focus, than don't worry about that. Buy a camera off the shelf and you're fine.

There is a place for candid photography. But once you start trying to make it into art, it's different. Candid only go so far. I mean, I play with shadows. I want my blacks and shadows to come out really dark. A lot of the cameras now are programmed to expose every aspect of the image. Shadows are considered bad in the mind of the camera. So you have to turn off that option. Many people are nervous of breaking the rules or turning off the "safety nets" on their cameras. A lot of them are like---"auto, auto, auto. O.K., I'm ready to go. Click, click!" You have to go outside of your box just a little bit.



When I do my photography for myself - - a lot of my friends, family, other artists, and public love my photos. I sometimes look at one of my photos and think "If I had waited a few more minutes, if I had moved to the left, or maybe a little to the right, maybe I should have slowed down the exposure - - no, no, I should have sped it up - - that's what I should have done so I would have caught the leaves falling better." I spend many hours thinking about what I could have done differently. I look at it and I say, "I could have done better, I really could have done better." Seriously, though, if you don't do that you're not really an artist. You have to keep pushing yourself. Try to do it so

you're happy with it. The beauty with photography is that you are capturing a moment in time that is never going to happen again just like that. You can try to recreate it, but it won't be exactly that moment in time. Photography is a moment frozen in time. We all want to be able to stop time. We want to be able to freeze time, slow down. We may think, "This is good, this is where I want to be right now, stop moving forward." That's photography! As a photographer we want to be able to show people what we're seeing in the moment.

NLJ: How do you feel about Photoshop? (Continued)



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Photograph by Joshua McNally, Fountain of Water

Joshua: I don't use Photoshop to change the emotion of the image. I only use Photoshop to help clean up the image to make it more clear. I don't add in fake rays of sun. I don't distort the image to make it what was not really there. I'm not going to Photoshop a tree out of my shot. I took the photo, I could have seen it while I was there. Why do I need to change it so that you don't see that tree? I understand that people appreciate Photoshop for making things more high contrast or adding colors where there weren't colors before. Their stuff looks great, but I know that it's not real. I love Photoshop and I use it all the time for my clients. But for my art, not so much - - not so much.

NLJ: Fascinating. You've got a lot of photographic wisdom to share with people. What are a few of your current projects?

Joshua: I am now working on a documentary and I am also training three brand new photography videographers. It's really fun being a mentor that way. It's neat to see their eyes light up when they get excited. Instead of putting them in a box I trust them. The stuff they come back with is amazing and gives them pride in themselves and their own projects.

**Joshua McNally** is a local based Photographer. He has been published in national and local magazines and newspapers. He

started doing Photography when he was 16 and enjoys working on motion picture movies, sporting events, and documentaries. Joshua also does nature photography and architectural photography which has sold at craft fairs. He has been in many different galleries and art shows. Joshua McNally has taught Photography in different schools over his career. Joshua enjoys the chase of finding and taking an enjoyable photo. Joshua's grandfather introduced him to his first camera so that he could find a way to express himself through images. 502-457-7724

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## ***PURE LOVE & COMPASSION FILL OUR HEART WITH PEACE***

By Rev. Valerie Mansfield

This is the time of year when we celebrate the Season of Non-Violence and the Season of Love. The Season of Non-violence is marked by the memorial anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. and invites us to build an awareness of non-violence in our life. The Season of Love is marked by the legend of the martyred Saint Valentine who married young couples after Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage for young men, because he thought single men made better soldiers than those with families. These souls stood for love and compassion in the world and created a journey for us to follow.

We know there are many elements of Love: "Eros, or sexual passion. The first kind of love was Eros, named after the Greek god of fertility, and it represented the idea of sexual passion and desire... Philia, or deep friendship... Ludus, or playful love... Agape, or love for everyone... Pragma, or longstanding love ...ilautia, or love of the self."

The awakening of Agape Love or Divine Love, a Love for all or our Oneness, is the connection we all share. We are connected as one and the way we treat others represents the reflection of ourselves in the world. When we are demonstrating compassion and love for ourselves, we reflect the compassion and love to others. When we hate and are being destructive to ourselves and others we are reflecting the opposite of love and compassion. So let us stand in compassion for ourselves and others and see them as the soul embodied as Divine Love Consciousness.

Love is a spiritual gift and not an emotion. Love is expressed in your feeling nature and is the balancing tool between your feeling and thinking natures. It is what balances the emotions. Love transforms, transfigures and fills the heart with harmony. It fills us with kind, helpful thoughts, words and cheer. Love fills us with life overflowing with joy and peace. We are all connected. We are one. Love is never changing and never ending. Love is the answer to all humanities problems. We need only to remember we are the love we want to see in the world.

Love is unlimited, the oneness of all that is, the good. In this aspect of love we can draw to us all which is good in the universe. This is the magnetizing spirit of love. We love those ideas we want to manifest in our life. If we want someone to love, we must be aware of our oneness first with our self - - then with the person or traits of the person and call it forth into being. You can do the same thing with health or wealth by drawing it forth through love. We draw forth compassion by being compassionate; being the compassion we want to see in the world, through love. We open our heart and mind to the oneness of good in the universe to serve as a compassionate being. The word compassion means to love

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together with, or the platinum rule "Do unto others as they want to be treated." All of humanity wants to be treated with love, kindness and compassion. There is not one soul who does not crave those three things.

We must recognize and love the soul of every being, looking beyond the actions to the real living soul and holding the soul in



love until the being is able to pull from the darkness into the light, transforming their thoughts and actions into love. This is how we tell if we are standing in love, by loving them right where they are without any exceptions. We have no agenda in mind when we truly stand as love. When the soul lives in the darkness they are unable to find the light without the

compassion and strength of love. This is how we transform ourselves and the world.

Be the LOVE and COMPASSION you want in your life in every moment, and this will expand into the world for all of humanity. Remember there is no absence of love, no separation in life, and we draw all we desire with good for all in peace and harmony.

Only good comes from love.

**Rev. Valerie Mansfield** serves as the Associate Minister at Unity of Louisville and Co-Director of the Resilience Family Project. Valerie is a Holistic Healer and Spiritual Life Coach. Valerie serves the Louisville community working with homeless families and women in recovery, creating conscious living skills, promoting peace, compassion and resiliency. Valerie's passion is to create a safe and loving atmosphere where all ages can explore and manifest a life filled with love, peace and joy. **502-583-5559**

## **MUSICAL WAVES** by Timothy Mast

Music, could it be the healing method of the future? With more research being verified all the time about the health benefits of music, music therapy, playing an instrument, singing, and drumming - - it is becoming more apparent how such practices are important to our health and vitality. I have been a musician for 36 years now. It has been known for many years that music utilizes both hemispheres of the brain. Music is one of the few activities that does activate both hemispheres of the brain.

One of the earlier books on the effects of music was Don Campbell's book, The Mozart Effect. His work showed how certain types of music influence the brain and body differently. Numerous studies on the brains of musicians have shown that musicians have a much more developed hippocampus. While the hippocampus plays a role in memory, the role it plays for musicians seems to be more along the lines of spatial awareness. This spatial awareness also plays a role with the mathematical understanding the person has. And, like other artistic endeavors, the musician activates the right hemisphere and the creativity that is there.

There are many studies on music now, and particularly on vocal music. In relation to the healing effect of instruments, a person using her or his own voice seems to have the most profound health benefits. Having sung in choirs for thirty plus years, I know that using one's voice for at least thirty minutes will release all sorts of helpful chemicals in the body, and particularly endorphins. This tends to result in a happy person. This has now been verified by many studies, and also by years of experience.

With my studies in music, one of the things I was fortunate to learn was toning. Toning is fascinating, for as one tones she or he discovers that certain notes, tones, or vowels do not "tone" as well. This vocal difficulty relates to imbalances within the body. There are even people that work with others who can tone and hear/feel the imbalances in another person's body.

For me, I feel that playing piano or other instruments seemed to have a similar result as singing. With singing, there was often a communal aspect, but one would have that with bands and orchestras too. I enjoy drumming as well, but presently my choice for having a very profound healing effect upon people is with crystal bowls. The reason for this is that I believe the impact of music can be even more profound when paired with the healing effects of meditation and vocal mantras, while listening in an altered brain wave state.

With the crystal bowls, quartz is the primary mineral used to create a positive healing effect upon the body. The crystal bowls I most often use in my meditations are called alchemy bowls as they have other minerals either mixed in or adhered to the quartz. Quartz is silicon dioxide, and within the body, there is a good amount of silica-particularly within the fascia (connective tissue). The body generally has a good amount of oxygen as well. Both of these elements will help create a resonant frequency within the body of a person near a crystal bowl being played. The crystal bowls will alter the water of your body, with the body being over



80% water, the crystal bowls will re-pattern and re-structure the water of the body as well.

Outside of the resonant effect, the bowls create a wave of sound that goes through a person. Each and every cell in a person's body will be vibrated. This can cause detoxing, healing, regeneration and more. The brain will often quickly enter an alpha-theta state--often within two minutes. With focus and intention, the bowls can become even more powerful tools of change and transformation. One of the nice things with the bowls is that they will affect a person, whether or not the person is playing an active role. I have found that the crystal bowls are not only a meditation tool, but a powerful tool of transformation.

I find that sound is one of the most profound ways of altering one's physiology and being. It has been used for millennia by shamans and other healers throughout the ages. Whether one goes to a monastery in India or Italy, one will hear the healing power of sound. If one goes to a place where there is an indigenous ceremony, sound will be used. The power of sound reverberates throughout the Earth.

**Timothy Mast** is a Licensed Massage Therapist who integrates different therapies. Some of those therapies include Cranio Sacral Therapy, Lymphatic Drainage Therapy, Cranio Sacral Immune Response Therapy, Visceral Manipulation, Advanced Brain Therapy, Myofascial Release Therapy, Sound Therapy, and different forms of Energy work, etc. To find out more, go to <http://sonorous.byregion.net>

Editor's Note: Crystal bowls of different sizes and composition create different lovely tones/notes when they are played. The bowls are played by gently moving the "playing mallet" along the inside or outside of circumference of the bowl - - or by gently tapping.

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# Growing Herbs in Pots Indoors

Sybil Watts Temple

As we all know, the best tasting food starts with the freshest ingredients. Cooks like the convenience of having fresh ingredients close at hand. What could be fresher or more convenient than growing herbs right in your own kitchen garden? Even people who live in small spaces can grow a kitchen herb garden.

The ideal setting for an indoor herb garden is the kitchen, where you can snip fresh herbs and use them in dishes without skipping a beat. If you don't have a spot in your kitchen, though, you can still grow herbs in any sunny room. Here's how.

## Find the Best Spot for an Indoor Herb Garden

To grow well indoors, herbs need as much natural light as possible. Place them in a sunny spot near a window where they'll get at least four hours of sun daily. Windows that face south or southwest are your best shot at sun, though east or west facing windows also will do. There is little light in north facing windows, thus plants don't really grow well in the north areas of a home.

If you're not sure whether a spot gets enough light, try this test. On a sunny to partly sunny day, turn off all lights and periodically check on the natural sunlight. How much sun does the spot get throughout the day? If you don't have any windows that get at least four hours daily of bright sunlight, you can use a lamp with a grow light bulb. Grow lights are available at most department stores with a Light Bulb Department. I usually get mine at Lowe's, just because I live across the street from one, however Home Depot and Minnard's usually carry a good selection of sizes and types.

## Give Indoor Herbs Good Drainage.

Herbs need to be damp and well-drained. Herbs sitting in water will drown and die due to root-rot. Potted plants of any kind sitting directly on a tabletop or windowsill will ruin these surfaces. Clay is intended to let moisture pass through to prevent over-watering, so it will not work as a windowsill liner. The best liners or saucers for windowsill gardens is plastic, rubber, or glass. I don't recommend metal as it has a tendency to rust, and rust spots are nearly impossible to clean from most indoor surfaces.

The best pots for growing indoors are plastic or ceramic glazed containers. Although clay pots do help with drainage, they dry out very quickly. If you are growing herbs indoors during winter when furnace heat causes homes to get especially dry, use the glazed or plastic containers that won't dry out as quickly as clay.

Always use a premium potting mix for containers to pot your indoor herbs. And by all means, be sure your pots have drainage holes!

## Herbs That Can Share a Pot

If your space is very small, you may want to plant several herbs together in the same pot. This is doable, you just have to make sure that all have the same water and light requirements. Additionally, you need to clip and use them on a regular basis to keep all plants small. Otherwise, some will take over the pot. Use a pot that is at least twelve inches in diameter. A mix of herbs in the same pot can be pretty and practical and will keep your herbs small.

## High Light, Low Water

Many herbs come from the Mediterranean area and thus share generally the same needs for damp, not wet, lean soil, and lots of bright sunlight. Rosemary, oregano, sage, thyme, and marjoram all fall into this group.



Thyme is a tiny, creeping plant that can easily be kept in a pot with regular clipping. Pair it with a prostrate rosemary and with variegated sage, which grows more slowly than all-green sage. Oregano and marjoram grow nicely in a shared pot. Although lavender fits into the water and light requirements, I would not plant it in the same pot as the more pungent herbs because the delicate lavender will be overcome by the stronger fragrances and lose its uniqueness. Plant lavender in its own separate pot.

## High Light, High Water

Basil, cilantro, tarragon and parsley also like full sun, however these species prefer more moisture in their soil than the Mediterranean varieties. Cilantro and tarragon can share a pot. Parsley, is a biennial, living only two years. So if you plan to keep the herb pot going indefinitely, prepare for the parsley to give out early. Parsley also rates its own pot. I use a lot of parsley. To make sure I always have plenty on hand, I plant a new pot each spring - and use from the pot planted the year before. This keeps two pots in constant rotation. If you have dreams of making pesto, lots of basil plants will be needed. One small basil plant in a mixed pot won't be nearly enough for pesto, which is why I don't put basil in with other moisture lovers. If you are a pesto lover, you may want basil in its own pot, as well. If you don't use lots of basil, it will do well in the mixed pot with cilantro and tarragon.

Continued on next page

(Continued from Growing Herbs in Pots Indoors)

## Mints for Pest Control

The mint family plants, which include peppermint, spearmint, catmint, and flavored mints such as orange mint and lemon balm, are spreading plants. They send out runners and grow sideways. For this reason, mints don't usually survive long in pots. Pots prevent them from spreading out, and the original plants don't live very long. If you're determined to have mint, grow it in a long window box where the plant will be able to spread out to the sides. Don't mix different mints in the same box because they interbreed and will produce some new, and probably not as deliciously fragrant, varieties.

If you put a mint plant in every room, spiders, mosquitoes and ants will all leave and not return as long as those plants are there. Mint also repels mice and other rodents. DO NOT grow mint in the house if you have rodent type pets, such as hamsters or guinea pigs. They may become ill, and they will always be attempting to get out and away from the mint!

## Indoor Herbs Are Happy With Typical Indoor Temperatures.

Many cooks only grow herbs indoors during the winter when it's too cold outside or too wet to dig in the dirt, however, you can grow herbs inside year-round. Indoor herbs prefer the same temperatures that most people do—around 65 to 70 degrees F. If you're comfortable, they probably are. At night, temperatures near a window may drop to 55 or 60, and most herbs like that, too. Keep foliage from touching glass to protect from getting nipped by cold.

Basil is trickier, though. Many kitchen gardeners yearn for basil in their indoor garden. If you have plenty of sun and warmth indoors, basil should thrive, but don't keep it on a cool windowsill. Basil leaves will droop and fade after a short time in cool air. It prefers indoor temperatures in the 70s day and night.

Remember that the air next to a window will be cooler in winter (or hotter in summer) than your average indoor temperature, so adjust your plants accordingly! Dry air, whether from air conditioning or heating, is hard on most herbs. If you can give them a weekly shower in the sink they will be happier.

Indoor herb plants will probably stretch and be spindlier than plants in the outdoors, yet they will still give you plenty of fresh clippings year round if you pay attention to these simple rules and ideas. Fertilize with an organic Herb, Vegetable & Flower Plant Food about once a month if you are harvesting leaves regularly.

Try these culinary herbs in your indoor herb garden: Chives, Lemon Balm, Marjoram, Oregano (Italian, Hot or Spicy), Parsley (flat, Italian or curled), Rosemary, Sage, Thyme (German or Lemon), and mint (peppermint, spearmint or sweet mint).

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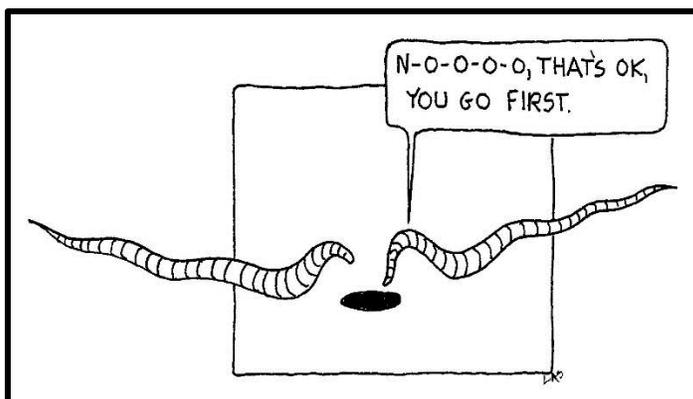
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# HEALTHY FATS & OILS ARE INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT FOR US

by Dr. Lisa Tostado, ND

NLJ: There seem to be many different opinions as to what types of fats and oils are best to eat and how much. This article is focusing mostly on unsaturated fats such as oils, and the next issue of this journal will focus more on saturated fats such as animal source fats.

Dr. Tostado: Most Americans are deficient in healthy fats and consume too many of the unhealthy fats. We have been conditioned to be afraid that eating fat of any kind will raise our cholesterol level. However, cholesterol is more often linked to inflammatory processes in the body caused by a diet high in processed sugars, refined flours, and chemically altered fats such as partially hydrogenated oils and trans fats commonly found in cookies, chips, cakes, candy, and other packaged foods. Healthy fats are incredibly important in our diet, and we can enjoy consuming them in many different ways. We can get fats from our whole foods like dairy, eggs, fish, lean meats, raw nuts, seeds, and different types of oils like flaxseed oil and unrefined coconut oil. It is important that we know how much we should be eating and what types. The best approach for buying, storing, and cooking with fats is also very important to know, because they can break down. When fats break down they become rancid and they are no longer a healthy nutritional food.



There are three different things to think about concerning oils breaking down. There is oxidation with oxygen, and there is heat, and also light. Light can break down oil. I would say that a dark glass bottle would be your best option to buy oil in. If it is in a plastic bottle, the plastic can leach into the oil over time. Oil can also react with metal. Once you open a container of oil there begins to be contact with oxygen. Minimize the time between using oil and putting the cap back on. That's because the oil will begin to break down.

NLJ: Should the oil be stored out of the refrigerator or in the refrigerator where it stays cool?

Dr. Tostado: Most oils can be stored out of the refrigerator as long as they stay in the temperature range of 56 to 70 degrees. In a dark closet would be desirable or in the coolest part of the house - away from light and away from your stove. Some people store their olive oil in the cabinet above their stove, or right on a ledge by their stove, or in a window sill. Those aren't desirable places to store it. If you do store it in the refrigerator you can keep the oil good for longer, however, it is recommend that you consume it within a year. A few oils must be refrigerated such as flax oil and hemp oil. It is crucial to read the label concerning refrigeration.

NLJ: I pour my olive oil in a jar that has a large enough opening so that I can easily get a spoon in. Then I keep it in the refrigerator and spoon out what I want even though it is semi solid. It melts very quickly. That works well for me. Starting now I'm going to be more careful of keeping my oils out of the light and the lid on. Which of the oils do you think are particularly healthful for people to eat?

Dr. Tostado: As far as the oils, there are different types of fats that we need. Some of them we cannot make in our body. We need to get them from our diet. The essential fatty acids would be included in that category. They are called essential because they are needed to sustain life. Our body cannot create them. Essential fatty acids are the omega-3 and the omega-6 fatty acids.

Although not considered essential, the omega-9 monounsaturated fats are also important for good health. Omega-9 fats are found in foods like table olives, olive oil, avocados and sunflower oil. Omega-9 fats can lower cholesterol and support cardiovascular health. Omega-3 fats can be found in cold water fish and plant sources. Fish oil, krill oil and cod liver oil are excellent sources of omega-3 fats, and more specifically in the fatty acids docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). Those are the substances that the body uses to support the health of our brain, skin, and heart. In fact a deficiency in these can contribute to heart disease and inflammation. Omega-3 oils can also help curb stiffness and joint pain, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, ADHD, and much more. Flaxseed oil is a good source of a plant based omega-3 fat called alpha linolenic acid - - or ALA. ALA, which can also be found in walnuts, is thought to decrease the risk of heart disease by helping to maintain normal heart rhythm and heart pumping. It might also be helpful in reducing triglycerides and the formation of blood clots.

Most Americans eat much more of omega-6 fats than the omega-3 fats. A somewhat equal amount is better. Most people eat a large amount of omega 6 in their diet because it is prevalent in soy oil, canola oil, and corn oil - - which are prevalent in fast food and processed food and commercial salad dressings. Most vegetable oils are omega-6. These tend to be more inflammatory. It is important to note that omega-6 can be pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory. It can go either way depending on (continued)

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the source. With omega-6 fatty acids, if you are getting it from foods such as sunflower seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, almonds, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, wheat germ, organic eggs or certain plant based oils such as olive oil, black currant seed oil, borage oil or evening primrose oil - - those are anti-inflammatory. However if you are getting your omega-6 fatty acids from vegetable oils such as corn, soy, canola oil, or in processed or fast foods - - then you are getting the inflammatory effect instead of the anti-inflammatory effect. The fat in grain fed beef is also omega-6, and it also has an inflammatory effect. Most cattle are grain fed at least part of their existence - - even though they don't digest grain well. Grass finished beef means that the cattle were fed grass their whole life. That beef is healthier to consume.

NLJ: I'll share what oils I eat, in case that is helpful for the readers as an example. I put one half tablespoon of flax seed oil in my breakfast smoothie. That's good for Omega-3. For Omega-3, I also take a fish oil pill (1000 milligrams) at breakfast along with my multi vitamin-mineral pill. For omega-9 fats, I eat one tablespoon of olive oil with both lunch and dinner. If I'm having a salad I sprinkle the oil on the salad and then sprinkle on organic apple cider vinegar and shake on some herbs and seasonings. That makes a quick delicious healthy salad dressing. If the meal is a soup or stew or any cooked food, I add the tablespoon of olive oil to the food after it is cooked. It adds nice flavor and texture. My daily omega 6 sources are one half tablespoon hemp oil in my morning smoothie and about two eggs a week. I've now decided to somewhat increase my intake of healthy sources of omega 6. I am almost completely vegetarian, and am lactose intolerant, and allergic to nuts and seeds. I don't eat any hydrogenated or processed fats or oils in snacks or meals. I don't usually crave snacks, but when I do it might be an apple. I eat a lot of vegetables, beans, fruits, and some grains, and some 100% real butter (butter is all fat and no lactose). I love water & herbal teas. My combined daily calories from fats and oils is about 475 calories, and my total food calories for a day is usually about 2300. 475 is about 20 % of 2300, which I understand is a good percentage of fat in one's diet.

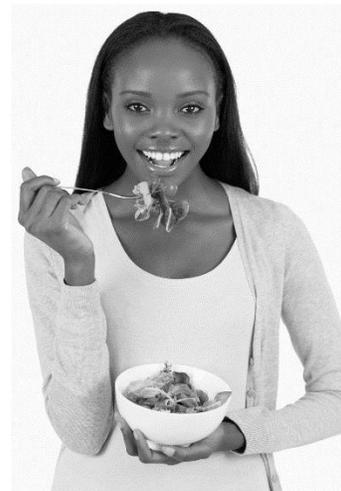
Dr. Tostado: That sounds like an excellent, well rounded diet, particularly with your intent to increase your healthy omega 6 intake. The general rule of thumb is that 20% of your total calories should consist of healthy fats, balanced out by quality protein and complex carbs such as vegetables and whole grains. Fats help stabilize our blood sugar and balance our mood. Our brain consists of 60% fat. If our cholesterol drops too low, we start to lose our memory!

When we talk about oils, how an oil is extracted is crucial as to whether it is going to be really healthy for our body. We find that many oils tend to be chemically extracted and heated, and the nutrients have been pulled out of the oil or broken down. When we are looking to buy an oil we want to buy an unrefined oil. Also in terms of the way that it has been extracted, there are expeller pressed or cold pressed. If an oil just says cold pressed, there's no guarantee that after it has been extracted that it hasn't been subjected to a heating process. What you really want to look for

is unrefined. The other key word would be virgin. For example, if you are looking for a good olive oil the extra virgin unrefined olive oil would be the one that you would want to buy because it hasn't been subjected to any kind of heating process or chemically treated. Also, organic is very important.

NLJ: For my olive oil, I do buy organic extra virgin unrefined olive oil in a dark or deep colored bottle. That is very important to me. Would you describe why extra-virgin oil is important? Apparently extra-virgin oil means the first time the olives have been put through the extraction process.

Dr. Tostado: Yes, you want to buy extra-virgin unrefined oils as much as possible. The more it has been processed and handled, then it starts to break down and you're not getting as much of the good fats out of it anymore. Then it becomes seriously less healthy. Even with coconut oil, there is refined coconut oil which is best avoided. With the refined you know that it has been processed to some degree. It's not going to be as healthy as eating an unrefined coconut oil.



NLJ: Next issue of Natural Living Journal will have part two of this article. Part one has focused mostly on unsaturated oil and fat sources. Part two will focus on the importance of some quality saturated fats in our diet and healthy sources for that - - such as 100% butter, grass finished meat, raw cheese, and plain unsweetened yogurt (with added honey if desired). We do need a balance of saturated and unsaturated. Part two will also focus on how cooking affects oils and fats, and desirable healthy ways to approach that.

Note: As always, consult your health care provider before making significant changes in your diet.

**Bio: 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. Inspired by the early pioneers in whole food nutrition such as Weston A. Price and Dr. Royal Lee, founder of Standard Process, Dr. Tostado decided to complete the 100-hour CCWFN program in 2016 with the International Foundation of Health and Nutrition for Clinical Certification in Whole Food Nutrition. She has been a resident of Louisville, KY for the past 8 years. Currently she has two office spaces, one at the Rainbow Blossom Wellness Center at Springhurst, and at Sharp Chiropractic in Fern Creek. She also loves to garden and spend time in nature.

## **EVERYTHING I DO FEELS LIKE I'M DANCING** by Maria Whitley

Nia was created in 1985 in California as a fusion or weaving together of the Dance Arts, Healing Arts, and Martial Arts. It's fantastic! It has transformed my life. It's good cardio, circular movement for flexibility, great for agility and balance and stability. It's low impact, there's no pain, all gain - - one remains completely relaxed. Nia can be adapted to any level of physical capability. The goal of Nia is that "everything I do feels like I'm dancing." There are fifty-two movements in Nia. For each session some of those movements are choreographed to a piece of music. The music is eclectic. It can be anything from Latin, to Asian music from India, to Native American music, to Prince. The music is crucial in Nia.



The movements are drawn from nine profound sources. The Dance Arts include jazz dance which brings in fun and showmanship and play. Then modern dance is the dance of shape and space. Similar to that we have "Duncan Dance." Isadora Duncan was a founding mother of modern dance. She was huge in empowering women to express themselves through their bodies in a free way. So what we get from the energy and chemistry of Duncan Dance in Nia is this sensation of free spirited light hearted flowing movement almost like when we were small children and danced around our living room. It's that sort of curiosity and wonder. Those are the dance forms.

The Healing Arts aspect of Nia comes from yoga where we find a conscious alignment of the bones and joints. Also there is the Alexander technique which is an awareness of the sensation of our movement coming from the top - - the crown of the head reaching up and out. Often in Alexander you will hear a teacher talking about sensing your head like a helium balloon. That is what Alexander teaches us - - the lifting of the spine and the movement coming from the crown. Additionally there is Feldenkrais which is the awareness of sensation in any part of our body. Moshe Feldenkrais created a whole system of somatic education. He believed that any part of our body has the capacity to heal. If we slow our body down, it allows our body a chance to reprogram and let the nervous system reset. If we come into that sensation of

awareness our body will "talk" to us and tell us exactly what we need to do to heal. That's what we practice in Nia - - the idea that we are self-healers and that it is through movement that we find health.

The Martial Arts aspect of Nia includes T'ai Chi from which we get the slow mindful movement. We learn to shift our weight rather than pound the weight. From Aikido we get a sense of spherical harmonious movement. Our turns come from Aikido, so they are very grounded and come from the hara. That is a very safe way to turn. In Nia we define hara as the one point where the second chakra lies. Put your hand so that your thumb is in your belly button and your palm rests on your belly. Image a band going all the way around you and into you and out of you. That one point - - center of all centers is your hara. From Tae Kwon Do, we get a sense of organic precision. So the kicks and punches and blocks of Tae Kwon Do come into the dance of Nia. We discover our agility and our precision. It's almost as if we have these archetypes within our bodies and just by calling on these energies, it brings out that part of our being. I have always personally been a very positive happy person. Really connecting with my Tae Kwon Do has made me more balanced in terms of recognizing my fierceness and my power and strength. Yeah! So those are the three Martial Arts.

Nia is conscious movement even when we are playing, doing jazz, pretending to be a tiger - - whatever we're doing, that focus is always present. The three sources of Martial Arts and Dance Arts and Healing Arts are woven together at the same time. There is a fusion. There's always a sensation of being aware of being in our bodies - - and sensing what's going on spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Nia is a beautiful practice.

**Maria Whitley Bio:** For over fifteen years Maria Whitley has been privileged to teach movement and music. She is a Black Belt in the Nia Technique and masterfully creates play-full movement experiences that allow folks of every decade to condition their bodies and self-heal. Maria also teaches Music Together at her studio, Shine, where conscious movement of all kinds are offered. Visit [shinelouisville.com](http://shinelouisville.com) for more information. 502-442-2843.

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## **SIMPLE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY BACK**

**Kelly Riska, ORT/L,RYT**

My husband hurt his back one summer while clearing the yard of some large rocks. He did not even realize he hurt his back lifting those rocks until later when he went to mow the yard. When he tried to get the lawn mower started by pulling on the cord, his back just “snapped” and he felt instant pain. I'd never seen my strong and vital husband in such pain, it was difficult to witness. The doctor said that he had two herniated discs and tore a ligament in his back. During his convalescence, I made sure he was comfortable using a bolster under his knees to relieve pressure off his back. Luckily, my husband has a high pain tolerance and is not one to just lie around. This gave me the opportunity to use my skills as an Occupational Therapist and Yoga instructor to guide him through some gentle stretches for his back. I taught him how important it is to use the breath while stretching and to help manage his pain. He also wore a simple elastic back brace for several months after his injury. After two to three weeks, he was out riding his bicycle and the pain was significantly less. Needless to say the doctor was very impressed!

Working as an Occupational Therapist, I am constantly on my feet and getting into various positions as I help someone to sit or stand up. Part of my job qualifications include lifting and being able to transfer a person from one surface to another. In order to do this safely, I have to use proper body mechanics and move my body in a way that is most efficient. For example, say you want to pick up a laundry basket of clothing off the floor. Rather than keeping your legs straight while bending over; bend your knees and use the strength of your legs and keep the basket close to your body.

The spine is the main framework for the body and knowing the various parts of your spine is very important. In fact, I generally go over the anatomical parts of the spine in almost every Yoga class I teach. Your back has three natural curves: Lumbar (low back) curves towards the front of the body, Thoracic (middle back) curves towards the back of the body, and cervical (neck) curves towards the front. It's important to maintain and keep these natural curves in balance...hence having “good posture!” We all remember hearing that from our parents, “keep your back straight and don't slouch!” Well at least I do!

So, perhaps there is something to having “good posture.” Try standing in front of the mirror and noticing your own posture....and don't cheat! Now try to straighten out your upper back then pull your belly in and move your toes inward a little. Imagine that something is pulling you up from the crown of the head like a string or a giant “hook” coming from the sky. Begin to notice how things seem to line up better and you appear a little taller and may even

feel less compression on your low back! This is what I mean by having a balanced back and essentially good posture. This is the “Key” to a healthy spine.

Now the trick is to keep the natural curves of the spine in balance when moving about through your day. This also means while standing, sitting, and lying down. Sit in a chair where the seat is high enough so hips and knees are equal and feet flat on the floor. Then take a small towel and roll it to 1-1 ½ in. and place it behind your back at your lumbar curve. Be sure to choose a firm mattress that will help to support the natural curves in your back. Always try to stand as upright as possible and walk with your head up and your toes pointing straight out in front.



In addition, it's also important to stretch and strengthen the muscles and joints along the back, abdomen, hips and legs. A simple stretch for the low back is to lie on your back and bring your knees to your chest. Hold to each knee and push the knees away from the chest as you inhale and bring the knees back towards chest as you exhale. Repeat this back and forth movement several times. Another simple back stretch begins on the floor on your hands and knees. Spread the knees a little and place hands under the shoulders. First take an inhale, then exhale and bring your hips towards your heels. Inhale again and rise back up to your hands and knees. Repeat this several times slowly coordinating breath and movement.

Remember to take your time and prepare before you move especially when bending forward and/or lifting. Be sure to protect your joints and use a thick pad or towel when kneeling. Staying in good shape and exercising regularly will help prevent or lessen any injuries. This is what truly made a big difference for my husband and his quick recovery from his back injury!

**Kelly Riska** is an experienced Occupational Therapist, treating adults with various physical conditions. She incorporates Holistic modalities such as Yoga, Craniosacral, and Reiki to enhance and balance energies within the body. Areas of expertise: pain management, stress reduction, and body awareness. Providing individualized assessment and treatment for the highest level of well-being.

\* As always, check with your health practitioner before trying any new exercises programs.

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# FINDING STRENGTH AND SELF COMPASSION WITHIN

By Joyce C. Gerrish

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

"You look so beautiful tonight, Crystal. You always do. I'm so glad we've been seeing each other. Seeing Nallie's dog running through all those hoops and high jumps was a riot - - and he won third prize! It looked like fun for him. It almost makes me want to have a dog. How about you?" Crystal laughs and agrees. He hugs her and says softly, "It's really special doing things with you - - know that?" Crystal murmurs in response, "I love being with you, Shawn." They gaze into each other's eyes. Eventually Crystal says, "Thank Heavens our kids brought us together. We all cooked some good chow together that first night that you and your daughter first came over. To think we've been living on the same block for a couple years and hadn't noticed each other beyond saying hello now and then."

"Yeah," chuckles Shawn, "Funny, I guess I sort of figured you were married. What man in his right senses would let go of you? Life has its twists and turns, doesn't it? There's probably a guy somewhere saying that to my ex-wife. Even though she's not with me anymore, I have to admit that she's special, too. We're still friends." Crystal bites her lip, then she snuggles up close to Shawn and hugs him tight. "Anyway, you're divorced and that's over, right? I'm glad that we're here together now. You feel so good to hold. I feel safe and warm in your arms." Shawn looks down at Crystal, smiles, and whispers, "Me too." He kisses her lips tenderly. They enjoy quiet moments together in the silence of the evening holding and kissing each other.

Eventually Shawn says softly, "Everything seems so perfect now being with you. I hope with all my heart that we never hurt each other, we've both already been through too much. We need to always be compassionate and kind with each other, you know? Is it possible - - or is pain inevitably a part of life? I sure wish I knew. I don't want to ever see your lovely eyes welling up with tears caused by me." Crystal kisses his cheek and holds him close. Shawn says, "Everything in me wants to try to entice you into your bedroom." Crystal hugs him closer

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A month later, Crystal answers her cell phone. Shawn's voice says, "Crystal, my ex-wife keeps calling me. It's almost like she feels she losing her last grip on me. I don't know why she's doing this to me. She's the one that wanted the divorce in the first place." Crystal asks quietly, "Honey, what are you saying to her?" He answers with a shaky voice, "What am I saying to her? Not much. She won't let me get a word in edgewise. She talks up a storm. Suddenly she thinks she loves me again. She was the one that wanted the divorce because she fell in love with a guy at her office. Now that has fallen through and she wants a backup plan. Why is she coming back to haunt me now? This is making me feel a little dizzy. I feel sort of confused - - I told her I'd meet her this evening, she insisted. - - (Silence) - - Are you there, Crystal?" - - (Silence) - - Shawn says again, "Crystal, are you there?"



Say something, please!" A quiet strained voice replies, "We can talk later, O.K.? - - not now. Bye Honey."

Before long Crystal calls her friend Janis. Through tears Crystal says, "Janis, I can't believe this is happening. He really sounded emotionally wound up as though his ex-wife still has a huge hold on his heart. He says he's meeting her this evening to talk. I - I - I don't want to do battle with her over him. Th-Th-That's not what I thought I-I-I was getting into here." She sniffs and blows her nose. "My heart is bleeding, and we've only been dating a couple months."

Janis responds, "Crystal, you're like a sister to me. I care so much about you and we've had so many special times together. Because I care about you, I'm encouraging you to find a way to understand and heal some of the pain from your childhood. I know your childhood was abusive. Those old emotional wounds may be causing you to feel so needy for a romantic relationship that you get emotionally attached really fast and strong. That can make it hard for you to recognize red flags when they come up. Shawn seems to still have strong romantic feelings for his ex-wife. He's not fully emotionally available to you, wouldn't you say?" Crystal gulps and says, "I thought he was there for me. It seemed like almost instant love. Now I feel the 'room' is getting sort of crowded." Janis continues, "Believe me, I understand your being drawn to him. He seems super nice, fun to be around, and very attractive. But he has a red flag that shouts "take caution."

Crystal gulps, "I hear you - - I'm in so much pain. I really fell for him fast. I thought that here is the perfect man for me. He really enjoys children and home life. I - I - I love him!" She sobs then says with a tiny childlike voice, "At least I thought I did." Janis responds, "I encourage you to give yourself and him some space so he can sort through his feelings about his Ex who is coming on strong again. Sometimes giving yourself a little more space for a while **by choice** can help you focus on discovering and building you own inner resources and strengths. You're a fantastic person! You've got a lot of good things going on in your own life. Your teaching is going well, you have a precious daughter Amy, and a nice home. You have artistic talent that you might truly enjoy taking time to develop more. Amy and you could explore that together, she's got budding talent, too. Give yourself a chance to feel happy and complete within yourself before you get too

deep with a romantic partner. You don't need someone else to 'fix' your life and make you feel O.K."

Crystal responds, "I know you've said that before, maybe I better listen this time. I can't keep going on this emotional roller coaster. You once told me that attending Co-Dependents Anonymous meetings think it might be helpful to me? I need something right now to hold me steady. Heaven only knows what's going to happen when Shawn and his Ex get together tonight." Janis says compassionately, "I do feel Co-Dependents could be helpful to you, or you might want to consider a counselor. I can't tell you how helpful both of those have been to me over the years. In the meanwhile, why don't you meet me after work tomorrow and we can talk some more about this. You're going to be fine, no matter what happens with you and Shawn." Crystal says slowly, "Thank you, Janis. I'm getting out my paints tonight. Amy and I can have fun painting for a while. There is a part of me that does long to get back to my art. I have a painting I never finished. I'm so busy teaching art all the time, I tend to forget to take time to let myself enjoy it, you know?" Janis responds, "I do know. It's easy to not get around to doing some of the things we love to do. But it's important."

**Joyce Gerrish, M.A.**, 35 years heart centered Intuitive Counselor/Life Coach & Energy Healer. Master's Degree in Human Development, Graduate of National Institute of Whole Health, Reiki Master Teacher/Practitioner, Publisher/Editor of "Natural Living Journal," [www.natural-living-journal.com](http://www.natural-living-journal.com)., Author of book, "Secrets of Wisdom, Awaken to the Miracle of You." Classes in Spiritual Awareness, Natural Healing, and Meditation. [www.joycegerrish.com](http://www.joycegerrish.com). Sliding scale fee. 812-566-1799, Louisville Office

## JOURNAL WRITING QUESTIONS FOR SELF-COMPASSION: FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION, TOO.

1. When you're feeling discouraged, are you gentle and kind with yourself? How do you support yourself then? Take a walk? Call a friend? Read inspirational book?
2. What do you consider some of your best qualities? Be your own best friend and really give yourself credit. Are you allowing those qualities to shine, and giving yourself opportunities to express them?
3. Do you give yourself some time to do what you love to do? Hobby? Dancing? Getting out in nature? Playing a musical instrument or listening to beautiful music? Visiting a friend? Taking an adult education course you've been yearning to try?



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## STORYTELLING, by Thomas Freese, M.A.

I am a storyteller and author. It has been my great honor and pleasure to tell stories to audiences from preschool to active adults to assisted living. Some people say that storytelling is a lost art and there may be truth in that comment, however I've found that so many want to both hear stories and tell their own tales. From folktales to ghostly stories to accounts of everyday living, sharing a story connects both teller and audience. - - And many find healing in telling a true story from challenging times in their life.

I've authored eleven books and there are many amazing stories folks have shared with me that appear in my books, true tales of encounters with ghosts, spirits and angels. Children of all ages want their imagination matched by a good narrative, some magic or mystery, and characters that teach them life truisms.

I also work with wood, saving logs from local cut down trees, wood that was headed for the chipper or fireplace. - - And each tree has folklore, a teaching wisdom that we can learn about in reading...in stories! For example, the Celtic peoples used holly wood for spear shafts, so that tree has the association of strength in battle. Our First Nations people call trees "Standing People." Throughout Europe folks have put ribbons and other objects on tree branches for wishing or other ritual prayers.

Stories can begin anywhere, with a familiar sound, a kitchen fragrance, an object or a photo. Storytelling can keep strictly to the facts or can wander near or far from the truth. When I was in middle school I had a telescope and taught myself the constellations of the night sky. Here is one story about the Pleiades star cluster, from the Onondaga Native Americans...

The children took a fancy to dance for their own amusement. They met daily in a quiet spot by the lake to have what they called their jolly dance. They had done this a long time, when one day a very old man came to them. They had seen no one like him before. He was dressed in white feathers, and his white hair shone like silver. If his appearance was strange, his words were unpleasant as well. He told them they must stop their dancing, or evil would happen to them. Little did the children heed, for they were intent on their sport, and again and again the old man appeared, repeating his warning.

The dances did not afford all the enjoyment the children wished, and a little boy, who liked a good dinner, suggested a feast the next time they met. The food must come from their parents,

who were all asked when the children returned home. "You will waste and spoil good victuals," said one. "You can eat at home as you should," said another, and so they got nothing at all. Sorry as they were for this, they met and danced as before. A little to eat after each dance would have made them happy indeed. Empty stomachs cause no joy. One day, as they danced, they found themselves rising little by little into the air, their heads being light through hunger. How this happened they did not know, but one said, "Do not look back, for something strange is taking place." A woman, too, saw them rise, and called them back, but with no effect, for they still rose slowly above the earth. She ran to the camp, and all rushed out with food of every kind, but the children would not return, though their parents called piteously after them. Only one would even look back, and he became a falling star. The others reached the sky, and are now what we call the Pleiades, and the Onondagas Oot-kwa-tah. Every falling or shooting star recalls the story, but the seven stars shine on continuously, a pretty band of dancing children.

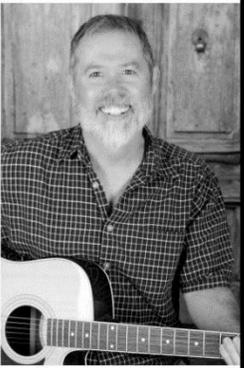
Storytelling can be performed in classrooms, churches, outdoor camps, for birthday parties or anywhere that brings storyteller and audience together. The art of storytelling combines narrative with imagination, and touches our hearts with laughter and healing. I believe that I've inspired many children and adults with my tales, playing guitar and combining origami with folktales.



**Thomas Freese Bio:** Please contact me for more information about my story programs, books and workshops. My website is [www.ThomasLFreese.com](http://www.ThomasLFreese.com) or call 502-491-5664. I have a Master's Degree in Expressive Therapies, and I am a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. I am on the Kentucky Arts Council roster of teaching artists and a member of the Kentucky Storytelling Association. I've been on storytelling tour in Argentina. I play guitar, harmonica, Native American flute, drum and other instruments.

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## **TAMING A HABIT WITH “DO INSTEAD LIST”** Barbara Bosler

Have you got a habit that sometimes gets a little out of bounds? It happens to almost all of us now and then. You're not alone. Here's an idea that might be helpful. Create a short list of things that you might like to "Do Instead" when you are craving that habit that you wish to curb. I have a "Do Instead List" that is helpful to me. When you're tempted to indulge in that habit somewhat more than you feel is good for you (such as that tenth piece of candy or a third cup of strong coffee in a row or cigarettes) choose from your "Do Instead List" something else to do.

My list has changed over the years as I have changed. The list will be personal for each person. It includes things that you want to do, need to do, and enjoy doing. My "Do Instead List" has helped me numerous times to get back on track. You may fall, but you can get back on track. I highly recommend this for any kind serious habit or addiction. My "Do Instead List" includes taking a walk, and "creating with my fabrics" where I pull out different swatches of colored fabric and I design something. Also on my list are beading, cleaning something, baking, or getting in the kitchen and cooking something fun and yummy. The list can be lengthy or not so lengthy. My "Do Instead List" also includes praying or meditating. Those definitely are good when you are in a place where you start thinking "I can't abstain anymore - - I'm going to - - ." Then you say to yourself "no, I'm going to go and get distracted for a time until those cravings pass." And those cravings typically do pass in a short period of time. So that sort of helps you get over the hump.

Another of my "Do Instead" activities has been playing the guitar and singing. That got me through some very hard times. I'd play the guitar, and then write songs, and then I'd record them with a small recorder and play them back and listen to myself, and redo and tweak. You know, for hours that would keep my mind occupied. When my mother died, when I went through the divorce, and during other really hard trying times singing with my guitar was my way of self-care, if you will. It was something that I loved to do. I think it is important if you don't have a hobby, find something that you really have a passion about and that you truly enjoy doing. Maybe it would be bicycle riding, or some other sort of exercise, or art, or whatever - - but find something that you have a passion for and weave that into your life. That's a good distraction from behavior you wish to curb, if you find something you wish to do instead.

The "Do Instead" list can help for over-eating, or nervousness, or depression, or for people who wish to cut back on their time with TV or social media. People with anger management or temper problems can contain themselves long enough to say "I'm not going to go there, I'm going to do something 'instead of' allowing my emotions to surface and become ballistic."

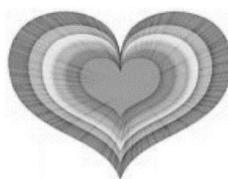
With my singing I could express my feelings in the songs. That's what my songs were mostly. I sang songs about my family, and the local mountains, and I wrote songs about love and how we need that in the world, and a bunch of fun songs. I wrote in journals, too. That can help if you don't feel like you have anybody to talk to for venting or sharing at a deep level. So that's how I did it. That's how I helped myself.



I have burned a lot of my journal writing because there was so much hurt and negative feelings and things that I wanted to move on from. It was important, though, that I gave myself that way to express my feelings harmlessly. There were also words of wisdom and passages about little things that I want to remember that one of my children did. I still have those upstairs and from time to time I get them out, write something in them. Someday someone in my family will look through those and hopefully that will bring a smile to their heart.

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## **SIMPLIFY** by Barbara Bosler

**DON'T** sweat the small stuff, like a failed investment or a bad hair day.

**WORRY** never solved anything.

**EMBRACE** who you are, and keep peace with yourself. You are not perfect.

**LET GO** of the should have, could have, and if only. Live in the now.

**PUT** less value on “stuff.” The best things in life aren’t things at all.

**OFFER** unconditional love to family and friends. You can’t fix them, that is their job.

**COUNT** your blessings daily, it will lighten your load.

**ONCE** in a while stop. Breathe deep. Look and listen. You can sense God in everything.

**AND** on a star filled night, lift your face to the heavens. And embrace all that is.

**MEMORIZE** that feeling and carry it with you daily.