

Natural Living Journal

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

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Swimming with Whales in the Wild

Making Joy a Habit

Rumi's Timeless Poems & Wisdom

Avoiding the Sugar High Yo-Yo

Courage to Be Who We Truly Are

Art and Self-Compassion

Delicious Healthy Holiday Snacks

Biggest Issues Kids Face Today

Kinesiology Tape to Heal Faster

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Maintaining Balance for Holidays

Healing Chronic Overwhelm

Uplifting Spiritual Experience of Death The Wild Edge of Sorrow

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SWIMMING WITH WHALES & DOLPHINS IN THE WILD

by Elsa Lichman, MSW, LICSW

Years ago, a wise woman I greatly respected made a curious comment: "It would be very valuable for you to swim with dolphins in the wild." "What?" I queried, as I had no idea what she meant. Soon after, I saw an ad in a spiritual journal about a wild dolphin swim. It was a week in Key West with a group led by natural healers. I signed up, as it seems the universe had created this opportunity. I had no idea what to expect.

A group of seven met at a small property. There were people of all ages and stages of life, each with a mission. Some were there to heal from divorce, or to strengthen a relationship, or for health reasons, or just for the pure passion for these remarkable mammals. Each day we went out on a small fishing vessel together. The first day, slipping into the water from a low platform was terrifying, as I had never been out over my head before. But my motivation was strong, and the group supportive.

I was more or less floundering around in the warm salty water, when the leaders yelled from the boat, "Elsa, look to your left"! One dolphin from a group which had approached our boat had swum to me and was right next to my shoulder. She was large, a matriarch in the pod, and when I looked into her eye, I was transported.

I was bathed in a sensation of unconditional love. I returned to the boat sobbing. Others had completely different experiences, as if the animals knew just what was needed for each person. I later learned that dolphins, like these bottlenoses, are capable of "reading" one's body, utilizing their powerful sonar to explore and discover health issues, pregnancy, and perhaps spiritual needs as well. Some find them intuitive and extremely intelligent. In New Zealand lore, it was said that dolphins carried messages back and forth to family members separated by long distances, as some left to explore and live in new lands. And of course, we have all heard stories of dolphins gathering and protecting humans lost at sea.

This trip was a time to form powerful new bonds with the group, and it also led to a quest for other experiences. I was fortunate to live on the East coast, and I went on many whale watches where I saw a variety of whales, dolphins, and porpoises. I then found a tiny research vessel and went on many 10- hour excursions, physically challenging and often very wet, where we had intense close encounters with humpback whales.

I went with a friend to see the film 'Whales' at the Imax theater at the Boston Science Museum. The steep incline of the theater and the ocean scenes all around us were dizzying, so I kept my eyes closed most of the time. My friend thought I should ask for a refund! But I managed to catch a glimpse of a man in the water with these leviathans, up close to them. "I could do that," I thought, despite my fears of ocean depths and many animals.



I found a trip to Baja, California, where for three days we lived in tents next to the sea at the San Ignacio lagoon, a calving and breeding area for gray whales on the West coast. We went out in pangas, indigenous wooden fishing vessels, where some 'friendlies' approached us and allowed us to touch them. One mother whale even brought her newborn calf right to my boat, where I leaned over so far to touch it, the upper half of my fully clothed body became submerged.

Next, I found several trips to the Silver Bank, between The Dominican Republic and the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean. This was 80 miles from any shore, in wildly rough and cold seas and turbulent weather. We lived on a small dive vessel and took smaller boats out to explore, and sometimes to slip into the water in wetsuits to snorkel with humpback whales.



Each and every time I was afraid, but my passion was stronger than the terror, and I saw just amazing things below the surface: a calf nursing as the mother stayed quiet, accompanied by a watchful male; 'sleepers' resting in shallow water at the bottom, rising calmly right past me to come up for air; a small calf resting over its mother's wide back; and a whale coming up slowly, slowly, to exit the water and breach right in front of me!!! A dream come true. All these experiences were indeed healing and transformative.

BIO: ELSA LICHMAN retired from social work in a variety of settings, after 43 years, and has turned to the arts in retirement. She studies voice and performs arias, art songs, jazzy tunes, and songs from musicals in studio recitals, performs with a multilingual chorus, and created a guitar and vocal duo called the Wild West duo, which performs on a volunteer basis in local nursing homes. She writes the Nature in the City column twice monthly for her local paper, and writes for other venues as well. She will be teaching a writing course at her local senior center.

Photos by David Doherty:
Top: Humpback Whale Breaching.
Middle: Atlantic White-Sided Dolphin



MAKING JOY A HABIT !

By Rev. Ray Nelson

CULTIVATING A CONSCIOUSNESS OF JOY.

Joy is so very important to me. It is one of my core values. It is probably my most important core value. I will say that joy does not always come easily. Sometimes we're out of sorts and it seems a struggle to get to that place of joy. But joy will bring me back. I'm going to share with you how to cultivate joy. But so often, external circumstances seem to dictate how we are or how we act in this world. Our circumstances and our conditions may seem to tell us that there's nothing to be joyful about. Then we may buy into that and we look for that. We can live happily and joyfully in spite of conditions and circumstances.

I'm inspired by May Rolland who wrote the book Dare to Believe. She never says to deny and pretend that those difficult circumstances don't exist. She says we can transcend them and live joyously anyhow. Don't deny the facts. Rocks are hard and water is wet; those are the facts. But the facts don't dictate to me how I am in the world -- unless I let it. It is all about cultivating a consciousness of joy and making it a habit through deliberative and intentional mind training. It all starts in the mind anyhow. When I'm in drama, the drama is out there -- but it's what I'm making up in my mind that is causing me the real problem. The Buddhists don't say that it is the external world that is causing us our problems. The Buddhists say the external world is doing something, and I either resist it or fight it or run from it or freeze -- or I keep my peace. So the first thing to do is to notice your reaction. Am I being in the joyful place?

You can start with noticing what is your tendency when you react. What are your triggers. Notice what they are. You can't practice changing something if you don't first become aware of it. It's not the circumstances or conditions that are causing your pain, it's your reaction. It is your thought about it that is causing your pain. You can notice it. You don't have to make up a story about it. You don't have to argue with the story. That's just another way of causing your pain. You don't have to judge yourself because you had a story. Instead you can focus on, "I noticed a shift and I'm going to stop being anxious -- and I'll go back to that place of peace and joy."

Joy is one of my core values. I know if I'm not living in joy, I've got something to do. In those times I usually feel that there is a shadow behind me that is shoving me in my derriere. There is usually a shadow that I haven't confronted yet -- even if it's only a momentary shadow. I have to become aware of that. When I do,

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it's my joy that's pointing me in that direction to become aware of it and let it go. If I'm not living in joy, I know I have something to work on. I use my joy or my lack of joy to get me there.

CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

You cannot be in joy if you're not grateful. Try being judgmental or angry, rejecting everything, thinking the world is sort



of terrible -- and then try being in a place of joy when you're there in all that. You can't get there. Instead, put your attention to cultivating an attitude of gratitude. Gratitude is not spiritual bypassing. Everything is not good. I'm sorry, but everything is not good. There are things that are just not good. I struggled with this for a while because one of the first classes I took when I was becoming a minister was a Bible class. One of the first things we read was in First Thessalonians 5:16-18.

It says, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all things. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." I wasn't going to argue with "pray without ceasing," but I felt, "I'm not giving thanks for everything." I finally came to the conclusion that I was misunderstanding it. It didn't say "Give thanks FOR all things," it said "Give thanks IN all things." All things in their heart have a spiritual lesson when I'm willing to not resist it, not bypass it, but allow it to be. No, my Mom dying was not good, her suffering was not good. My memory of my mother is good. My ability to draw upon her wisdom and all that she did for me is good. So I had to move to a place of understanding as described above -- and from that place I could move to a place of "Thanksgiving in all things," not "Thanksgiving for all things" -- and live a joyous life.

CHANGE YOUR FOCUS AWAY FROM WHAT'S WRONG -- TO WHAT'S RIGHT.

We can be grateful every day. There is no time that you can't be grateful. Someone might say, "Oh, nothing is working well in my life." Really? You're here, so something must be working. Your

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car works, so you can be grateful for your car working. You can change your focus away from what's wrong -- to what's right. Last night I experienced joy as I posted on Facebook while my cat was purring on my lap and I listened to light jazz playing on the radio. Good comes in many forms. Not that my day was perfect, but that moment was filled with a bliss and a joy. So, you cultivate joy by getting a new perspective and changing where to put your attention.



Another way to cultivate joy is to at least be O.K. with whatever is (within limits), otherwise we're just fighting the universe. Things are what they are. You can be miserable in it, and it still is what it is. You can choose to be NOT miserable in it, and it doesn't feel like such a big deal.

An additional way to cultivate joy is to just ACT JOYFUL. A good friend had to go in for surgery recently and then go back for surgery three days later. There were two different issues. On that Tuesday when he and I were in the waiting room at the hospital waiting for him to go in for the surgery he was sitting there in drama. I got him telling jokes with me like knock knock jokes, or "if you're fighting a gang of clowns, go for the juggler." Before long we were laughing so hard that when the doctor came in, he appeared to be wondering if he was in the right room. We cultivated joy by just acting joyful. I've always loved the saying. "Sing like no one is listening, love like you've never been hurt, dance like no one is watching, and live like it's heaven on earth." Let's act on that.

I was driving to work a couple weeks ago, and at a stop sign I could see in my rear-view mirror a guy in the car behind me who was clearly singing and bouncing around sort of dancing having a good time. I have a habit of picking up my 19-year-old cat and I

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put on some dance music and I dance around the apartment with her. She loves it. Even more I love dancing with my wife spontaneously in our living room. Most of our troubles that we experience in life are temporary, they aren't going to last. I love the saying "this too will pass." Most of them pass really quickly. Yet while we're in them we often give 100% of our energy to them. It's like they are the only thing in the universe. It's like with children when they get into a total emotional melt-down they give their total being to it, and then shortly afterward it's gone. We can let go, too. So, let's sing and dance and move and be joyful!!!

BIO: REV. RAY NELSON is Head Minister at Unity of Louisville Church. He is a graduate of the Unity Institute and Seminary. He has a Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. Unity of Louisville is an inclusive and welcoming spiritual community. Unity celebrate the many paths to God. The mission at Unity of Louisville is to transform oneself and the world through Love.



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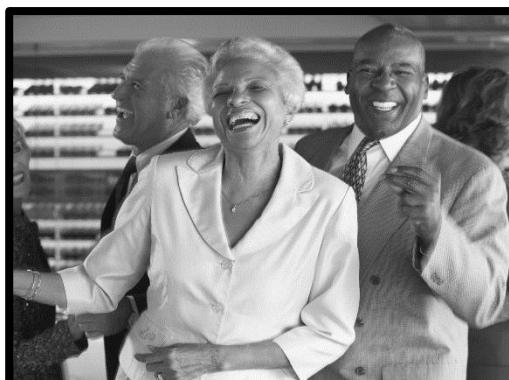


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THE SUGAR HIGH YO-YO LEAVES YOU DOWN

Who Needs It? 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 for some people it's only a little. 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 2000, Americans consumed an average of 152 lbs. of sugar 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 overconsumption 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 cause weakened adrenals, an overworked

Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.



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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.

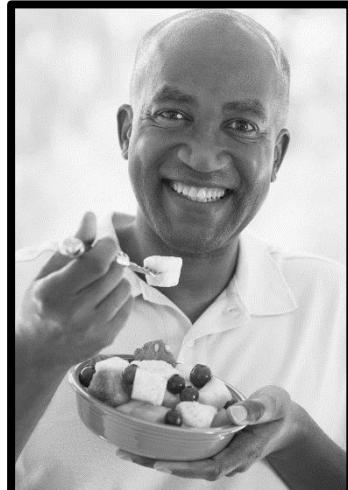


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For baking foods, I recommend natural sources of sugar such as raw local honey, 100 % pure maple syrup (not the kind that is mostly corn syrup with a little maple flavoring -- please read the label), dates, or fruit such as bananas. Keep in mind these 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, there are problematic issues there so you may wish to check that out online.

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, do something to support your emotions rather than attempting to mask or distract them with sweet foods or drinks. (Continued on page 17)

REFLECTIONS ON WISE TIMELESS POEMS BY RUMI

**Karen Schellinger, ATR-BC, LPAT,
LPCC**

**"Before you speak
let your thoughts pass through three gates;
Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?" RUMI**

In writing this article I chose selected Rumi poems relating to everyday living. For many as soon as the day begins and feet hit the floor, thoughts begin rushing in. Some thoughts are chosen and some show unannounced. Words in my opinion carry energy, silent or spoken.

The imagination is a wonderful tool mostly ignored due to the daily tasks of work, family and friends. How would life differ if as Rumi suggested each thought is to pass through three gates prior to being spoken. The first gate - - is it true? How would this gate appear in a morning garden? Can the first thoughts of the day pass through this gate of truth, if so will the day suddenly shift?

For those thoughts passing through to the second gate, is this gate more challenging? A true thought on its way to the second gate. What must the second gate look like? In my opinion thoughts carry energy. What might an unnecessary truthful thought be? Is the mind suddenly free to be in stillness? Has awareness of the moment changed?

Now the thoughts having passed through the true and necessary gates is standing at the gate; is it kind? How does this gate appear? Is this gate the most challenging for surviving thoughts? In previous articles I have spoken of what is called monkey mind, a thousand thoughts. The cognitive (awake) mind is looking for a task. Using the metaphorical (daydream, dream, sleep) mind create three gates in your mind by which all thoughts must pass...

**"Respect your uniqueness.
Drop comparison.
Relax into your being." RUMI**

How does truly knowing your uniqueness change the present moment? Hereby released of all mental comparison, to dive into the day of "NOW" aware of how unique you are. To share yourself with every person you connect with trusting you are enough. Rumi says, "relax into your being," he says nothing about relax into your doing.

Karen Schellinger, LPAT, LPCC, LLC

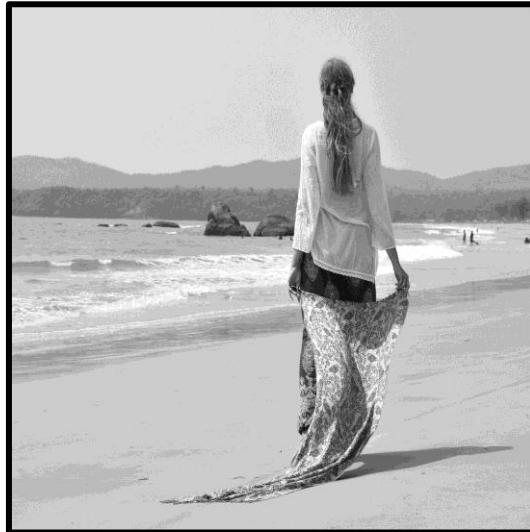
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**If you are at peace, you are living in the present.
Lao Tzu**

**"Although the road is never ending,
take a step and keep walking,
do not look fearfully into the distance...
On this path let the heart be your guide,
for the body is hesitant and full of fear." RUMI**

This poem speaks loudly to me. Rumi speaks of the body, which is an aspect of self, full of fear while suggesting to be guided by the heart. Imagine what it might feel like to be guided by the heart. Is Rumi speaking of the physical heart? I believe not as he states, "the body is hesitant and full of fear." What then, a compassionate heart? A compassionate heart guiding every step, compassionate to self and to others. Walking one step at a time guided by compassion. Will this be a new walk?



**"Lovely days don't
Come to you,
You should walk
to them." RUMI**

Is Rumi asking us to walk into our day with our thoughts passing thru the three gates guided by our compassionate heart celebrating our uniqueness? Shall we.....

Photo © CanstockPhoto / Happy Alex

BIO: Karen Schellinger is in Private Practice, accepting adults only. Karen is licensed as an Art Therapist and a Clinical Counselor. Her approach is non-judgmental and compassionate while practicing awareness of present moment. Karen provides her clients with real life practices to transmute suffering. Karen is a Veteran, Author and Fiber Artist. Contact: [Schellingerkaren@gmail.com](mailto:schellingerkaren@gmail.com),



COURAGE TO BE THE TRUTH OF WHO WE ARE

by Joyce C. Gerrish, M.A.

We may spend our life trying to please everyone else -- when young trying to get good grades in school -- trying to please our parents and trying to impress our peers as a teenager. When we are an adult, we're probably trying to please our employer, family, friends, and groups to which we belong. This also probably includes our being influenced by social media and mass media. It tends to often be an outward focused process of looking to what others seem to want and expect from us. Many of us just accept that as sort of normal and stuff down and repress to some extent what we really feel in our heart and want for ourselves. This can go on for decades. We may keep trying to be what everyone else seems to want us to be. The ongoing question may often be, "Am I sufficiently fitting in and popular? Are my clothes in the latest style? Do I look O.K.? Is someone going to be offended or get mad at me? Do I need to sort of bury my own opinions and thoughts if they aren't in step with those around me?" Wow!!!

One day it just may seem too much to keep sort of holding back. Some part of you may say "What do I feel about this? I sometimes disagree with these people I spend so much time with. What if I really say what I think? Will they still like me???"

Gradually it may just feel too hard to hold down your truth anymore. One day it may happen, and you step into your courage to express your inner truth -- and your world may begin to feel more alive and more clear!

It happened to me in a very powerful way when I was about in my late twenties. I had been fairly recently divorced. I was still trying to fit in with what others seemed to expect of me. I was working a job that I didn't care tremendously about except for the paycheck. I was counting minutes until time to leave. Suddenly I couldn't hold back my inner self any longer. I had made several serious attempts at true self-expression earlier, but had gradually been drawn back into fitting in. Now that was over and there was no going back. Then life potentials seemed totally different and open to me and my intention became crystal clear. People who knew me were shocked at my shift, but the fire in my heart was undeniable. I had moved into a path that was all my own and the excitement and thrill were amazing. The world was opening before my eyes and I knew for sure that I had choices that were all my own no matter what anyone else thought -- and I knew that I could work it out somehow. Most of my old friendships did continue though some faded away, and also new dynamic fascinating

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friends and connections came into my life. I felt in a state of divine grace and protection that I had never been as aware of before. My life has been mostly an amazing exhilarating adventure ever since.

We have choices in life -- we can step into them or let them pass by. I feel that usually opportunities don't come only once, but we never know when they may come around again. One opportunity stepped into may lead to another special opportunity. The crucial thing is to be as clear as possible within yourself what you want to achieve in this life (at least the next step) so you can recognize an opportunity that may lead you in that desired direction.

Try to avoid blind alleys that may pay a little more money but would tie up your time and energy without contributing to your growing vision, joy, and life meaning.

Hold that vision. Cleave to the passionate dream in your heart of how you want to express your truth (Continued on next page)

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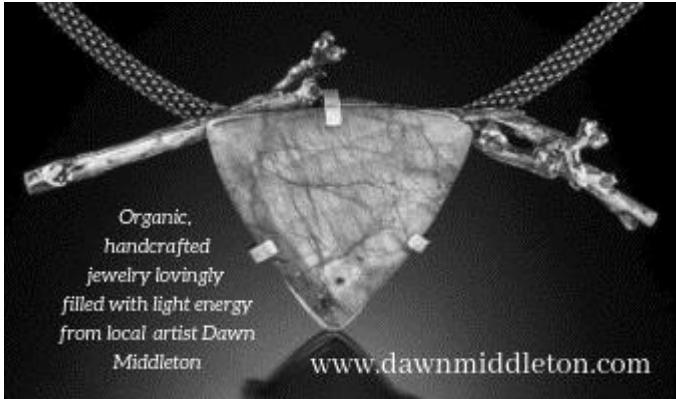
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(Continued from previous page) and abilities and creativity. You are needed. Your Soul is calling you. Realize that life on planet Earth can respond to a clearly focused mind set and vision. To a certain respect, we "see" what we expect to see. If we expect opportunities and look for them - - we'll probably see them - - sometimes in the most unexpected places and ways. If we expect "same-old same-old" we may not notice opportunities as they present themselves to us.

Be courageous! Put yourself out there. Believe in yourself. Share your dream and vision with friends and people with whom you may come in contact. Use common sense as well as courage. The two can thrive hand in hand, believe it or not! I use a lot of common sense and I feel that it stands me in good stead. At the same time, I take calculated risks to achieve my goals. I confer with trusted people who I consider wise and supportive of my vision and line of service. Life is exhilarating and responsive to your creativity when courageously following your heart and soul one step at a time. You'll be drawn to like-minded people and situations. Sometimes if the energy doesn't seem to be there for you, it may be time to make a slight shift to where the energy and support may be flowing more freely.

Lift your consciousness above your "worry mind" and above the mass mind of humanity's worry and stress and trauma. Lifting your consciousness helps make courageous thought and action more possible. If we allow ourselves to be engulfed by our own fears and the anxiety and fears of others - - we may not get around to positive action. Meditation, energy healing, and positive thinking can help lift, clear, and free your consciousness. I offer classes, individual sessions, and writings that can help support this amazing self-actualization process. Also, Reiki attunement and training is a wonderful way to lift and clear your consciousness and aura. The time is now to move more fully into the truth of your being. Be courageous. You're here on earth for a reason.



BIO: Joyce Gerrish is a Holistic Life Coach, Emotional Therapist, and Transformational Energy Healer. She has a Master's Degree in Human Development, and is a Graduate of National Institute of Whole Health. She is a highly attuned and sensitive guide for Higher Meditation and Spiritual

Awareness. She has extensive training and decades of experience as a practitioner and teacher of numerous natural healing modalities including Reiki, Reflexology, and Meridian Activation. She is author of the book "Secrets of Wisdom - Awaken to the Miracle of You" and is Publisher/ Editor of the Natural Living Journal. Louisville Office. 812-566-1799., www.joycegerrish.com Enjoy the free guided meditations on Joyce's website and many peaceful songs she composed and sang.

REIKI ENERGY HEALING IS OFFERED IN HOSPITALS

Reiki energy healing is now offered in more than 800 American Hospitals to help speed up the patients' healing. One AHA (American Hospital Association) survey reports that Reiki and similar techniques such as Therapeutic Touch now rank in the top three complementary in-patient therapies in U.S. Hospitals, after massage therapy and music & art Therapy. Reiki not only enhances physical healing, but it soothes and heals the mind and emotions.

SHINE LIKE THE SUN,

by Joyce Gerrish, Words of a song Joyce composed

Shine like the Sun. Glow like the Stars.

Be all that you truly are Deep within your heart.

Melt away, Melt away any icy fear.

Melt away, Melt away any lingering doubt

Radiate the sun that glows deep within your Soul.

Yes, Radiate the sun that glows deep within your Soul

Photo: Pixabay, Dimitris Vetsikas



ARE ACID-BLOCKERS REALLY THE ANSWER TO INDIGESTION & GASTRO ESOPHAGEAL REFLUX?

Dr. Victoria Snelling, DC, DHM

I recently read that fifteen million people (as of 2015) in America take some variation of acid blocking medication every single day and countless others take over the counter products to shut down the pesky acidity that causes distress. Americans take more pills for indigestion and acid reflux, per capita, than any other country in the world. What's going on with our diets and our guts (large intestines) that our prescription writing health care practitioners think these drugs are the answer to our ills? Do we just have to learn to live with indigestion and GERD (gastro esophageal reflux)?

If you or a loved one takes one of these medications, have a look at the package insert. You'll find a long list of side effects in small print, warnings, etc. From the first pill, users can experience nausea, constipation, and diarrhea. The chronic use of acid blockers can lead to chronic stomach and intestinal diseases, along with osteoporosis, generalized increased risk of bone fracture with an imbalance of calcium and magnesium, kidney disease, seizures, arrhythmias, and muscle spasms. Some acid blockers lower immunity and have been shown to increase the risk of pneumonia and other infections.

What are these acid blocking medications that could put you at risk - - proton pump inhibitors and H1 blockers. Check on-line for a listing of proton pump inhibitor medicines and H1 blocker medicines. Also, don't forget the "over the counter" (OTC) products for acid indigestion and GERD. These OTC meds have fewer side effects, thankfully, but they are not the answer to this malady. Some of the OTC meds contain aluminum which is a neurotoxin.

Chronic users of these medicines are left deficient of nutrients, malnourished and often manifesting all the usual symptoms of a lack of good nutrition. These medications were designed to be used for a short period of time, not long term. How many people do you know who have been on acid blockers for years? I know far too many, and many have developed chronic diseases as a result.

You might be surprised to find out that too much acid in the stomach is VERY RARELY the issue here. Quite the contrary: nearly all the time, a lack of normal needed stomach acid is the culprit. This issue is TOO LITTLE, not too much. Our stomachs have a natural, normal pH of 1.0. That's very acidic, and very necessary for the proper digestion of our food, especially proteins. The rest of the body, though, is ideally not acidic.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

For quick relief, and while you are reducing acid blockers, drink 1 or 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar at the beginning of your

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meals. Remember, most of us need MORE acid in our stomach when we are digesting food, not less! In a person with a healthy digestive system, an acidic environment in the stomach for digesting food is provided by natural digestive fluids. Without that, foods aren't digested well which causes the gas and bloating that can cause acid to reflux up into the esophagus to cause pain.

*For symptomatic relief, a spoon of baking soda in water, sipped slowly will calm down that burn while you are working on a resolution to your indigestion or GERD. If you know anything about homeopathy, you might know of a remedy called Carbo-vegetabilis. It's very useful in calming down indigestion. There are other helpful homeopathic remedies for GERD. Contact me if you'd like information on the local homeopathy study group.**

TO HELP HEAL YOUR DIGESTION

How do we resolve this chronic trap of acid blocking drugs? My pharmacist friend recommends slowly discontinuing acid blockers, with the help of your primary care physician. Also, other steps are helpful. Chew your food well and improve your diet where needed. Our bodies weren't made to run on junk food, and we weren't made to digest it, either. Natural whole foods contain enzymes to assist the digestive process. Nutrition with its own enzymes - the perfect package! Try to eat a little more slowly, in a calm environment. Remain upright for an hour or two after a meal and try not to eat right before bedtime. At night our tired bodies need to rest, not work all night digesting food.

The most important tool for healing your digestion is a multi digestive enzyme supplement. We naturally produce a little less normal acid and enzymes as we age, while we are under stress, and during illnesses. To overcome the deficit, look for a good enzyme product with amylase to digest starches, protease to digest proteins, lipase to digest fats and a little HCL, or betaine hydrochloride, for the acid that we need. (Continued on P. 17)

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



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Jeannie Samdani, MA Econ.
Licensed Health/Life Agent

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**PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO ALL.
MAY WE ALL LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY
& TRUTH. MAY LIGHT AND LOVE ENFOLD,
BLESS, AND HEAL OUR PLANET FOR THE
HIGHEST GOOD OF ALL.**

Photo Kitten:Domingo Trigo, Pixabay. Candle, Myriam Zilles Pixabay

DEEPER CONNECTION WITH ANIMALS THROUGH STILLNESS *by Lynne Crowton*

As humans we often communicate with the animals in our lives through touch and speaking. An even more powerful way to build trust and openness is through silent stillness. Try it out. Sitting in a relaxing position, close your eyes and begin to release any tension and expectations. With an open heart, allow your animal to have freedom of movement and to relax in a way they choose, either next to you or in another room. Over time our relationship with our animals beautifully transforms through a calm, relaxed and open state.

THE WILD EDGE OF SORROW

The Five Gates of Grief

Joyce Dillon, RN, MN

Facing grief is hard work...it takes outrageous courage to face outrageous loss. Yet, this is precisely what we are called to do. For the first time in my life, I'm beginning to see more health/wellness and mainstream people speak and write about wellness, healthy living, death and dying. We are beginning to appreciate that dying, death and loss are part of the natural cycle of life...for all living beings.

I know these are difficult topics to talk about, but having open conversations about grief are part of the transformational conscious change that is occurring on the planet. One of the authors who has helped me to open my heart more fully to loss and grief is psychologist and soul worker Francis Weller, author of a beautifully written book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*. He has been one of my mentors for my own soul work and an extraordinary teacher for helping me guide others through their dark waters of grief and sorrow.

In his book, Francis says "Every one of us must undertake an apprenticeship with sorrow. We much learn the art and craft of grief; discover the profound ways it ripens and deepens us. While grief is an intense emotion, it is also a skill we develop through a profound walk with loss."

One of Weller's most important contributions in this book is his delineation of the "five gates of grief." Several of the gates will be familiar to you, while others will not be so well known to many of us.

The first gate is known to all of us. It is that we will eventually lose everything we love. In the end, we take nothing with us but who we truly are and the purpose we came to earth to live and learn from.

The second gate has to do with those things we have not known. These are the places in us that have been ignored and banished to the depths of our unconscious. We cannot grieve what we have not experienced in our lives.

The third gate is the sorrows of the world. This sorrow is one that is becoming more familiar every day – destruction of the earth, extinction of animals, deforestation, unclean water, fires, floods and on and on. The cumulative grief of the world is overwhelming.



Joyce Dillon, RN, MN, BCC

Integrative Health & Wellness Nurse & Life Purpose Coach

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jjdillon@mindspring.com 404.824.7332

The fourth gate is what we expected and did not receive. No child expects to come into the world to experience fear, abuse and lack of love. We never expect that we won't be able to reach our full potential, to live on purpose, or to share our true gifts in the world.

The fifth gate is our ancestral grief. This is the grief we carry in our bodies from our ancestors. Grief of mental illness, slavery, leaving our family, denying past family history, violence, alcoholism and other woes.

Many of these unmet needs turn into sorrow and grief that we don't recognize as loss. Therefore, we aren't aware of what is making us feel sad, depressed and alone. Grief is part of life. Looking at and sharing our losses can awaken serenity.

If you are walking through loss, I highly recommend you read this book – *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* – or any book that helps you find more peace and joy in your life.

I will be offering several opportunities for Loss and Grief support: *Grieving Through the Holidays: A Circle of Compassion and Caring*; Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church, Louisville, KY; Nov 20, Dec 4, 11, 18; 404-824-7332.

Dealing With Loss and Grief During the Holidays; Rainbow Blossom – Highlands, Louisville, KY; Dec 7, 14 at 2:00pm; 404-824-7332

BIO: Joyce Dillon, RN, MN is the founder of Joyce Dillon Inc. she provides Health and Wellness training and coaching, life purpose facilitation, loss and grief retreats, and counseling. Joyce has studied loss and grief with author Dr. Francis Weller and wise elder Maldoma Some, and trained in rapid resolution, trauma therapy, and clearing of old wounds and beliefs. She recently relocated from Atlanta back to her hometown of Louisville.

PHOTO: © MrKornFlakes_Can Stock Photo, Inc

KINESIOLOGY TAPE CAN HELP INJURIES HEAL FASTER

By Dr. Jill Hayes

Kinesiology tape has been around for decades, but many people noticed it and became intrigued by it during the 2016 beach volleyball Olympics when the U.S. women's team was seen playing while wearing kinesiology tape. What is kinesiology tape? It is athletic tape that can be used to help enhance performance and reduce recovery time. The kinesiology tape that I use is called KenkoTherm DUK Tape by Nikken. DUK stands for Dynamic Underlayer Kinesiology tape. It is a tape made out of flexible, thin, breathable, stretchable cotton with hypoallergenic adhesive on the back of it so it can be taped onto the body.

This kinetic tape is different than others on the market because it contains special cotton fibers with infrared energy and negative ions. This special cotton tape absorbs ambient energy from around the body and reflects this energy back into the body to gently warm and soothe the muscles and tissues. Infrared energy helps healing naturally by increasing the circulation of healing properties of the body into the area and increases the release of waste out of the injured or sore area. This reduces swelling, minimizes discomfort, and enhances healing. It can eliminate bruising totally or help bruising resolve more quickly. It also reduces acids in the area and helps things feel better. It comforts stressed muscles and joints and promotes greater freedom of movement while it produces warmth from natural energy and refreshing negative ions.

The Nikken KenkoTherm DUK tape is the **only** kinesiology tape with the added far infrared and negative ion technology.* Infrared heat is all around us. We can feel it from fire, the sun, and things that are hot. Just as visible light has a range of wavelengths (running from red to violet) so does infrared light. Longer wavelength far infrared waves are thermal, while short or near infrared waves are not warm. It is the far infrared energy that is most helpful for this purpose.

You can wear this tape when exercising or under clothing. It is stretchable, has a thin profile, and the flexible cotton composition affords all day comfort. It can be cut to any length and width and has consistent adhesion from end to end. It can also be used to hold a magnetic disc in place where desired. It provides support where needed. The stretchable and elastic fit affords a snug but non-binding fit. It helps to ease muscle and joint discomfort. It is water resistant and generally stays on for several days, even after showering. It is 100% cotton tape and has hypoallergenic adhesive all along the length of the tape. The roll of tape is 2 inches wide and 98 inches long (5cm x 2.5m). It can be easily cut to the desired size to fit any area. For best results adhesion is improved if corners are trimmed to be more rounded. It is placed directly on the skin on a sore spot. It has consistent adhesion from end to end. The tape may be applied passively on the skin without tension or stretched slightly for additional support and benefits. When it is stretched it gently lifts the skin to allow more circulation to the area which enhances the healing in a natural way.

Dr. Jill Hayes
Periodontist and Naturopath
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3409 Stony Spring Circle • Louisville, KY 40220
(502) 499-6171 • Fax: (502) 499-9980
j.hayes3409@gmail.com

There are many benefits of using the tape. One is the fact that you are able to self-treat an area. Since it is thin elastic within cotton, it stretches as you move so it is very comfortable. You don't even notice it is in place. It is a noninvasive way to help an injured or sore area. The tape sticks for days and doesn't restrict movement. You still have full range of motion and can continue your regular routine.

If you need to reduce discomfort and promote healing of an area you may consider using this kinesiology tape. There are photos in the box it comes in to help you place it correctly, or you can get ideas online. One thing to be careful of is to avoid placing it on broken skin and to be sure to place it along the length of a muscle or joint and not all the way around in a tourniquet fashion, which could become too tight. I have received many benefits from using this kinesiology tape and believe you will too! It is available at my office if you are interested in getting some. Please call first. It costs \$16.50 for one roll. It's also available at www.nikken.com/na/jillhayes.



*Regarding negative ions, research indicates that exposure to negative air ions is linked to enhanced well-being. Any molecule with an unbalanced electron to proton ratio results in a net positive or negative electrical charge. Negative air ions are produced naturally from some changes in the atmosphere and weather and other natural causes. Scientific research has created products sold for health purposes that can generate or access negative ions.

BIO: Dr. Jill Hayes has a Naturopath Degree from Clayton College of Natural Health. She has been an advocate and distributor of infrared and other natural products since 1998. Dr. Hayes has been using the infrared Periolase and performing LANAP/LAR since 2010 and is also a certified instructor for the Institute for Advanced Laser Dentistry. She currently works through Periodontal Care Center at 3409 Stony Spring Circle in Louisville, KY 40220 .Phone: 502-499-6171 Email: j.hayes3409@gmail.com
PHOTOS: Courtesy of Dr. Jill Hayes



AN UPLIFTING SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF DEATH, to Inspire All of Us

By Charise Logan

I'd like to share a beautiful, spiritual experience I had about death. I was raised by my birth mother and by my aunt who lived with us full time. She became like another mother, so I call her my Auntie Mama. She was a strong, beautiful, independent woman. She loved me very much, and I her. About ten months ago she developed emphysema and was hooked up to oxygen full time and a nebulizer every four hours. She was bed-ridden at home and needed full-time care. One evening I got a call from my brother that she had taken a big shift for the worse and felt she may not last another week. I took the next flight out to California. I come from a large family of seven siblings, and we were soon all there at her side. For five days and nights we all took two hour shifts two of us at a time. It was beautiful to see my family altogether caring for my Auntie Mama. During her illness we all became even closer with her than before. The last five days she didn't speak and barely ate. She was surrounded by so much love. I felt the grace of God/Goddess was upon us. Then during my shift with one of my sisters, as we were each holding one of her hands, we noticed she was pausing between breaths. We knew it was close, so everyone gathered at her feet except for me and my sister holding her hands. We had made her room into a beautiful sanctuary of candles, flowers, crystals . . . We held silence all seven of us and prayed for her crossing over to be gentle.

Then the moment came when she no longer squeezed my hand and her pulse was very faint. Her breaths were distant one from the next. I was watching her breathing ever so intently and then it happened; she took no breaths and she passed over. It was the most peaceful and beautiful passing with all her children at her feet. Many were crying, and then we each said goodbye with prayers of thankfulness and kisses. I continued to hold her hand as everyone said goodbye. I knew I would have to say good-bye as well. I took her hand which was still warm and held it against my cheek for about five minutes.

This was my first death experience. I felt she passed gently surrounded by love. I thought to myself that I'd like to die in the same way when my time comes. After about an hour something magical took place spontaneously. We were all in the room and we began singing all her favorite songs that she sang to us as children. We were singing and dancing. It was touching, profound, powerful, magical and sacred. Then my brother suggested we listen to the story she used to play for us once a year. It's called

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"Peter and the Wolf." Suddenly like magic we all began taking on the characters and acting out the story. We were all laughing ecstatically, and it bonded me and my siblings very close. We loved our aunt. I felt so close to God/Goddess and felt such ecstasy that death could be so beautiful.

That evening we sponge bathed her, then dressed her beautifully and put lovely jewelry on her. She looked beautiful. When she was dying, she looked unwell. Then when she passed, within ten or fifteen minutes her face and legs and whole body went back to appearing more as when she was about forty years old. All the swollenness was gone. She was beautiful just the way I always remembered her. She was eighty-nine years old, but suddenly the great spirit breathed beauty back into her and she looked like forty - - amazing. She was gorgeous.

It was such a powerful experience for me. My family is very spiritual, though not religious. Peace and harmony overflowed. I will always cherish my Auntie Mama. The greatest gift of all that she gave was demonstrating how death

can be a spiritual, beautiful, gentle and peaceful passage. It was magical from start to finish. I believe in the beauty of letting go with grace as she did. I miss my Auntie Mama, yet I know she's with me in many ways. I sometimes feel her energy gently around me still loving me. I know she still exists in another spiritual realm. Blessed be.



BIGGEST ISSUES KIDS FACE TODAY.

Parents Listen to Your Children by Kathy McBroom, M. Ed.

In my classroom at Mount Washington Middle School, I have a trash bag hanging on a closet door. In the trash bag are paper wads. Those paper wads are our issues that concern us the most. Above it is a sign that says, "Here are the things that I don't have time for and that do not scare me". What do you think those paper wads say? What issues bother and concern a group of middle schoolers the most?

Many would say the issues that concern our middle schoolers the most are drug abuse, drinking or the latest craze which is vaping. Vaping is of great concern to educators such as me. According to truth initiative.org, one Juul pod contains twenty cigarettes worth of nicotine. Does this sound like a safe alternative to smoking that has been marketed to our children? Vaping is in some areas becoming epidemic.

Others might say that the biggest issue facing our children and teens is peer pressure. Peer pressure begins in elementary school, and it never stops. As adults we feel peer pressure every day for different reasons. This is also a great concern for our students. But is it the biggest concern?

Still others would say that our students biggest concern is self-esteem. We all know that as children reach middle school years, they begin to view themselves differently. Their bodies change and their emotions may become a mess. They may begin to feel that they are ugly and awkward.

Some would even say pressure to perform is the biggest concern for our students today. The pressure to make good grades or measure up to parental expectation or their friend's expectations is a great concern. But is that really the biggest concern that our students have?

The reoccurring theme was that my students are concerned for their parents. Unfortunately, we live in a day when students are seeing their parents drunk, high, entertaining overnight guests (nice way to put it), and otherwise putting many things above parenting. I have had students who have bagged drugs for mama's boyfriend. I have had students not shocked when a parent's drunken habits resulted in a car crash and a death of a friend.

Amazing. Unbelievable. This is backwards. How can we help?

KATHY McBROOM, M.Ed.

TEACHER, BLOGGER, VLOGGER, BIBLE STUDY TEACHER

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This Ain't Hollywood Either, & Giving Yourself Away

As caring adults, we can listen. Reach out to struggling teens and children knowing that they just want someone to listen and care. They don't want the stress of having to worry if mom or dad is coming home or will come home drunk or will be drunk after being home for a while and the yelling will begin.

Our students today are bright and want a better life. They want to please their parents, but many parents must realize that your child will turn out most of the time just like them. That is staggering -- but needs to be a wakeup call.

But what about all those other issues? They were mentioned many times. As a teacher, I have found that one caring adult can make the difference when it comes to all the other issues listed above. Our children are the future. As a teacher, I feel good about that. As a follower of Jesus Christ, my husband and I realized early on that our children watched what we did more than they listened to what we said. If we wanted them to have faith in God as the foundation of everything, we needed to show them that we

lived that way. As mentioned earlier, students most of the time become like their parents, but one caring adult can make a difference. We must work to be that adult in children's lives that we can influence.

BIO: KATHY MCBROOM has a Bachelor's in Science and Master's in Education. Kathy is married to Robert McBroom, Connections and Missions Pastor at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville. She is a teacher at Hebron Middle School in Shepherdsville. She and her husband Robert have two daughters, one a first-grade teacher in Harlan, Ky and the other the High School Girls Youth Minister at Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tennessee. She has 3 books for sale on Amazon: You Ain't in Kansas Anymore, This Ain't Hollywood Either, and Giving Yourself Away. Visit her blog: kathymcbroom.wordpress.com.

PHOTO: Family, Pixabay 3817046 - 1280

CHRONIC OVERWHELM AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT,

Norma Wileman, B.S., EFT Practitioner, TAAP& ACE Certified

Feeling overwhelmed means a person is giving ‘**too much of something.**’ We can feel overwhelmed by emotions, which may be either a positive or negative experience depending on the emotion. We will be addressing the negative aspects of being in a state of ongoing, chronic overwhelm - - and measures you can take to reduce or release it forever.

Feeling overwhelmed is a common **Anxiety Symptom.** One of the hardest parts about living a life of anxiety is the way that it tends to show up regularly in your life. When your body adapts to the state of overwhelm on a habitual basis, it makes everyday living very difficult and sometimes impossible. There are two types of overwhelm: the type that’s triggered by external events and the type you self-impose. Both can be managed with the same technique.

7 ways to stop feeling overwhelmed

1. Take the ‘overwhelm’ out of your head and write it down.
2. Break each aspect down into smaller parts and list them.
3. Taking action is the best antidote to feeling overwhelmed.
4. Exercise, get out, walk, do something that gets you moving.
5. Spend time with family or friends who make you happy.
6. Listening to calming music, doing yoga, or Tai Chi are good ways to de-stress.
7. Listen to YouTube videos for mindfulness or gratitude

Ticking off one item a day keeps you moving forward without so much anxiety. This approach keeps you from looking at the big picture and feeling as if there is no way to get it all done. When we can remove one problem and then another and another, we begin to see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, and our body starts to relax a bit.

The main issue that rarely gets addressed is how you can learn to cope with the fight, flight, freeze state that may be going on in your body. Many doctors will prescribe an anti-anxiety medication, which is sometimes necessary. You should always consult with your physician before discontinuing medication. However, you can use holistic methods to help you calm down naturally. Ideally at some point, with the agreement of your medical health practitioner, you may be able to cease medications.

In severe or ongoing situations, it may be best to address the body and brain focused issues that are going on. When the body is in Fight, Flight, Freeze (FFF) mode there are biological and chemical changes going on in the body. The limbic system is on high alert, the amygdala is activated, as well as the hypothalamus,



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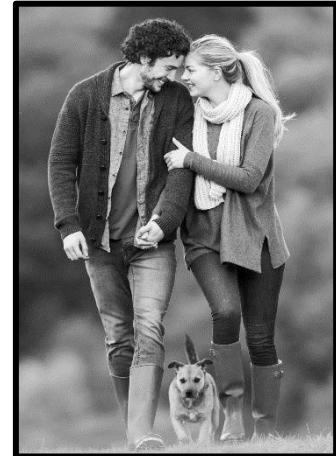
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pituitary and adrenal glands. Those structures are busy pumping your body full of the stress hormones, designed to help you fight or flee what it perceives as the “tiger” chasing you, or lurking around the next corner. Too much cortisol and other powerful stress hormones are fine in the short term. When we are in the stress state for longer periods those chronic stress hormones are detrimental to our health and can lead to higher levels of inflammation in the body.

When the body goes into FFF, other changes occur in the body to accommodate your safety. In cave man times we might have had to outrun a tiger. If that were the case, our bodies would shunt approximately 80% of the blood flow from the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and divert it to our limbs so we can make a faster retreat. That is perfect in the moment to help us survive. For those of us who have been in chronic FFF for months or years, moving through our days with most of our blood flow diverted from the PFC, can affect our thinking and memory. Worrying about brain function can increase the fight, flight and freeze response. This type of overwhelm is highly detrimental to our physical and emotional health. The amygdala reacts to a threat and the hypothalamus activates adrenaline release, while the adrenal cortex releases cortisol to help you remain alert.

: Canstock Photo / GL Images



EFT or Tapping has now been shown to calm the amygdala in brain scans taken before and after tapping. That is why people feel much calmer about their issues and emotions after a Tapping session. As an Accredited, Certified EFT Practitioner, I am able to help clients get more control of their emotions while we release the causes and roots of those emotions. It is a simple method that easily translates to using it on your own when you need to. When you calm your amygdala and other organs and glands, the body truly begins to change and calm down around the topics issues or people that are most upsetting to you. (Continued on P.17)

No matter where you are on your spiritual journey...



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(Continued from Page 6) Dr. Tostado

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. You

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can bring your health into a better balance, feel better, and optimize your energy naturally!

Bio: Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D. 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, Dr. Tostado decided to complete the CCWFN program in 2016 with the International Foundation for Nutrition and Health. She has been a resident of Louisville, KY for the past 8 years. Her office is at Whole Health Associates, 3834 Taylorsville Rd., Ste. B1.

(Continued from P. 10) Dr. Victoria Snelling.

If you have questions about this, feel free to phone my office. There may be other factors that need attention to resolve your digestive issues and we can help you with that. As important as a good diet is, good digestion will help to ensure a long and healthy life.

(Continued from P. 16) Norma Wileman

Additionally, there are other methods to help your body start to release the excess stress hormones from the body and even to break the habit of your body going into fight, flight, and freeze responses. I have been working with people in chronic overwhelm for over nine years. Getting out of overwhelm will change your life and enhance your enjoyment of it.

BIO: Norma Wileman is a former biology and oceanography teacher. She has been an active practitioner in several energy modalities for over 9 years. She is AAMET/EFTi Accredited Certified Level 1 and Level 2 EFT Practitioner. She is also certified in Advanced Clearing Energetics, ACE, and is a Trained Allergy Antidotes Practitioner and Ask Receive Practitioner. She is an International Speaker on EFT for Sports Performance and has worked with professional, collegiate and amateur athletes. She has helped many people with emotional and physical issues, including pain management, injury and surgery recovery and more.



Photo: Jill Wellington / Pixabay Photos

ART AND SELF-COMPASSION

by Mallory Linden

Art is extremely personal. No matter what our level of investment, creating or performing art is deeply linked with our own feelings of identity. It is one of many things that help us determine who we are. It also enables us to communicate across a variety of mediums. From visual art to dance to music to drama, whether done as a means to an end or as a simple hobby rather than a life's pursuit -- art still is partially linked to our feeling of self.

Being creative can be immensely helpful in our lives. We can derive joy from our hobbies and expressions of art. In some cases, we can also integrate our creativity into our workplace. Creativity is a gift, but so often we feel like that it must be used competitively.

Joy can be found in creation that has no monetary benefit and doesn't bring us acclaim. For us to improve and hone our craft, this must be true. If we cannot practice and find joy in the simple act of our craft, then we may wish to seek our joy elsewhere.

Because of how close we may feel to our craft, it can also leave us feeling intensely vulnerable. By this I do not mean vulnerable to criticism. All art is subject to criticism, as it should be. The vulnerability discussed here is that which we open ourselves up to when we put our work out into the world. We open a path. That allows us to both share our work with others, but also allows us to inevitably compare our creations to the creations of others.

Sometimes we're our harshest critic. It can be a challenge to accept our own work, especially when seeing the works of others that may have what we perceive as a higher

level of skill or talent.

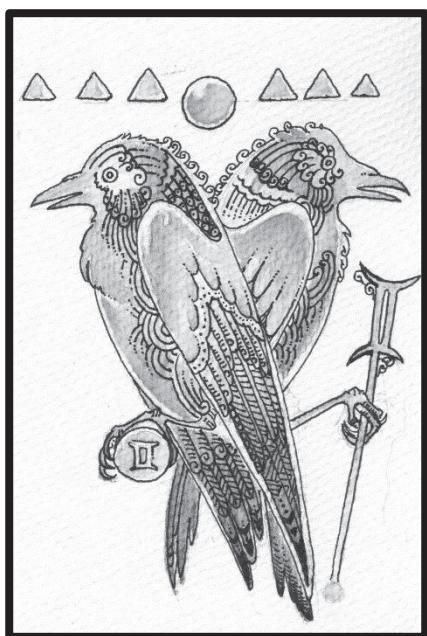
Feeling that one's work is unworthy may cause an artist to decide it is not worth the trouble. Cutting off that line of communication, that facet of our own selves, is in essence cutting off part of who we are. The desire to change styles to something more in line with what popular artists create or perform may be tempting. To banish one's own unique aesthetic tastes and choices is to banish a piece of ourselves. When we seek acceptance and praise by doing what we assume others think we should be doing, we self sabotage.

What if we're not enough? What if I'm not enough? What if my personal style or choices or expression are not enough to garner a callback or a book deal or a gallery showing? These are questions with which many artists struggle.

Here are two insights. One: a rejection of our art or craft is not a rejection of our core self. It may seem like such, since so many artists tie themselves very closely to their art. But the viewers aren't always simply trying to be nice when they say, 'Your style just isn't what we're looking for.' Sometimes it's not someone's preferred style.

Try not to take it personally. Two, the only way to improve upon our true art, the art we desire to create and share, is to practice and hone our skills. That may mean our art changes, but that's not a bad thing. Even if we decide to leave out or change some aspects, our art will always be ours. It will always be our truest voice to the world.

The three designs are by Colleen Bennett.
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MAINTAINING BALANCE DURING THE HOLIDAYS.

Leah Bomar, B.A

I like to party. Celebrating is fun. Big things, little things, it used to not take much to entice me into toasting life's awesomeness or commiserating its crapiness. Raising a glass to drown out the sorrows or cheering the good times was normal. I grew up attending epic family blow outs with ever flowing alcohol. I certainly did more than my expected share of experimenting during the teenage years. I followed protocol and partied hard in college, dancing on bars and handling hangovers like a pro, all in the name of 'fun.'

What happens when the *fun* runs out? When recreational partaking turns into a reoccurring habit and negatively affects other areas of your life like parenting, work, or mental and physical health? The 'Sober Curious Movement' is gaining popularity with those desiring to improve the quality of their life by cutting back on the damaging effects of alcohol. You can Google the term and find various definitions, books, and articles about a growing population of people interested in cutting back on alcohol consumption. Eliminating the hangovers, headaches, and regret of doing embarrassing things while tipsy, as well as a growing interest in learning new ways to cope with emotions and feelings are sparking the trend.

Is drinking alcohol daily, weekly or at every family event really the example we want to set for our children on how to celebrate, party, 'have fun', grieve, handle stress, or navigate adulthood? Do we really need that bottle of wine after a long day of dealing with the kids? What if there were better ways to de-stress that didn't make us feel like a not-so-smiley version of the poop emoji the next day?



With the classic celebratory season upon us, alcohol use spikes like rum punch at a hopping holiday party. How else are we supposed to survive family functions without the elixir of a festive beverage in hand? A bottle of bourbon was my best friend for decades, a preferred method of dealing with tense family situations and social anxiety in general. Since I decided recently to consume less alcohol, I've had to face my fears and stare soberly at my own drinking habits.

If the thought of giving up alcohol, especially during the holiday season, automatically makes you want to reach for a drink, build in some alternative coping mechanisms. Maybe mindful meditation, listing 5 things you notice from each of the 5 senses, 'breathing in the rainbow' by doing a quick chakra clearing in each of your energy centers, or simply imagining yourself in a ball of white light can help tremendously. Perhaps supplementing with CBD oil or researching new havening techniques can calm in a moment of anxiety.

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Also ask yourself... if attending a certain event makes you so anxious you have to get sloshed to survive, maybe just don't go? Perhaps its time to reexamine your routines. Self-care includes being selective with your time and protecting your energy. Just because they're your 'family' or you've always done things a certain way in the past doesn't mean you have to continue. Buck tradition.

If you're not ready to go stone cold turkey on Turkey Day, start by limiting alcohol consumption. Examine your own habits and triggers. What automatically makes you want to drink? Who do you typically drink with? What situations always seem to 'require' alcohol? What events do you regularly attend where drinking is expected or just accepted as the norm? (tailgating, summer pool parties, concerts, girls night out, wedding receptions or work parties with an open bar?) Can you have fun without alcohol? Are you willing to try? Challenge the norm and just see what happens. Devise an alternative plan to delay,

deny, or replace your drinking habits with something that will have more positive effects. What emerged quickly for me in this new lifestyle of not drinking as much or as often was a necessity to learn new ways to deal with my old 'triggers'. If you are ready to find new ways to celebrate this season join the conversation online at facebook.com/thenaturallivingjournal. To hear stories of my own personal experiences after saying R.I.P. to L.I.T.'s and other life lessons, visit LeahBomar.com.

PHOTOS:

(Group Photo) CanstockPhoto_GoldenKB. (Photo in business card & of Leah Bomar) by Katie Willis Rhodes.

BIO: Leah Bomar is an Author, Speaker and certified Therapeutic Art Coach. She graduated from UofL with a degree in English. Leah taught elementary art and worked as a substitute teacher for JCPS. As a mother of 3, she started a local co-op for homeschooled. Her 'GlitterBomb' Retreats, Dream Board Parties, and online courses connect people who are ready to rediscover their own dreams and purpose while learning new techniques to turn overwhelm and everyday stressors into sources of JOY.





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DELICIOUS NUTRITIOUS HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

by Barbara Bosler

EXTRA SPECIAL HUMUS WITH GARNISHES

Give humdrum hummus a party status "Zap" by simply adding some garnishes. Start by filling a pie plate with 2 cups of your favorite hummus. Then layer on top $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each of different diced raw veggies, like red onion, cucumber, artichoke, kalamata olives (or your favorite), quartered grape tomatoes, red pepper. Finish with crumbled feta cheese & a fresh herb chopped. Serve with pita chips or crackers and enjoy!

SPICED SWEET POTATO HUMMUS & SWEET POTATO CHIPS

INGREDIENTS:

2 cans drained & rinsed garbanzo beans or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked from dried beans.

1 baked, cooled & peeled sweet potato

1 Tablespoon Tahini

3 Tablespoons olive oil

Juice of 1 lime

$\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon smoked paprika (I love Penzy's brand)

1 clove minced garlic

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon coriander

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt.

Blend all the ingredients in a food processor until smooth. Serve with pita chips, or the favorite of my guests -- Raw Sweet Potato Chips! (see directions above to the right)

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RAW SWEET POTATO CHIPS

Simply peel raw sweet potato, slice thin, rinse and dry. Try it, you'll like it! Good with any dip.

TAPENADE (Tah-puh-nade)

Tapenade originated in the Provence of France. It is traditionally a thick paste made from capers (pickled flowers buds), black olives, anchovies, olive oil, and seasonings. You can tweak the traditional recipe to your liking. Often it is used as a condiment for fish or meats or served as an appetizer with bread or crackers.

ARTICHOKE TAPENADE

1 Lemon

1 14 oz can of artichokes in water or brine. Drain & pat dry.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup loosely packed chopped parsley

1 clove garlic chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup pitted green olives

1 Tablespoon drained capers

5 Tablespoons olive oil

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in a food processor & chop. Should be small diced, not smooth.

Serve on bread or crackers.

What ever you decide to prepare for your guests this holiday season, enjoy your time in the kitchen. Happy cooking! Barbara Bosler.