

Natural Living Journal

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

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**Higher Consciousness:
Healing Ourselves and
Our Planet**

Joy of Herb Gardening

**Parenting for Peace in
Our New Reality**

Breath is Prayer

**The Struggle is Real
(and Normal)**

Spring Renewal

**The Endangered,
Endearing Seahorse**

Sound Healing: Gong

**Natural Solutions for
Spring Allergies**

**Healing Childhood
Sexual Abuse**

**Tiny House: Creative
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**Keep Your Immune
System Strong**

A Parable of Healing

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Natural Living Journal encourages people to live in harmony with the wholeness of their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. We encourage all to live in harmony with each other, with our precious planet and all aspects of nature, and with the Divine. This journal is independent of any organization and is not affiliated with nor advocates any specific religion or political ideation. We support natural holistic health care practices, and we seek to work in harmony with the medical field. Our deep purpose is to foster wisdom, peace, joy, creativity, co-operation, love, ecology and sustainability, inclusiveness, wholesome adventure, stewardship, community service, natural abundance, and the arts.

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GONG - - A HEALING JOURNEY. **Sound Healing. By Onyx Antara**

It was fall of 2007 when I walked into the back room of a metaphysical bookstore in Phoenix, Arizona to experience my first gong bath. As I stepped into the room, I inhaled the earthy aroma of frankincense, and immediately began to feel tension melt away as my shoulders softened and my breathing deepened.

There was a large, shiny, metal gong hanging from a stand placed towards the back of a short platform. The facilitator spoke for a few minutes to get us started, and I have no idea what she said. I was too excited to concentrate and a bit nervous about what was going to happen. We sat on mats as she led us in a kirtan chant, a style of call and response singing that originated in India. The sound was melodic and soothing. It further helped to relax my body and soothe my mind in preparation for the gong bath.

We were encouraged to remove our socks and lie with our feet pointing toward the gong. As I lay back onto the mat and closed my eyes, I pulled a blanket over me for comfort as much as for warmth. My mind was restless, but my body was willing. The sound began softly, gently, and it was unlike anything I had ever heard before. As the sound built and then released, I could FEEL the waves of sound washing over me and THROUGH me. I imagined that every cell in my body was having a full-on dance party!

I tried to think, to concentrate, to pay attention to the playing...but it wasn't long before I surrendered to the sounds as they transported me into a deep state of meditation. My thinking mind quieted. It was almost like sleep, yet not. I felt both present and far away. I saw images and colors like a dream, but I knew I was not sleeping. The waves of sound and vibration carried me on a journey into myself. There were crescendos of sound, then silence, then more sounds that I could not decipher. It was surreal... and it was nourishing in a way that I had never before experienced.

When the gong playing ended, there were other sounds - - crystal singing bowls, Tibetan singing bowls, and other sacred instruments that I did not recognize. We were gently guided to become aware of our bodies, to wiggle our toes and fingers, to stretch, and to bring circulation back to our muscles. Gradually we were invited to return to a sitting position and share anything we wanted about the experience. Words did not come for me until hours later when I was home. That night I slept more soundly than I had in many months, and I woke feeling refreshed in a new way. The journey of the gong was a journey of healing and of embarking on a new direction in my life.

Ten years later, I was living in Bangkok, Thailand. After experiencing gong baths and other sound healings around the world, I learned that a renowned gong meditation teacher, Martha Collard with Red Doors Studio, was visiting from Hong Kong to teach her gong training intensive. You bet I signed up!



Martha told us to forget everything we knew about music. Gong is not music and playing requires no musical training or skill. Playing is intuitive. In fact, one does not play the gong. The gong plays you! Each time the gong plays you it will be different, and every time you experience a gong meditation, it will be unlike the last. The brain cannot predict the sound the gong is going to make, and the mind goes into neutral. I affectionately refer to this as fast-track meditation because the mind has no defense against the unpredictable sounds of a gong. The experience is not repeatable, but the benefits are undeniable.



Over the years playing the gong and enjoying other people's playing, I have experienced decreased anxiety, decreased fatigue and increased energy. I have found an ability to calm my nervous system more quickly and more easily, as well as decreased chronic pain. My clients have additionally reported improved sleep, decreased stress and tension, improved concentration, and awakening to higher states of consciousness.

The gong meets you where you are and takes you where you need to go.

BIO: Onyx Antara is deeply committed to how sacred witnessing of personal journeys can expand world views and transform lives. To end global suffering, she believes that we must begin with our own healing. Onyx completed a gong training intensive in Bangkok, Thailand in 2017 and has facilitated private, group, and event sound healings in Thailand and the United States. She is the founder of HeartSpace, a body of work that focuses on deep listening, clearing emotional tension in the body, connecting with our Divine Essence, and learning to live a purposeFULL life with heart-centered presence. An international presenter now living in Kentucky, USA, Onyx has facilitated transformational workshops in Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Kenya, and the United States.
Photo by Rebecca Dimon.

HeartSpace is a boutique wellness studio on Frankfort Avenue in Crescent Hill. It is currently offering monthly New Moon Gong Meditations. More events, including transformational workshops, will be added to the calendar soon.
www.facebook.com/HeartSpaceAwakening

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL (AND NORMAL)

By Kimberly LaFollette, Psy.D.

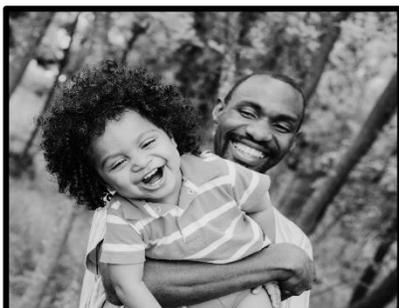
Life has been hard over the past two years and most of us have struggled in one or more areas of life. That is not surprising. What is surprising is how much we beat ourselves up for struggling. Recently, I've had a lot of conversations with people who feel like they are failing at life. What I have found is that it's not the actual struggle that makes us so miserable, it's the belief that we should not struggle.

Unfortunately, embedded in American culture is the belief that constant happiness is the only acceptable way of being. We have been fed a falsehood that achieving this eternal happiness is achievable. Worse yet is the belief that if we are unhappy or struggling it must be remedied as soon as possible. We've become a culture of individuals who cannot tolerate any uncomfortable emotions. As soon as sadness or grief enters our life, we try to push it out.

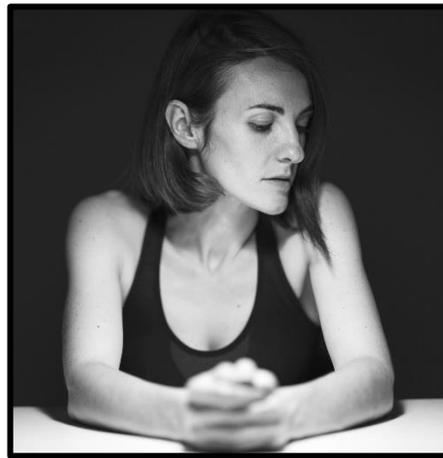


In the midst of trying to rid ourselves of these emotions, we also tend to blame ourselves for having them. It's as if to feel anything other than happiness is a personal failure. What I have noticed is that instead of treating ourselves with kindness when times are hard, we tend to belittle ourselves and think that there is something inherently wrong with us because we are struggling. Oftentimes, this leads to a downward spiral of pain and self-loathing.

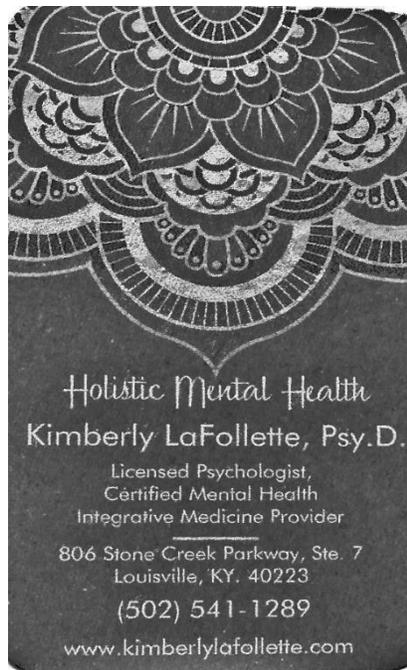
What I have learned as a psychologist is that being sad, afraid, and angry are all part of the human experience. These emotions are adaptive and necessary from time to time. For most of us, these emotions present themselves to nudge us to pay attention. We



must sit with these emotions and allow them to teach us the lessons they offer. When we try to rush through these emotions, or numb them all together, we can miss out on some very important life



lessons. In order to have a fully present life, we must be open to experiencing the pleasure *and* the pain.



The next time you are struggling, imagine what might happen if you just allowed yourself to have the emotional experience without judgement. How might that feel? What I can tell you is that if you accept the emotion and allow yourself to feel it, it will not be as powerful as when you fight against it. Most of the time, if we allow ourselves to experience and process our emotions as they come, they tend to fall away. On the other hand, when we fight against our emotions they tend to stick around. A phrase I say constantly to my clients is, "what we resist, persists."



In the end, I hope you know that life will always contain moments of great struggle; but they are only moments. You are not wrong for thinking life

is hard sometimes. You are not failing if you are struggling to get by right now. You are having a completely normal human reaction to a very difficult time. The sooner you accept that and start practicing self-compassion, the sooner your current struggle will end. Not to worry though, another one will come along. And that's okay.

BIO: Kimberly LaFollette is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified Mental Health Integrative Medicine Provider. You can find out more about Dr. LaFollette and her practice by visiting her website kimberlylafollette.com.



PHOTOS: Top - Engin Okyurt Pixabay; Left - Canstock photo iofoto; Right - Laurenz Kleinheider - Unsplash; Bottom - joice Kelly, Unsplash.

TINY HOUSE HARBORS CREATIVE DREAM COME TRUE

By Marty Byrne, Student of Life

"Oh, look a tiny house! Wait now... what does that sign out front say? Pottery pop-up shop!? What the heck is that? Is that a tiny house store? It is! Someone is totally selling pottery out of a tiny house! How cool is that!"

That is the reaction that I imagine happening as people first see my Byrne'n Mud Pottery pop-up shop! A mobile structure that is now currently shelled in with a bright white metal roof, metal siding on bottom and beautiful cedar shakes on the top half of the outside walls giving a nice warm contrast to the cool metal cladding. The inside dimensions are 7 x 15.5 feet. Right now, it is still covered in snow from our cold Labrador winter up here in Canada. I am itching to get back at construction when the temperatures warm up.

The project started as a part of my journey of wellness. Having suffered from obesity all my life, I didn't feel well enough on the inside to do any projects on my outside. Through working on myself emotionally, spiritually, and physically, I started to transform. Slowly as I began to recover physically, I began to grow spiritually as well. As I grew, I found that because of the emotional changes within me I started to feel a willingness to work on projects that had only been the subject of daydreams until now.

I had purchased an old double axel trailer from a guy who owned a trailer park here where I live. The roof on it had caved in due to the heavy snowfalls we get. I used a reciprocating saw to strip the camper down to its chassis. I chose to repurpose a lot of reclaimed wood in the building process. I salvaged beautiful old windows from an abandoned mine in my hometown. I discovered the door to my pop-up shop in the woods! The paint is peeling off, but it has so much character, it's beautiful!

So yes, the pop-up shop is going to be more than a tiny storefront... it is also going to be a mobile clay studio. I will be offering pottery wheel lessons as well as doing demos for people living in my remote little corner of the world.

I think there is such potential for nurturing spaces such as this. I imagine it being a creative haven for an artist in residency. Perhaps



a fellow ceramic artist, photographer or painter. I also imagine it being a mini gallery of sorts when other artists and I exhibit work on the walls in a fun and contemporary way, breaking the traditional norms for creating and exhibiting art. In the fulfilling of all these seemingly lofty ideas, a lot of



fun will for sure be had in the process! To say that this is a dream coming true is an understatement. It fills my heart with warmth knowing one of my dreams is coming to fruition.

I picture myself sitting there on chilly Labrador evenings in front of my buddy's great-grandfather's parlor stove that he donated. The fire will be crackling. I will be appreciating the quiet

peacefulness I've cultivated while making pottery for people to enjoy. As I create and dream, I will feel an extra sense of peace in knowing that I am helping the earth by having a low carbon footprint from my choice to use reclaimed materials that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill. I am also helping myself by not being linked into huge financial constraints with banks, leases, and fiscal stress. I will inhabit a sustainable building that will in turn sustain my creativity and continue to fill my mind, body, and soul with goodness.

I got caught up in the tiny house movement by embracing the thought of simple living...where you own your stuff and your stuff doesn't own you...where you are free from materialism. The mobility of it all appeals to me as well. The thought of travelling to another town with my artisan wares really appeals to me. Perhaps I will be like a gypsy, a nomadic spirit heading whichever way the wind takes me. Meeting all kinds of cool people. Having wonderful experiences. My time will be my own. To exist in a state of grateful creativity is the real dream, and it is so nice to experience my dream coming true.

BIO: Marty Byrne is a ceramicist and artist from Labrador, Canada. He graduated from Memorial University with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in English. His has a creative background in community theater, visual, ceramic and now literary arts. He started Byrne'n Mud Pottery in 2018 hosting ceramic craft building and pottery wheel lessons for individuals and families. His work was most recently featured in the Lab West Art Wander outdoor art show as well as in the Craft Council gallery in St. John's, Newfoundland. (Photos from Marty)



SPRING RENEWAL

By Rev. Valerie Mansfield

Spring is the time many of us do our spring cleaning. We generally do this in our homes, gardens, or patios. Sometimes this is an overwhelming task. I invite you to take it slow and easy. Clean out a drawer using three categories, trash, give away and keep. Get a trash can or garbage bag for the trash. A box or bag for donations and a box or basket for items you wish to keep. Mark each box or bag so you know what goes where and then clean out the drawer.

Once you are finished take the trash out to the trash can. Put the donation items in your car to drop off that day or the next. Make sure the items you have selected to keep are in the right and perfect spot, change their location if necessary. Then start on the next drawer.

Once you have cleaned all the drawers start on the closet. If you have clothing that no longer fit give them away, and if you have not worn something in the last year...let it go, too. This process creates a vacuum in our life for new prosperity to come to us.

Take time outside each day. Maybe take a gentle walk or sit and observe the new growth bursting from the trees or flowers growing from Mother Earth. Plant herbs to enrich your food or flowers to bring joy and wellness during the coming summer days. Listen and watch the animals at play, hear the songs of the birds.



Spend a quiet moment where you are and breathe in deeply. Find a comfortable place to sit and time to renew your spirit. Feel the warmth of the sun or the crisp wind or the stillness of the indoors. Close your eyes or select a spot to focus your attention. Breathe in Spring...Breathe out Spring...Breathe in Spring...Breathe out Spring...Breathe in Spring...Breathe out Spring. See the shimmer of life all around you...observe and absorb the beauty. Allow the beauty and radiance to lift you up in thoughts and spirit.

Ask yourself what you require right now. Know and see your wholeness. You are perfect just as you are, and all is well. You are only limited by your thoughts, words, and actions. Be kind and gentle to yourself. This is your moment for self-love. You are

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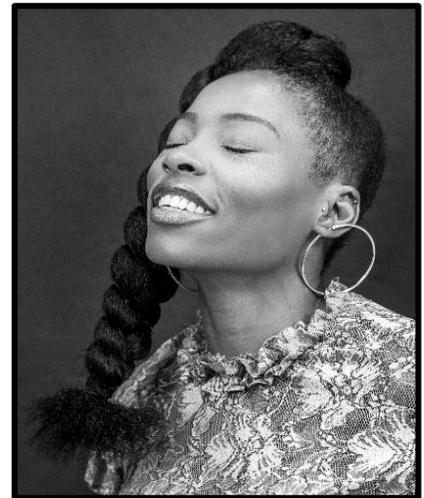
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growing just as the trees and flowers are growing. Life is filled with moments of new beginning and new adventures.

This is an exciting invigorating time in your life. Raise your vibration of thought by using positive affirming language. Increase your physical energetic level by moving your body. If it's difficult to move your body, then visualize yourself moving. You can clean your body by drinking lots of water. Try putting a lemon wedge in your water for three or four days each week. Notice the difference the little things we do can make, and how you feel when you take time to renew your environment, your mind, and your body.



REV. VALERIE MANSFIELD'S New Enterprise. She is Senior Minister at Unity of East Louisville. She is also a Life Coach, & Holistic Healer. She is manifesting a new enterprise "Pathways to Harmony." This provides an opportunity for individuals to bring harmony, clarity and understanding to their daily life. Families work together to bring harmony, peace, and love to the forefront of the family dynamics through Conscious Connections. She is consulting for non-profits and small businesses focusing on harmony, efficiency, and effectiveness. Valerie is also Treasurer of Unity Worldwide Ministry. Her mission in life is to create a harmonious, loving, conscious experience daily. She is a lifelong Unity Truth Student and welcomes you to join her on a spiritual journey of harmony, love, and transformation. She lives with her husband Bruce of 40 years and loves time with her children and grandchildren.



Photos: Spring Cleaning, Canstock Photo/Len44ik; Breathing Meditation, Unsplash Bjorn Pierre. Editor's Note: Unity of East Louisville is in east end; Unity of Louisville is near Old Louisville.

THE ENDANGERED, ENDEARING SEAHORSE

By Diana Norred

The seahorse is an improbable fish! With a horse's head, a possum's prehensile tail, eyes like tiny glass fishbowls and wavy, gossamer fins - - these shy creatures have delighted and intrigued us since ancient times. Seahorses, mythical and real, have been objects of human fascination for millennia. Roman legend has it they pulled Neptune's chariot and danced with mermaids. Pliny the Elder claimed they were the major ingredient to cure baldness. These adorable creatures have even been featured in supporting roles in animated sea life movies such as 'Finding Nemo.' Their equine character in the East has been equated with medicinal efficacy as an enhancer of potency and a restorer of strength. Seahorses keep the ecosystem in check by eating plankton, small fish, and tiny shrimp. They live in shallow and weedy areas, usually where the current is strong. They are not the most efficient swimmers, so their tail helps them anchor onto the grasses and corals in their habitat, so they don't get swept away. They swim by utilizing the long dorsal fin on their back and the tiny fins on the left and right sides of their head. The powerful fins beat at a stunning 30-70 beats per second. This speed is similar to a hummingbird's wings.

These active hunters have no stomach, teeth, or talons. They spend most of their days eating and use their long straw-like snout to suck in their prey. Mating starts with wrestling and males give birth! Seahorses are set apart from other fishes, indeed, and what renders them unique in the broader animal kingdom (of which fish are a part) is the extreme form of male parenting they exhibit. A male will carry the young for 18 to 69 days depending on the amount of eggs that the female deposits in his pouch. He can hold up to 2000 eggs depending on the species.

The latest estimate of the number of seahorse species is 44, whittled down from 120. Each species produces a variety of colors, sizes, and body proportions. Coloration is extremely variable. Some have a base color of olive, yellow, brown, white, and gray, and very rarely entirely gold seahorses are spotted. These stunning creatures give the seaweed they cling to the appearance of an aquatic Christmas tree on which a shiny new ornament has been hung.

The seahorse harvest is considerable and unsustainable. In 1995, global consumption was approximately 56 tons, or 20 million individuals. Although Oriental cuisine does offer them as dishes, the major use is medicinal. Chinese medicine credits the seahorse with increasing energy levels within the human body as well as decreasing cholesterol levels. It is also believed to play a curative role in ailments such as asthma, kidney infections and acne.

Seahorses for traditional Chinese medicine are supplied by commercial fishermen. In fact, some seahorse populations have been thought to have declined by as much as 50% in the past five years. However, the medicinal use is by no means responsible for



all the seahorse decline. Their natural habitats are particularly susceptible to degradation through pollutants, land reclamation and other human activities such as destructive fishing methods. The heavy bottom trawl nets, dynamite, and cyanide fishing* have a very negative impact on their survival. The disturbance of their habitat has a more serious impact on the wild seahorse population than direct harvesting.

In 2002, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), responded to concerns and tightened trade restrictions on all species of seahorses. However, scientists say that the existing measures don't reach out far enough. Even with restrictions in effect, tens of millions of seahorses still died worldwide because of nonselective fishing. To make matters worse, the fishing methods used destroyed their habitats. Even with legal protection, life just keeps getting harder for these unusual fish.

Ground up for medicines, sold sightless and stiff as souvenirs, captured and sold alive for home aquariums - - most seahorses in many parts of the world have a hard road ahead of them. Perhaps a combination of public awareness and aquaculture in this country may yet turn the tide for these fascinating fish. Seahorses, as well as any other species, have a place on this earth. We need to protect and respect their purpose.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Cyanide fishing for aquariums involves spraying a sodium cyanide mixture into the fish's habitat to temporarily incapacitate them (and permanently weaken them). This also harms the habitat and is illegal in most countries, yet it is practiced.

BIO: Diana Norred lives in St. Petersburg, Florida with her husband, Jim. She graduated from Pasco State College with a degree in Communications and is retired from the Tampa Bay Times where she worked in Advertising Management for 28 years. Her college training included extensive scientific coursework. Understanding science as related to nature, our environment, and humanity has been a lifelong interest and study for her.

PHOTO: Pixabay_Red ge87



KEEP YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM STRONG

By Dr. Lisa Tostado

Our immune system is vital to our health and well-being. Without it, we would be open to attack from foreign invaders such as bacteria and viruses. Although the immune system is spread throughout the body in a vast network of cells, proteins (antibodies), organs and tissues, it is believed that 70-80% of the immune system resides in the gut. The gut, more specifically the large intestine - is where we also house a community of 40-100 trillion microflora collectively known as our microbiome. Our gut flora also protects us from pathogens -- helping our immune system work more efficiently. When we develop an imbalance in our gut flora (such as an overgrowth of bad bacteria or candida), we are more susceptible to immune system challenges including infection and autoimmunity.

Chronic stress, toxins, poor sleep habits and an unhealthy diet can also weaken the immune system. Now more than ever, with our ongoing environmental challenges and stressors, we need to build immune resiliency to ensure good health.

THE FOLLOWING ARE MY TOP 5 WELLNESS TIPS FOR NATURALLY BOOSTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

CONSUME A WHOLE FOODS DIET. Consuming a whole foods diet helps to provide the nutrients needed to drive good immune function including vitamins A, C, D, E as well as calcium and zinc. Immune boosting foods include peppers, leafy greens, all brassicas (kale, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts), berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries & cranberries), citrus fruits (grapefruit, oranges, lemons), mushrooms (shiitake and oyster mushrooms), sunflower seeds, almonds and healthy omega-3 fats (flaxseeds, chia seeds, cod liver oil and wild caught fish).

SUPPORT GUT HEALTH WITH PREBIOTICS AND PROBIOTICS. According to Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, all disease begins in the gut. Lower levels of beneficial flora can weaken our defenses, allowing for opportunistic organisms to overgrow. These pathogens release toxins that can cross the blood brain barrier, resulting in inflammation in the brain (neuroinflammation). Brain fog, anxiety, depression, and mood disorders can be linked to an unhealthy gut-brain axis.

We can support healthy populations of beneficial flora by eating foods that are naturally rich in probiotics including coconut kefir, fermented vegetables (sauerkraut and kimchi), kombucha, raw apple cider vinegar, and fermented soybeans (tempeh, miso etc.). It's especially important to supplement with a broad-spectrum probiotic while taking an antibiotic. I typically recommend a broad-spectrum probiotic that includes lactobacillus spp., bifidobacterium spp. and a beneficial yeast -- saccharomyces boulardii.

Fiber is considered a prebiotic – or food for our gut bacteria – helping them flourish and thrive. Beans, legumes, apples, bananas, raspberries, artichokes, and whole grains are high in fiber and some of the best foods to eat to feed our good flora.

Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.

Naturopathic Doctor

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INCORPORATE HERBS & SPICES. The plant kingdom offers a natural pharmacy that can aid in every aspect of our health. We have been harnessing the power of plants and herbal medicine for thousands of years to build and maintain health. My favorite herbs and spices include green tea, ginger root, turmeric, oregano, rosemary, garlic, echinacea, and elderberry. Many of these can be consumed daily as a tea or used as a spice, while others can be taken as an herbal extract in a tincture, or tablet. Elderberry is particularly good to take during flu season due to its antiviral properties. Its taste is pleasant and is considered generally safe.

GET PLENTY OF SLEEP. Sleep is essential for good immune function. It is while we sleep that we produce immune fighting antibodies and hormones. Our immune system also releases a protein called cytokines that protects us from infection, inflammation, and stress. We should aim for 6-8 hours of sleep per night – falling asleep well before midnight brings the most powerful repair to the brain and body.

AVOID PROCESSED SUGARS. Studies show that consuming just a couple of sugary drinks can curb immune cells from being able to attack bacteria for several hours. It is estimated that the average American consumes about 77 grams of sugar per day – this is more than 3x the amount recommended for women. Processed sugars contribute to weight gain, blood sugar dysregulation and inflammation. Eating a protein with every meal or snack can improve satiety and help us feel more balanced. We can also avoid blood sugar dips by eating regularly though out the day. One of my favorite herbs for sugar cravings is gymnema sylvestre – it is considered the “sugar destroyer”. It helps improve insulin sensitivity and can dull our taste receptors for sweets.

Staying hydrated, getting regular exercise and stress reducing activities such as yoga and meditation can also boost immune function. Having a positive outlook on life and feelings of gratitude can also improve health and wellbeing. Please consult with your doctor before making any changes to your diet or if you are on medications.

Bio: Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D. Free 15 Minute Consults. 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's been a resident of Louisville for the past 8 years.



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BREATH IS PRAYER, by Michael Reitz

(Excerpt from book of same name)

Breath is life! Breath is prayer!
We may have first learned to pray as a child
with memorized words.
Yet before words, we had breath.
As we grew older, we may have found our own
words to speak to the divinity we feel is
present for us.
Yet before we had words, we had breath.
As we mature, we find that words have many
languages, many denotations, connotations, and
private understandings.
Yet before understanding there was breath.
We may have dropped words from our prayer
and use music, dance, and/or silence to put
ourselves in the presence of life's blessing,
life's goodness, life's interconnectedness.
Breath made life possible. Breath sustains life.
Breath is present at the alpha and the omega.
Breath connects us to all that lives, seen and
unseen.
Aware of our own breath,
We are united with the action of creation.
As we are mindful of our breathing,
We radiate healing within ourselves
and toward those we love.
At death we relax and give our breath to the
universe.
Right now, in this moment...
Breathe in and be aware of your "inbreath."
Breathe out and be aware of your "outbreath."
For a few more moments, focus on your breath
"in" and your breath "out."
Your breathing attunes you to the present moment.
Breathe in: I am at peace.
Breathe out: I share my peace with whomever
I meet...
Your breath and your prayer are one from birth to
death.
Create a personal intention for the circumstances
of your life.
Remember it as you breathe.



Become aware of your breath as you sit, walk, run,
exercise, or work at your desk.
When resting, take long slow breaths
with your intention.
Synchronize breath and intention with your steps
as you walk or run.
As you breathe remember your chosen intentions.
Your breath connects you to "all that is."
Eventually no thought or intention may be necessary.

Photo by Tina Dawson, Canstock Photos

BIOS: Michael Reitz is an author and retired educator who has
taught on the Navajo Nation as well as public and private schools
in Ohio. He can be reached at michael@mcreitz.com.

BOOKS BY MICHAEL REITZ

Breath Is Prayer and Breath is Healing

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BOOK BY BARB VASILOFF

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NATURAL SOLUTIONS FOR SPRING ALLERGIES

By Dr. Victoria Snelling

Is tree pollen interfering with your enjoyment of the beauty of spring? I recently enjoyed a trip through three Southern states. I marveled at the flowering Redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*), Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) and Dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) that increased in color as we drove down I-65 into Tennessee and Mississippi. While I was enjoying the scenery, my companion's sneezing accelerated as the trees became more colorful. So many of my patients can relate to this. Louisville, with its abundance of trees, also has an abundance of allergy clinics. Some of the recommended medications and nasal sprays contain steroids which have a definite downside for the immune system as they are suppressive to the natural processes of the body and carry their own risk over time. Some of the oral allergy medications can dry out more than your sinuses and have other aggravating side effects. If, like my travel companion, you'd like a more natural, non-toxic method of soothing spring allergies... read on.

If you'd like to enjoy the outdoors as the weather continues to improve, consider a natural nasal treatment instead of chemical



nasal sprays. Some natural saline sprays contain herbal extracts or homeopathic ingredients. A few new products contain xylitol that can moisturize and clear congestion. My favorite is colloidal silver drops, either in a neti pot or purchased in nasal spray form. It's useful before and after outdoor activities when the pollen count is high. Clearing your sinus passages after being outdoors can eliminate pollen that prolongs an allergic reaction. Use care if essential oils are your go-to for self-care. Many oils will further irritate inflamed sinus passages and delay relief. Speak with your natural health provider for guidance.

Homeopathy offers many remedies for acute relief and even to gradually reduce allergic tendencies. *Allium cepa* is useful for sinus congestion that is runny, thin, and drips from the nose. With that condition, the sinuses may have a sensation of stinging or burning from the allergen reaction. *Kali bichrominum*, *Kali bich* for short, is for congestion that is thicker and more difficult to clear.

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Homeopathic Histaminum can bring relief for allergies, hay fever and even hives. One product that my office stocks in abundance is a combination homeopathic product made from our region's flowering pollinating trees, such as oak, pine, maple, etc. It also includes summer and fall allergens like grass, ragweed and others. I recommend this product for anyone with pollen allergies. With those homeopathic remedies described in this paragraph, follow label directions. They can be repeated as needed.



Many of my patients find that a clean diet greatly reduces their allergy symptoms in the spring. For some, avoiding sugar, dairy and wheat will give them the relief that seek.

If you decide to try homeopathy for your spring allergies, take a dose before you go outside, rinse your sinuses once you are indoors, and repeat the homeopathic remedy every half hour or so as needed. Don't let allergies keep you from enjoying the beauty of spring in Kentucky.

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.

Photos: Blossoms, Ruby Doan_Unsplash; Man, Tommaso79_Canstock Photos.

Editor's Note: Please consult your primary health care practitioner before making any changes in your health practices.



A PARABLE OF HEALING

By Gerry Boylan, Ph.D.

Author's Note: Do we sometimes project our woundedness or our suffering on other people or factors outside ourselves rather than looking within to heal ourselves and our life with love, acceptance, freedom, and compassion? We can access God and the Power of Creation within our heart.

And it came to pass as each person searched inside themselves, that instead of one voice there were many. Instead of peace, there was chaos; instead of love, there was fear. And they said unto themselves, each one in his own way, "I must rid myself of these sufferings for they make me insane and provoke me to do all kinds of wickedness."

So, the people devised many means to free themselves of these sufferings. They prayed; they sacrificed; they fasted; they did sacred dances; they offered themselves over to learned priests and physicians. And lo, after all of these efforts they remained just as they were before -- adrift in their chaos and fear. In desperation, they raised their arms to heaven and beseeched the Most High. They cried, "Rid us of this curse! We would be free of these sufferings. We have tried rightly all we could. You are our last and only hope."

And the Almighty answered saying, "These things you call sufferings are nothing but your heart's desires gone astray. Listen deeply to these voices as the yearnings of your own hearts and do not reject them. Listen, and you will know that beneath the chaos and the fear is a hungry heart yearning to be nurtured. Know that each of these voices of yours leads you to the food and nourishment you need to heal and to become whole."





Sunday Service
- 11:00 Worship Service

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Visit www.unityoflouisville.org for links, classes and updates.

Listen and deny them not. They are not your enemies; they are your friends and teachers."

Many scoffed this response. They decided God must be crazy or uncaring, and continued to create rituals and prayers to make the sufferings go away. But others heard and listened and acted accordingly. By embracing themselves and even those things that brought them



distaste or disgust -- they found their truth within -- love, trust, acceptance, freedom, and compassion. And with these eyes of Virtue and Grace they saw their sufferings as wounds rather than curses. They came to see even the anger and fear of their brothers and sisters as pain that had not been acknowledged or healed. And in healing themselves they began to heal one another.

No longer did they curse or cry to heaven for they had found what they were seeking. They had found "God and the Power of Creation within themselves."

BIO: Gerry began his career as a teacher and retreat leader at St. Xavier High School where he taught Biology, Chemistry and Religion. His undergraduate degree is from Catholic University, and he holds graduate degrees in Biology and Transpersonal Psychology, and a PhD in Comparative Religions. He teaches classes at Unity of Louisville along with guest speaking at Sunday services.



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JOY OF HERB GARDENING in POTS ON DECK or in SUNNY WINDOW! Barbara Bosler

Even if you're new to this you will get good results when you follow a few guidelines. Herb gardening in pots is rewarding in itself, not to mention how delicious the fresh herbs are with your foods and drinks. You can't beat a fresh herbed olive oil dressing on your fresh summer salad.

GETTING STARTED YOU WILL NEED:

Five 8 to 10 inch pots. I prefer clay pots with holes in the bottom for drainage. In the larger pots 2 or more herbs can be planted. Herbs can make beautiful arrangements.

Organic potting soil

Organic granular fertilizer

8 to 10 organic herb starter plants (these can be found at large "home & garden" stores.)

Herbs can be started by seed, of course.

I found it easier, more economical, and timely to buy established starter plants. It's a personal choice.



PREP SOIL: Mix potting soil with fertilizer according to fertilizer directions for culinary herbs.

TRANSPLANT: Fill pot $\frac{3}{4}$ full with soil. Pat down the soil. Gently remove your herbs from original containers and lightly loosen roots. Then place in the pot. Add more soil patting down until soil reaches the bottom of the plant's stem. Push the soil firmly around the plant. Water thoroughly.

Louisville is in Zone 6 where "freeze free" recommendations for outdoor planting is after May 15. Many Louisvillians traditionally plant on Derby Day (1st Saturday in May) anyway. Check "freeze free" date for your area to determine when to plant outdoors.

It's preferred to place your plants in a location that is sunny 6-8 hours daily. Allow your soil to dry slightly between each watering. Culinary herbs grow best in soil that is more on the dry side. 2 weeks after the transplant begin sprinkling a little granular fertilizer on top of soil and then water well. Your herbs may need to be watered daily if no summer rain showers. Trim dead leaves, prune, and harvest according to each type of herb.

I hope that you enjoy your beautiful, aromatic, and flavorful little herb garden just a few steps away from your creative kitchen. May we remember to always be thankful for our food.



Photo on left by Brebca of Canstock.
Photo above by Pixaline 337 images of Pixabay

PARENTING FOR PEACE IN OUR NEW REALITY

By Leah Bomar, Author

When I was a teenager, I swore I would always remember what it was like being a teen. The intense emotions, the unfairness, the way others disregarded my thoughts and feelings just because of my age and lack of life experience. I especially wanted to remember what it was like as a teenager living out the age-old drama of “Parents Just Don’t Understand.”

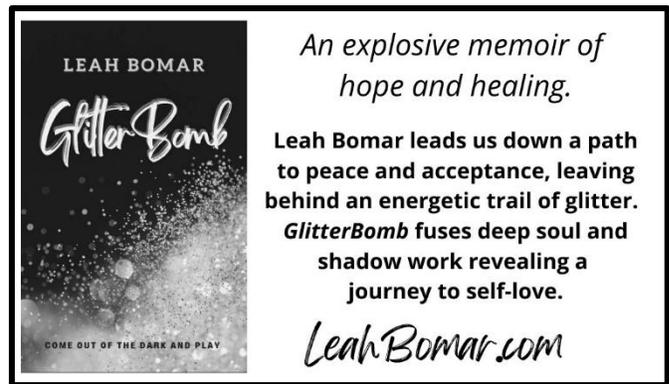
Now, I am a parent of three young teens of middle school age. I often find myself standing and speaking firmly from the #TeamParent perspective. I understand more than ever my own parents’ side of things during my own teenage struggles. But I also strive daily to remember that girl, that fierce, deeply feeling fifteen-year-old who made herself promise she would always have a vote and say in future decisions. I strive to treat my children with the ultimate respect and honor their needs and opinions. They may in many ways still be kids, but human beings of all ages deserve to have their voices be heard.

It’s more important now than ever as we enter into a new era of elevated consciousness on Earth to listen to the voices of our children and especially teens. The future is moving in faster than our archaic society can process and the world our children live in will be drastically different than the one we were raised in. It already is, and that’s OK. There’s no need to panic.

Many adults cause themselves unnecessary stress and strife trying to hold onto the ways of the old world, how life was “before.” The global pandemic along with simultaneous social justice revolutions and actual wars are contributing to a worldwide awakening. The transformative part of all the suffering and the change is a new way of living (and parenting!) that is now being practiced and applied to our everyday life.

While many parents may still worry about the “learning loss” in the classroom due to school missed during the pandemic, our children have been blessed with the experience of something greater than we could have ever planned for or imagined. Global Educator Gahmya Drummond-Bey shares, “I do not believe that our children are behind. The last few years may have been tough, but our kids were, and continue to be, much tougher. Our children experienced a form of experiential learning that enriched their lives in ways that we never could have prepared for.” This *KidYOUiversity* creator has previously taught through two other pandemics in Korea and has a vast well of free resources and programs for parents and kids at evolvedteacher.com.

“In order to help our children cope and to empower them as much as possible, parents and teachers worldwide have had more



conversations with young people regarding their emotions than ever before. We’ve discussed the differences between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, how to be upstanders, and ways to relieve stress and anxiety. Our children are more emotionally intelligent than we were, and the benefits of not only being able to handle one’s own emotions, but to create space for others transcends far beyond what any academic achievement ever could.”

Mental health has become a hot topic in our society and its true

our kids and teens have access to new ways of coping with their thoughts, feelings, and traumas that may have never even existed before this generation. If your special young person is one of the millions experiencing depression, anxiety or just needs a little emotional support as we all transition into this new “after,” seek out additional support. Speak to them. Listen when they tell you what they need. Clear communication might not be the obvious strong suit of your teen, so use your strong parental intuitions to guide their sweet souls into emotional maturity.

Use art, music (of their choice!), time in nature as a family, or even alternative schooling if necessary to allow them the time and space they need to connect to themselves and their greater purpose in life. This may require you to let go of some of your own expectations and try something different in your parenting style verses the way you were raised, and that is ok and welcomed. A whole new world awaits us all and children, especially teens, have an important role in helping forge the way forward. May they help create the pathways to peace and love we all hope for.

BIO: **Leah Bomar** is an author, speaker and certified Life Coach specializing in Therapeutic Art. She graduated from University of Louisville with a degree in English, taught elementary art and worked as a substitute teacher for JCPS. As a Super Mom of three children, she started a local Creative Co-op for Homeschoolers and taught middle school & electives at a local cottage program. More info at LeahBomar.com or email AuthorLeahBomar@gmail.com



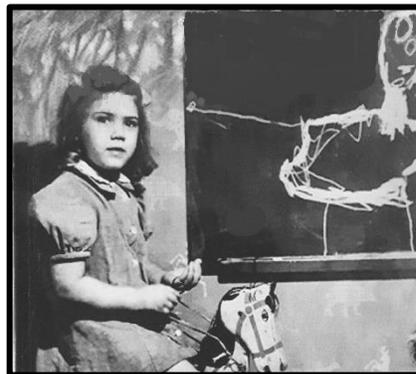
PHOTO: Johannes Anderson, Unsplash

HEALING CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE, An Art Therapist's Journey

by Ann Owen, MFA, MA

Late last year, my book Healing Childhood Sexual Abuse, An Art Therapist's Journey was finally published. It was a huge step. Years ago, I accepted that I was sexually abused. It made logical sense of my fears and anxieties; yet I was busy with my career and not wanting to take time out for serious therapy. I thought maybe I could forget it. Years later, my right eye rolled back in my head and medical tests couldn't find a reason or cure. My college offered early retirement and I finally began therapy along with making pastel paintings. It seemed that words were not enough to describe my feelings (an artist often thinks visually). I kept those images zipped inside a portfolio never looking at them because they were a painful past. "Forgotten," they traveled with all my stuff from one home to the next until a photograph of a little girl on a rocking horse in front of a drawing on a blackboard caught my attention. This photograph was definite proof that I had been sexually abused. (In the book I describe how art therapy understands children's art which often speaks louder than words.) Until the miracle of the photograph I intuitively knew but had no concrete memories because I was so young. I had even worked with a hypnotist looking for proof and he did not find abuse. This left me questioning my intuition for a time. With the photograph, I began my serious journey toward supporting that little girl who was still inside me. and publishing my book.

The book is more than my story. It includes insights from Art Therapy, ideas for supporting a person who has experienced sexual abuse and very concrete ideas for a survivor who is ready to move beyond the pain of blaming themselves and feeling like damaged goods. The book might be helpful for therapists or loved ones who could share the images with a survivor who is willing to start difficult discussions. The questions in the book are focused on my paintings yet could develop from art, crafts, collages, stories the survivor creates or even fairy tales. Being creative is often freeing. Thoughts for a survivor to ponder, discuss or write about include: What do you remember or see in the art? What are the different people or even animals doing? How are they relating to each other? What might each individual say? Can you guess what each is feeling? Who is standing next to each other and what do you



learn about their relationship and the situation? What can you guess about their personalities? How do you feel about the situation? Have you known times like these?

There are many more questions





Ann Owen
Author, Painter, Healer,
full Prof, Counselor



Healing Childhood Sexual Abuse,
An Art Therapist's Journey
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for the survivor like what is your position in the family? Each individual has different roles or jobs. Who can you trust? Are there other people in the family who are fearful of supporting you? Confusion and fear can be multiplied by social media and its constant pressure. Yet, there are games on the web that permit people to explore and practice options and try interesting dynamics. What if each person in the environment takes on the personality of an animal? What might happen to unspoken questions?

What makes you happy? Feel safe? The book takes time to explore how colors influence your feelings - like dark dull colors when you want to disappear and bright colors when you want to explore the world. Small objects that fit in your hand like a crystal, an object from a loved one, or a soft furry cloth might comfort. I have a small wind chime above my sink that I ring when I think of my husband who died years ago. The sound helps me connect to his memory and support. When I chimed in the beginning my heart would ache, now it is a comfort. Be sensitive to how the intensity of memories change over time.

How can you protect your little "child within?" I believe that it is important to be in touch with your "child within." When I become worried or fearful, I know now that I need to check in and protect my "child within." I talk to her as if she is alive. It is important to know what your "child within" likes to do. Singing, dancing, hiking in the park, coloring? Promise to do something as soon as possible to comfort your "child within." These days are fearful times with the pandemic, the unsettling political and economic tensions, and the war in Ukraine. I can't detach from them, yet I work for balance in my life. I practice the piano for about one hour a day and that brings me peace. I am creating art to express emotions, reading poetry and prose, exercising at the YMCA, taking time to be with friends, gardening and cooking healthy food. My "child within" now feels protected by Native American traditions. (See my design of the Native American buffalo skull.) Each day I journal and take time for my Spiritual practices. What do you need to do for yourself and your "child within?"

BIO: Ann Hemdahl-Owen, MFA in fine Arts, MA in Expressive Art Therapy, retired full Professor, Hypnotherapist, Hypnobirth Coach, Counselor: Reiki, Healing Touch, and more.

PAINTING by Ann Owen. Photo of Child provided by Ann Owen

HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS: HEALING OURSELVES & OUR PLANET. By Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

Life on Planet Earth is in major transformation just about everywhere. As soon as we perhaps think that we understand what is going on somewhere, it changes. Nothing seems to stay put long enough for us to feel that we have it all figured out. What effect does this have on our emotions and psyche? What can we sink our roots into? What can we say that we really grasp unequivocally? The truth is that everything in manifestation and all that exists is constantly in a state of movement. That is the truth of reality, that all is in constant movement whether we are aware of it or not. The electrons in every atom are circulating. Our planet is constantly whirling as well as circling around the sun. The energy in our human body is constantly circulating. If the energy in our body slows down or develops stoppages in the energy flow, that can interfere with our health. That is the essence of energy healing - - to keep the energy flowing freely within and throughout our body.

From studying astronomy or watching T.V. programs about it, many of us know that our solar system is very gradually expanding.

This is called the "Big Bang Theory" of the expanding universe. We are a part of this as well. As we grow spiritually, our consciousness expands and becomes more sensitive, and our aura energy field purifies and becomes a higher



energy frequency. We then can access a broader range of awareness, intuition, and become very aware of our Soul mission

This is what is happening now on our planet. Many people are waking up to a broader reality. We aren't limited to just what is going on in our immediate physical vicinity that we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell with our five physical senses. This broader awareness is sometimes called the sixth sense - - higher awareness of non-physical spiritual realities. This allows a person to be able to lift their consciousness above what may be happening on the physical plane and not be totally controlled by it. With higher consciousness a person can become a source helping to lift those people around him or her to new more positive options. When one is limited to the traditional five senses, a person may feel that what is seen around him or her is all that is possible. With higher consciousness the horizon is broadened and lifted to newer possibilities. This is what is happening now on planet Earth. Many people are waking to higher consciousness and are beckoning to those around them to also wake up to higher awareness.

Let us all rise up and create a transformed planet not limited to old patterns of competition, hate, prejudice, resentment, anger, jealousy, depression, or plunder. The transformed reality we are

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awakening to is a world filled with all the Divine Qualities of God such as peace, kindness, joy, sharing, compassion, and more. This is what is transpiring on planet Earth right now. This is going on around us now and is growing stronger steadily even though we may not be very aware of it yet. Lifting up out of the old patterns isn't always easy. It may require some serious effort where old realities seem stuck.

Where an aspect of the current reality around us seems stuck and harmful, it is helpful to draw together (in person or virtually) many wise good people to pray for that situation to heal and evolve for the highest good of all. Along with prayer, it is crucial for good people to work together increasingly to find solutions. There is power in numbers and in working for good causes in groups. If one person is aware of a situation that needs support and transformation, there are most likely other people that feel the same way. Let us all actively work together to heal our neighborhoods, cities, and planet. Once again circulation is the solution. We don't need to feel that we are the only person who cares about improving what we care about. There are others who care, and we can put out a call. That is part of the good side of our current days of increasing digital circulation.

Some people who seem to be most resistant to transformation for the higher good of all may surprise those around them by unexpectedly stepping up to help. We can invoke active response where that is needed. Visualize it, expect it, know that many people are waking up and wanting to be of service to others. They may reach out to others around them - they may think beyond their limited self-interest. There is hope for the planet and for our neighborhoods and cities. We need to not give up hope. May we think positively and inspire others with our courage. Working and acting all together we can help actualize positive transformation. It is possible and it is happening. **PHOTO:** Pixabay 6248913

BIO: You are invited to join Joyce's Zoom Transformational Healing Meditations Wednesdays 6:00-6:45 pm (Est). Joyce is a Transformational Energy & Emotional Healer (on Zoom or Telephone, and in some conditions In-Person). Remote energy healing can be very effective. Reiki Master, Master's Degree in Human Development. She's a highly attuned & sensitive guide for Higher Meditation & Spiritual Awareness. She offers Past lives readings and Akashic Readings. She's author of book "Secrets of Wisdom - Awaken to the Miracle of You," & Publisher- Editor of "Natural Living Journal." Louisville Office. 812-566-1799. www.joycegerrish.com, See more on business card above.