

Natural Living Journal

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

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Accessing Power of Your Higher Mind

Confidence Comes From Within

Finding Peace in Chaos

My Al-Anon Family

The Peace of Gardening

Mother Nature's Awesome Dance

Iconic Koala Bears

Creative Solutions for Homelessness

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Better Digestion for Better Health

Dulcimer: Playing Sweet Music

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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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FINDING PEACE IN THE CHAOS

By Rev. Valerie Mansfield

Self-Compassion allows me to work through my challenges with peace in my heart. Spending time each day in prayer, meditation, contemplation, or mindfulness allows me to “be.” Be still and listen to my heart’s desires. Going within to prayer is a natural response for me. It is how I deal with all emotions and grief. I sit in quiet contemplation sending love and healing energy into my body, mind, family, and the world. This is a daily practice and sometimes a moment-to-moment action.



The world seems to be in continued chaos. Pain is welling up inside many folks. The endless death and destruction of human life shows the dark times our unconscious living is creating.

On Tuesday, May 24th, my grandson graduated from elementary school. I had the opportunity and pleasure to substitute teach for a few months at his school and enjoyed watching the ceremony as they begin a new journey in life. After the morning graduation my husband told me about the shooting in Texas. My first question was where? I have family with children in elementary school in Texas. It was about 150 miles from my family. I had to close my eyes, breathe, and take a moment in silence.

Later in the week, I hear about more senseless violence with two teenagers shot in the leg. The war in Ukraine continues and innocent folks are dying on both sides.

When is the waste enough, when do we awaken to a new way of living life consciously? What do I mean by conscious living? Conscious living is being aware of my own thoughts, working through my own darkness, manifesting my own desires through positive thoughtful action, and ensuring the greater good of all. I believe in standing up for the greater good in the world. It is my belief that standing against something creates more adversity in our world.

When I stand for peace for all, it begins within me. The first action I take is to continue to find peace within my being and send love into the world. We live in a world of abundance, and we can choose a different way of life. We can live in a world of justice for all people. We can support those who are suffering from mental health and trauma and help them to heal. Our children can grow up free with liberty and justice for all.

It starts within each of us. It is up to us to see the change we want in the world. Go within and find your peace. Stand up for peace in your neighborhood. Mentor peace and kindness in your



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family, with your friends, and in your neighborhood. Join the “Peace on Earth by 2030 Game,” register at peace2030.earth. Connect with the Louisville POE (Peace on Earth) Zone contact Suzanne De Gregorio at poezonelou@gmail.com and join a group to begin creating a more peaceful life and world. Change your thinking, change your life, change the world.

Editor’s Note: This “Peace on Earth by 2030 Game” sounds intriguing and important, right? Check this out at the contacts given above.

Mission of “Peace On Earth By 2030.” We embody the “Seven Actions of the Peace on Earth by 2030 Game” and spread them throughout the city.

Vision: Develop a vibrant Louisville POE Zone by seeding teams to play the Peace on Earth by 2030 Game” locally and to establish POE Partnerships. We join other cities and towns across the world in a shared vision to create Peace on Earth by 2030 and are committed to helping make this a reality.

Values: Cooperation, Relationships, Respect, Reciprocity.

REVEREND VALERIE MANSFIELD’S BIO: She is Senior Minister at Unity of East Louisville Church and is the Treasurer of Unity Worldwide Ministry. She is also a Life Coach & Holistic Healer. She is manifesting a new enterprise “Pathways to Harmony” which is a twofold operation. (1) It’s 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. (2) Consulting for non-profits and small businesses focusing on harmony, efficiency, and effectiveness. 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 & loves time with her children & grandchildren.

Photos: Group: Canstock, Fizke. Prayer, Khmer Tep Ro, Pixabay

THE BIGGER PICTURE

By Gerry Boylan, Ph. D.

Suppose that God is All. God is Everything. Suppose that God is Love, Be-ing, and the Power of Creation. Suppose that the only and ultimate energy or movement of this Allness is to grow and evolve. It was said of Jesus, as a child entering into young manhood, that he "grew in wisdom, age and grace," and that is a material world metaphor. Even though words are by their very nature limiting, we are continuing to stretch to embrace the meaning behind the words.

Suppose that the way God has chosen to grow and to evolve is through all of the billions and perhaps even infinite faces of His/Her creation. So that, for instance, here on planet Earth, this ranges from the tiniest subatomic particle to the most complex being, from the beginning and the end of that spectrum, from the Alpha to the Omega, every form has consciousness. Every form experiences itself in its own unique way. This is not just one experience, it is a continuum. What would it be like to realize that all experience, beyond duality and removing from it the stigma of judgment, of right or wrong, or good or bad - - it's all experience that is moving and evolving?

How would that change your vision of life? Imagine the tiniest of subatomic particles being conscious on its own - - and yet also moving and evolving and then joining with others along the way, becoming more and more complex. Now, what is interesting here is that each subatomic particle still retains a sense of "self" and yet at the same time knows that it is contributing to more than it is.



So if we take that particle and observe it joining with others, becoming more and more complex, doing more complex actions/responses here on planet Earth, and finding similar patterns beyond the Earth, a complex being called a solar system and a sun can be formed. Then each one of these suns and solar systems become more and part of a more complex being called the galaxy containing billions of suns. Then billions of galaxies become part of this known universe. And this is only a stretching of our imagination to begin to encompass the material world.

What about the immaterial worlds? What about other dimensions? What about energy beyond matter, beings that would be impossible or ungraspable by the intellectual mind and yet still

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exist there beyond all reason. What would it be like to know that you sit in the midst of all of this? And that even on this Earthly level, with all of the lifetimes you have lived - - you are living "Right Now."

See all of that as something else as well. The world we have been taught to live in exists in linear time, one thing following the next. That is the way it's "supposed" to be, that is the way it "should" be, and therefore that is the way it is. And yet we know intuitively or even instinctively that there is more than our linear thinking. Love goes beyond that, gratitude goes beyond that, our sense of self goes beyond that.

So you see this thing called life, your life, your individual personal life, is such a minuscule piece of this entire tapestry woven of both visible and invisible threads. Now when we say "minuscule" that does not mean unimportant. What the grain of sand has to contribute to this Divine Evolution is valuable and important, what this blade of grass has to offer, what this dolphin has to offer, what this human being has to offer are all essential. There is no measurement or judgment in this realm. We are all participating in this continuing "Act of Creation."



The only seeming difficulty is how often we forget, but let us take another leap here, to know that even our forgetfulness is a chosen mode of operation by Spirit to allow us to learn on even a deeper level the truth of Who We Are. There are no mistakes or errors. So here we all are with billions of other beings participating in this marvelous dance, this mad marvelous dance with our own unique script in our hands. What would it be like to do this joyfully?

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.



PHOTOS: Top right, Ds-visions of Pixabay. Stars Photo, S11990 of Pixabay.

TRANSCENDENT BEAUTY

B. Vasiloff

The day was warm with temps reaching the high 80's. Our hike had taken us deep into the Bernheim Forest in Claremont, KY. The forest is the largest privately owned natural area in the state. We were in search of the man-made giant wood sculptures.

Danish artist Thomas Dambo created the installations using recycled wood from the region in March of 2019. They are expected to last at least three years.

We found the first sculpt, resting against a tree; a mother giant known as Mama Loumari.



To locate all three installations, one hikes about two miles. When we reached the last of the three, we rested.

People were taking pictures; children were playing in a labaryth of stone; and strangers exchanged information they knew about the sculptures. It was a peaceful, relaxed environment, without masks to shield smiles, clouds to dampen spirits or hostile words to disrupt relationships. We sat still, enjoying the beauty.

A butterfly flew toward us, then around us, and finally settled on my partner's shirt. Was it the design on the shirt that attracted it? Was it the blue-grey color that appealed? Perhaps the words WE WALK TOGETHER that were printed on the shirt called out to the butterfly. In any case, it was quite happily settled and in no hurry to move on. It was so friendly, I wondered if it might be able to latch on to my finger.

Carefully I moved my finger toward one of its six jointed legs and allowed it to step up, one leg at a time. The butterfly flapped its wings a few times and then rested.



I held my breath and kept my hand steady.

In my silent musings I remembered how Buddhism describes the way we can transcend ourselves to become more beautiful like the butterfly.

It is written: "When human beings transcend from ordinary people (the person who is full of greed, hatred and delusion) to a good person (the person who knows what is right and wrong) then into the noble one (he who gets rid of greed, hatred, and delusion) we can see all these steps as similar to the process a butterfly must undergo.

To make this transition, the Buddhist Monks cite three techniques.

The first technique is **self-discipline** used among other things to guard against damaging our consciousness. **Self-discipline** – the ability to WAIT and THINK before we ACT.

The second is **concentration**, used to put our full energies into whatever we do. **Concentration** – directing our attention to a single object.

The third technique is **being mindful** when we stand, walk, sit, sleep, eat, drink, work, speak, think and so on. **Mindfulness** – being intensely aware of what we are sensing and feeling in the moment without interpretation or judgement.

Paraphrased from: Phramaha Piya Uttamapanno(Jundadal), a Buddhist Missionary Monk of Wat Pasantidhamma temple in Carrollton. He can be reached by e-mail at p_kind_j@yahoo.com. Photos: Courtesy Barbara Vasiloff

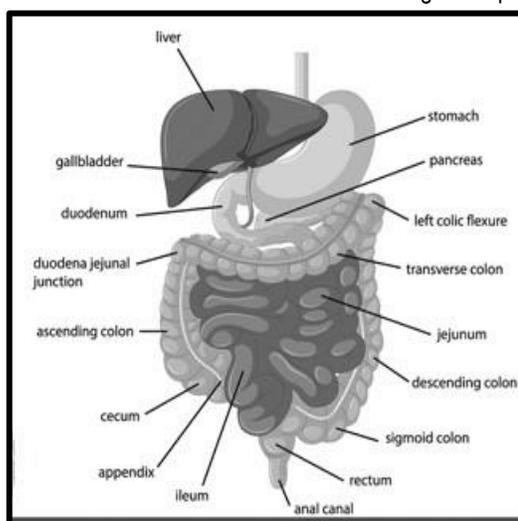
BETTER HEALTH DEPENDS ON HEALTHY FOOD & GOOD DIGESTION, By Dr. Lisa Tostado

You may have heard of the age-old adage “you are what you eat.” While this is very much the truth, there is still more to the equation. I would also add that you are what you can digest and assimilate. Digestion includes both mechanical (chewing) and chemical (enzymes) processes and depends on the functions of various organs and glands working together, including the stomach, pancreas, liver, gallbladder, and salivary glands. When functioning optimally, the digestive system is efficient at turning your food into absorbable molecules that the body will use for energy, growth, repair, and survival. Our health and livelihood depend on it. Healthy natural food and pure water enhance it!

Whether you are eating a tasty apple or delicious stew, the process of transforming food into nutrients (and then waste products) is essentially the same from start (mouth) to finish (anus). It begins with the thought, smell, or presence of food and the subsequent release of saliva, which causes the mouth to water. Chewing triggers more salivary secretions, which helps to lubricate the mouth and add moisture to the food. The enzymes in saliva help to break down starches and triglycerides. What happens once food hits your mouth is such an important part of the digestive process. The more chewing, the better! Chewing not only correlates with saliva production, it also sends a signal to the stomach to release its gastric juices in preparation for what is to come.

Once you swallow your food, it travels down the esophagus and into the stomach. You can think of the stomach as the body’s blender. It mixes and grinds the food into a liquid consistency with the help of hydrochloric acid, or stomach acid. Having sufficient stomach acid is one of the most important factors of a healthy digestive system. With insufficient stomach acid, food (especially protein) will take longer to digest and is more prone to moving back up instead of down (acid reflux)! Stomach acid is essential for calcium and vitamin B12 absorption among other minerals and vitamins. Stomach acid also protects you from food-borne pathogens. Digestive supplements can help.

After enough mixing and churning, the food (now considered chyme) gradually empties into the first part of the small intestine called the duodenum. The acidic pH of the chyme triggers other digestive secretions. The pancreas releases bicarbonate and enzymes, and the gallbladder contracts and secretes bile (made by the liver). Unfortunately, about 20% or more of the people I see no longer have their gallbladder. This can impair the body’s ability to digest fats completely. I recommend taking bile salts with your meals if you have had your gallbladder removed.



Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.

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Please consult with your doctor before making any changes to your health regimen.

All the steps I have described so far are a part of the upper digestive system. Once the transformed food moves past the duodenum to the lower part of the small intestine, it is now ready to be absorbed. At this point you can think of the intestinal lining as a gatekeeper – it is selective in what can cross over into the blood stream. A healthy diet and lifestyle support this. All this is paramount to your health, for the barrier can become more permeable and “leaky” -- allowing foreign substances to cross through (as in “Leaky Gut Syndrome”). In some people this can trigger autoimmunity. Examples of autoimmune conditions are Crohn’s Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Celiac Disease, and others. Leaky Gut also can impair efficient nutrient absorption.

Once we have finished absorbing vitamins, minerals, and other substances such as glucose – what is leftover makes it down to the large intestine where we pull out any leftover water and electrolytes. This is the final stop and where waste products are prepared for excretion through the rectum. The large intestine also houses the largest community of beneficial bacteria living in our body where they play a significant role in our immune health and protect us from foreign invaders. They thrive on a diet rich in fiber – which is what they use for fuel. Fiber also aids in the release of waste material out of the body. I hope that this has helped you understand a little more about digestion, where it is happening in the body, and how you can support it.

I have a passion for helping patients address their gut health issue – from indigestion to gut flora imbalance. I strongly believe in the words of the Greek physician Hippocrates — “all disease begins in the gut.” I offer free 15-minute phone consults where you can learn more about my approach.

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 Louisville Lifestyle Medicine, 3012 Eastpoint Pkwy., Louisville, KY 40223. **Photo:** Constock Photos_Colematt.

KOALAS: ADORABLE ICONIC KOALA BEARS *By Diana Norred*

The Koala, or more inaccurately koala bear, dwells in trees in Australia. Koalas are featured in bedtime stories and mythology of Indigenous Australians. The Tharawal people believe that the koala helped row the boat that brought them to the Australian continent, and another myth tells of how the koala turned barren lands into lush and verdant forests. Early Europeans considered them to be a prowling sloth-like beast with a fierce and menacing look. However, the koala's reputation began to grow in popularity at the beginning of the 20th century in spite of earlier opinions. Many children's books, cartoons and songs depicting the koala have been in existence since the late 1800's. The first koala stamp was issued by the Commonwealth of Australia in 1930, and a hugely successful television ad for Qantas airlines used the koala as their mascot.

The word "koala" comes from an ancient Aboriginal word meaning "no drink" since koalas rarely drink water; they get their hydration from the leaves they eat. Like humans, koalas have fingerprints; they are the only known mammal besides primates to have them. Their appearance is that of a cute cuddly bear with its round body, tufted, fluffy ears and spoon-shaped noses. Their fur is not really soft but resembles that of sheep's wool. It's designed to repel water and keep them insulated. Koalas grow 2 to 3 feet tall when fully matured and can weigh from 9 to 19 pounds in adulthood. Koala babies are called joeys and weigh about 0.017 ounces when born (about the size of a jellybean)! Soon after birth, the joey climbs into its mama's pouch and begins suckling where it will reside until the age of 6 months. When it grows too big for the pouch it will ride on its mama's back and begin snacking on leaves. At 12 months it is fully weaned and is expected to live on its own. Koala's closest living relative is the wombat. Koalas and wombats are both of the marsupial species which are all pouched mammals.

Koalas eat almost only Eucalyptus leaves. Eucalyptus leaves are toxic to most animals. However, the koala is built with an exceptionally large intestine. It is approximately 80 inches in length. They are able to digest toxins present in the leaves due to their production of a bacteria which breaks down these poisons in the liver. They usually consume about a pound of leaves each day, and since they have such a slow metabolism, it usually takes almost 100 hours to digest them! When they aren't eating, they are usually sleeping or resting to support their complex digestive system.

Koalas are uniquely suited to their life in trees. They have perfectly designed paws with sharp claws that help them expertly grip and climb. Each paw has 5 digits. The front paws have two digits that are opposed to the remaining three digits which give them a strong grip, and to prevent falling. They groom themselves using their hindlegs. Koalas may live from 13-19 years in the wild. Female koalas usually live longer than males because males have a more hazardous lifestyle. Sometimes they do fall out of trees and become injured and usually climb right back up, but deaths do occur when the injuries are too severe. And koalas are prone to a sexually transmitted disease called chlamydia, which can lead to



infertility, blindness, and death. There is hope on this front, however, because microbiologists from the University of Sunshine Coast of Queensland have developed a vaccine that has been useful in eradicating the disease.

Koalas have few natural predators, although dingoes* and large owls sometimes attack and kill them. The biggest threat to these unique animals come from habitat loss due to deforestation. In 2000, Australia was ranked fifth in the world by deforestation rates. 1,396,000 acres of native trees were cut down to be made into wood products. In rural areas, habitats were cleared for agricultural use. While urban renewal and production pose a threat to koala populations, fortunately they can survive in urban areas as long as enough trees are present. However, urban koala populations have distinct vulnerabilities as well. There is a possibility of death or injury from traffic and attacks by domestic dogs. Almost 4,000 koalas are killed each year by automobiles and dogs, according to the Australian Koala Foundation. And 60,000 were killed last year due to forest fires.

In February 2022, the koala was listed under the EPBC Act as endangered by extinction. It has been determined that there are approximately 43,000 koalas in the wild. This is compared to 8 to 10 million at the start of the 20th century. There are measures being taken to reduce the threats to the beloved koalas. Let's hope that it's not too late.

*Wombats are short-legged, muscular marsupials native to Australia. They are about 40 inches long with a small, stubby tail. They weigh about 40 – 70 pounds and look a little like a bear. They aren't friendly to humans. Koalas and wombats are both of the marsupial species which are pouched mammals.

*Dingoes look similar to wolves.

*Koalas eat a variety of eucalypt leaves and a few other related tree species, including lophostemon, melaleuca and corymbia species (such as brush box, paperbark and bloodwood trees).

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 the sun, our environment, and humanity has been a lifelong interest and study for her.



PHOTO: Canstock Photos, Alizada Studios

PLAYING SWEET MUSIC

By Molly McCormack

Kentucky has a rich musical legacy from the birthplace of jug bands and Bluegrass music to the home of many jazz greats like Lionel Hampton, as well as members of the rock band My Morning Jacket. But few folks know that the official state instrument of Kentucky is the mountain dulcimer.

This mountain or lap dulcimer evolved when early European settlers came to this country and built zither-like instruments similar to ones in their native countries, such as the German scheitholt. These simple wooden instruments have 3 or 4 strings stretched across the length of the neck which are mounted on a sound box. As the instrument traveled west, it evolved over time and makers refined their instruments by adding frets to the neck. Eventually, these instruments became known as dulcemores or dulcimers. The name is derived from Latin *dulce* meaning "sweet" and Greek *melos* meaning "melody". The name is suitable because of the sweet and mellow tones that are produced when the strings are plucked or strummed. In the early 1800's, Scots Irish immigrants brought their old songs and ballads and settled in the southern Appalachian region. It was there that the mountain dulcimer, also called the Appalachian dulcimer, took root. It was used to accompany singers and play simple melodies. Most of these early instruments did not survive and the music and history would have been lost had it not been for one Eastern Kentucky native.

The "Mother of Folk", Jean Ritchie, was born in Viper, Kentucky in 1922 to a family of singers. In the 1950's she moved to New York City where she sang and played her family's old songs on her dulcimer. She became well known in Greenwich Village clubs and performed with Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and others during the folk revival. Ritchie's high-lonesome voice and ethereal counter-melodies brought the dulcimer out of obscurity. Her music has sparked generations of dulcimer players. Well-known musicians like Joni Mitchell, Dolly Parton, and Cindy Lauper have contributed to the instrument's continued popularity.

It was through Jean Ritchie's music that Nancy Johnson Barker discovered the dulcimer and its sweet music in the 1970's, and she began teaching others to play the dulcimer in Louisville. In 1978, Barker and her band of enthusiastic students formed the Louisville Dulcimer Society. Barker went on to produce a premier music festival, Kentucky Music Weekend at Iroquois Park, where Jean Ritchie often performed. Members of the Louisville Dulcimer Society actively supported that festival until it closed in 2015. In 2001, the Kentucky General Assembly officially designated the mountain dulcimer as Kentucky's Official State Instrument.

Since its beginning, the Louisville Dulcimer Society has been dedicated to the preservation of traditional American folk music and the mountain dulcimer. While the focus of the society is the mountain dulcimer, the group welcomes players of other traditional acoustic instruments. This all-volunteer organization provides a



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players of all levels are
welcome!**



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www.louisvilledulcimersociety.org**

free online music library, instructional videos, monthly newsletters, and plenty of comradery to its membership. Bev and Mike Knoop have been members for five years and they regularly attend jams and play gigs. Mike said, "You will find that the Louisville Dulcimer Society has great people who love to play music and are always willing to help beginners."

Going strong for over 40 years, the Louisville Dulcimer Society hosts weekly jam sessions and performs in a variety of venues in Louisville and surrounding areas. Members come from diverse backgrounds and varied musical experiences. Some members play by ear while others use printed music. The result is a toe-tapping musical burgoon! Members treasure the music they play and the friendships they have made. Longtime member Betty Hansel said, "I played a little guitar in college, but in 1981 I was blessed to find the Louisville Dulcimer Society. My daughter and I attended the meetings, and we made some "forever" friends. It changed my life. I've loved playing with LDS ever since!"

While many of its members play mountain dulcimers, during a typical jam or performance you will see and hear a variety of other acoustic instruments such as banjo, guitar, hammer dulcimer, harmonica, percussion, mandolin, penny whistle and fiddle. The society's repertoire includes old time fiddle tunes and folk songs, but the members are open to learning new tunes, too. One common thread of the members is their passion for playing music. Member Barbara Bosler said, "Back in the early 90's during the Kentucky Music Weekend festival at the Iroquois Amphitheater, I heard the LDS jamming under the giant old trees of the park. I sat under one of the trees and listened for as long as they played. I was hooked. I am here and thankful to be a part of this musical family. I am loving it!"

The club hosts in-person jam sessions on Sundays at 3:00 at the Jeffersontown Senior Center. Visitors and players of all ages and playing levels of acoustic instruments are welcome. Annual membership dues to the Louisville Dulcimer Society are \$20 per household. For more information on membership & performances: <http://www.louisvilledulcimersociety.org>.

BIO: Molly McCormack has been a member of the Louisville Dulcimer Society since 1989. She teaches mountain dulcimer and performs around the country.
<https://mollymccormack.com/>





DR. RICHARD T. REUL

Chiropractor

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I LOVE GROWING VEGETABLES

BY KESHA SHAHID

I enjoy vegetable gardening because it brings me peace and relaxation. It's sort of a meditative thing when I'm gardening. Also, I like it because my gardening is all organic and natural with no chemicals or GMOs that are detrimental to my health. I know that I'm eating foods that are really healthy. I have a 12 square foot plot at Peaceful Eden Community Garden in Louisville. There are at least 100 gardening plots there. I'm the garden leader on a volunteer basis.

I also do some container gardening on the deck of my second-floor apartment, but mainly I have aloe vera, snake plants, and flowering plants there. Most years I have planted all seeds directly in the ground at the garden. This year I started tomato and corn seeds in pots on my deck that got transferred later to the garden. That was because the weather was so uncertain.

At my garden in addition to corn and tomato plants, I have lima beans, potatoes, okra, lettuce, mustard greens, squash, watermelon, cantaloupe, and more. I will put in pumpkins for the fall. I also love to grow herbs like oregano, basil, and thyme. I was just recently given some blackberry and raspberry starter plants.

The other gardeners in our garden complex completely clear their plot before planting it. I leave in the peppermint plants that grow all around my plot that help keep out pests (marigold also help that way). I allow dandelion, plantain, and clover to grow naturally in a part of my garden. They can be healthy to drink as teas. Some plants that are considered weeds are actually very beneficial.

My intentions are to get to my garden every day, but realistically it is more like three or four times a week. For people that work full time, perhaps a few hours twice a week Saturday and Sunday would be O.K. There are about six waterspouts at our garden complex. Each person with a garden plot pays \$25 a year for water and being allowed to garden there. It really makes me happy watching the whole process from planting seeds to them



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becoming full plants! I planted sunflower seeds last year. Watching those grow from seeds to HUGE sunflowers about six feet tall was amazing! Nature's awesome! I love feeling in harmony with nature, For information about these gardens: kshasid118@gmail.com



VACATION TRAVEL AND SUMMER FUN

By Dr. Victoria Snelling

School is out, the weather is warm, and many are focused on vacation and travel plans. If your plans include some tips for natural summer care, you're likely to have an even better experience. Here are several homeopathic remedies to keep on hand.

Homeopathic remedies are usually sold in small containers and are easy to travel with. They can be found in many health food stores and of course in the offices of homeopathic practitioners. Follow the label directions, but remember to avoid eating or drinking 15-20 minutes before and after taking a remedy.



Whether it's car sickness or feeling woozy on a plane, Bryonia fits the picture for nausea and vomiting that is worse from any movement and the person often wants to be left alone. On the other hand, Cocculus can help if the motion sickness is accompanied with dizziness and a weak feeling. Arsenicum album can help people who feel anxious along with the usual symptoms. The sight or smell of any odors can make them feel worse, but they may feel some relief with small sips of water.

Apis mellifica soothes the stinging, burning and sometimes itching of insect bites. If hives develop along with the typical symptoms, Urtica urens is a better choice.

Rhus tox is specific for poison ivy or poison oak. Be sure to clean the area well to prevent spread and then apply Rhus tox



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cream. If you only have Rhus tox in tablet form, that works equally well.

Calendula cream is recommended for cuts, abrasions, heat rash and sunburn. It's also great for diaper rash or other skin irritations.

If you're suffering the consequences of overindulging in food or adult beverages, Nux vomica could be your remedy. Nux can help the indigestion and heartburn from overeating, as well as the morning consequences of too much drink.



Don't forget the basics like Arnica for any trauma, injury, muscle soreness, etc. Another to consider is Aconite for shock, fright, a child's nightmares, etc. Aconite can also help to shorten the duration of a summer cold or flu if taken at the first sign of symptoms, and it can soothe a fever, too.

Have a wonderful summer, at home or away, and stay well.

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: Family, Canstock Photos sofia shunkina.
Tennis, Martin Alfonso Sierra Aspino of Pixabay.
Guitar Player, Canstock Photos, P. Hotoloco.

***MOTHER NATURE'S
AWESOME DANCE!!
Elsa Lichman , MSW, LICSW***

It's that delicious time of year
when shoots burst forth,
unfurl, grow into hostas
with tall lavender blooms.

Forsythias are the harbinger,
yellow sprays exploding
up to the clear blue sky.
Lilacs appear, heady-scented.



Photo: Iris Princepeiris, Pixabay

Violets meander over lawns.
Butterflies and bees
visit native flowers
for succor and delight.

At first there is a haze of yellow-green
just a hint of the season to come.
In summer, trees and shrubs
are a lush, vibrant green.

Magnolias display their beauty,
short-lived, perfumed
fuchsia flowers,
appealing to all the senses.

Wave upon wave of azaleas
blossom in turn:
pink, purple, white,
brilliant yellow, orange.



*Bumble Bee Pollinating Flower.
Photo by Frank Peace*

Birdsong is everywhere.
Newly hatched chicks
grow quickly,
demand food loudly.

Nature seems to rejoice
and dance, as this bounty
blesses new growth
on steamy days and sultry nights,

That allows us to shed our
bulky winter-cold clothes
for frothy cottons and linens,
straw hats worn askew,
and sandals.

ELSA LICHMAN is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, who retired and pursued new activities. She joined her first chorus, began voice lessons, acquired her first computer, and started writing a nature column for her local newspaper. She has published her prose, poetry, and photographs in a variety of print and online journals. She has also sung in choral concerts and in a duo. Her 43-year career was a gift, as is her current expression of her creativity.



Photo: Author, Elsa, enjoys fragrance of blossom.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR ESCALATING HOMELESSNESS

By Lynne Coachran, M.A.

"Home is where the heart is." That's an old saying, but in our turbulent times where can the homeless heart turn? Homelessness is one of the most persistent and tragic problems of our times, especially in large urban areas like Los Angeles County where I live. There are currently about 92,000 homeless people in this L.A. County!!! The various areas in L.A. County are quite different as to their populations and needs. For example, the needs of families, individuals with mental health disorders, children, and senior citizens are quite different - - particularly among the homeless population. According to the Los Angeles Times (April 28, 2022), the numbers of aging homeless people may triple by 2030. This aging group will have additional problems including wheelchairs, walkers, and chronic health issues. A recent anti-camping law setting deadlines for homeless people to leave various tent cities and encampments has been posted at more than 100 locations across Los Angeles. (LA Times, May 2, 2022.)

In an effort to help alleviate some of the suffering of homeless people, a variety of solutions have been proposed. These include "tiny homes" (see photo), hotel lodgings, and group shelters. These range from large settlements of shelters offering shared showers and toilet facilities to single units in abandoned shopping malls. Some have proposed garden areas for producing food and open shared park-like areas. These group plans are not always accepted by homeless residents who do not wish to leave familiar locations and who desire privacy.

Another approach being offered is more experimental. There are many people working to protect homeless individuals by providing single portable structures that do more than presenting group shelters or structures/ rooms without privacy or tent type structures which can be cleared away by legal statutes that allow periodic sweeps. Those sweeps not only destroy the temporary tent structures but also result in the loss of possessions. When the sidewalk or tent city structures are destroyed there is a loss of small items essential for daily life.

These enterprising entrepreneurs are attempting to produce a moveable structure which would provide not just a shelter but a home. One example is Ecocapsule which uses push carts similar to the market basket carts commonly used by homeless people. The Ecocapsule includes a tent as well as storage space and other necessities which can easily be moved to a different spot and locked.

Another ingenious personal capacity machine is the DeWoomfiets "House Trike" which also provides shelter and mobility as well. As urban areas try to add increased capacity of available living spaces for the homeless, such as providing thousands of new "tiny homes," hotel rooms, apartments, and other types of small dwellings in public spaces - - some homeless needs are still not fully or even partially addressed. These include the largest concern, which is privacy, but also resistance to housing rules which may include not being able to have a partner or pets or possessions.

One of the most successful efforts to aid homeless people, in my personal experience, is a community-based program created by my church, St. Mark's Presbyterian Church. Organized by a few



individuals, the original program spread to include most of the congregation. The homeless program of support and aid to the McCoy Homeless Encampment began when one church member suddenly became homeless. He worked as a handyman/house painter. Concern for this member led to finding him a nearby tent city. This eventually led to regular visits to the McCoy Encampment and with St. Mark's organizing several supportive church events. For example, members assisted some individuals and families with filling out forms and necessary paperwork for finding new housing. This project was named "Free Butterflies." Regular meals were provided for some who remained at the site. As individuals would move into new living spaces, the congregation would welcome them with laundry baskets filled with needed supplies for the new homes such as soap, towels, toilet paper, pillows, toothpaste and toothbrushes. St. Mark's has also provided backpacks filled with school supplies for children returning to school each fall. We joined with other church groups to offer monthly hot meals and worked with a Church Garden Fellowship to provide main dishes to be served with vegetables and other food grown in a volunteer garden,

During March, our most recent project came about when St. Mark's volunteers noticed that the homeless members of the McCoy Encampment had ill fitting, badly worn shoes. A Shoe/Sock Drive was organized with the entire congregation contributing 103 pairs of new or lightly used shoes and a multitude of socks that were donated to the Salvation Army that serves the encampment.

As a Protestant community church, we are reminded of the Christmas story in which Mary and Joseph were told that there was no room for them at the Inn. And so Jesus was born in a lowly manger. The Holy Family was, on the First Christmas, homeless.

Recently, an anti-camping law was passed in Los Angeles. That endangered many homeless encampments. An estimated 29,000 people living in cars and homeless encampments were predicted to be without shelter. (LA Times, 5/2/2022). I feel the only hope for any solution to the huge and tragic reality of the homeless community lies in a compassionate combination of federal and state and local problem solving, as well as technical advances focused on helping those who are without homes.

I'll close with another old saying. "There's no place like home." Given that, what place is there for those who are homeless?

BIO Lynne Coachran: MA degree in Speech Pathology from Cal State, Long Beach. Worked as Speech Pathologist 22 years. Was honored to represent her school district as one of Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year. Upon retiring, She became a Supervisor of student teachers and graduate students. Deacon at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, Lomita, CA. Student of Tai Chi and Senior Yoga. A major part of her life has been involved with her 2 daughters, Grace and Laura and her granddaughters, Lydia and Ruby. Photo: Karl J.K. Hedin of Unsplash.



CONFIDENCE COMES FROM WITHIN

by Leah Bomar, Author & Life Coach

Confidence comes from within. Feeling good about yourself and loving your body is an inside job. Confidence cannot be bought off a rack, but it can be cultivated, nurtured, and created from a genuine place of self-love and acceptance.

In our culture, beauty standards are often imprinted in our subconscious before we can even establish a strong sense of self-love and worth. Women, and men as well, feel great pressure to adhere to a strict standard of beauty. Many are raised to fear being fat at all costs, even to the deficit of their physical health and mental well-being. We are bombarded with constant images on social media telling us how we should look, feel, and behave in our bodies. The health and fitness industry is a *billion-dollar* money making machine that targets the insecurities of vulnerable people, preying on their desires to obtain optimal health or to just look better in their bikinis on the beach.

Coupled with the actual medical crisis of obesity in our country where hundreds of thousands of lives are lost due to health complications from food and weight related diseases, no wonder people are confused, depressed, and dying. According to the National Institute of Health, being overweight or obese is the second leading cause of preventable death in our country close behind tobacco use. An estimated 300,000 deaths per year happen due to the obesity epidemic.

Nine percent of the U.S. population or about 28.8 million Americans will suffer from an eating disorder in their lifetime. While the most common eating disorder is “binge eating disorder,” six percent of people with eating disorders are medically diagnosed as “underweight,” so it’s not always a “fat” issue. It’s a fear of fat issue, a lack of self-esteem, and mostly a mental/emotional health issue.

Nearly as many men as women are affected by “binge eating disorder” which can be described as ‘insatiable cravings that lead to eating large amounts of food, often quickly and to the point of physical pain, followed by intense shame and self-loathing.’

How can we learn to love ourselves no matter the size of our body? How can we be comfortable in our skin while stopping the self-harm cycle of abuse through food? Many people suffering from food addiction constantly seek comfort and satisfaction from



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something outside themselves. Food is often not the problem, it’s a symptom of suffering. Another diet, weight-loss surgery, implementation of more restrictive behaviors, or a rigorous exercise regimen to punish oneself or ‘work off the food’ are not the real solution. (Some aspect of those may be part of the solution.)

One underutilized tool in recovery from eating disorders and addictions are emotional support groups. Various kinds of emotional support groups exist that use a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual approach to finding peace and recovery and freedom. These can often offer a social support structure that fosters a sense of connection and belonging.

Practicing self-love and acceptance is an important way to start feeling better. Loving yourself as you are today, in the body you inhabit right now, is where healing begins. Its radical to love yourself where you are, especially if you are facing health concerns and need to make changes for your physical well-being. But the foundation of real,

lasting change is starting where you are and surrendering to the inner beauty of your true essence that has nothing to do with the way you look.

If you would like to attend a local workshop or retreat focusing on manifesting the life you desire, confidence building and celebrating your own journey to self-love, visit LeahBomar.com for an upcoming schedule of events.

Editor’s Note: In one’s continuing journey to find healing for eating issues, it is important to stay in touch with one’s doctor or a registered dietitian.

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. **Photos:** Courtesy of Leah Bomar

MY AL-ANON FAMILY

Anonymous

As I walked into the rooms of Al-Anon, my desperation for help was stronger than my fear. I was one who always wanted the support of someone else. I hated doing certain things alone. In my mother's family, alcohol and drugs and mental illness were the way of life. My father was an only child. His mother died in 1919 when he was only two. He was raised by his grandmother and father in a sober home.

Alcoholism is cunning, baffling and powerful. What we experience as children growing up in this disease is devastating. As you can guess my mom was the drinker in my home. As alcoholism is usually inherited, I was blessed that I inherited my father's genes. I drank some but hated to lose control, especially when dancing. Control is one of the character defects that I am now aware of in myself.

Al-Anon has shown me how to be aware of my character defects. Denial worked to help me survive my childhood. In hating to make mistakes, I bought a picture that reads "I Never Make Stupid Mistakes Only Very, Very Clever Ones." I am aware of things I try to deny and use the saying "You Spot It, You Got It" in myself. That helps me accept myself more fully. Another of my learning experiences in Al-Anon is that I now recognize shame as an error in judgement. There are no "shoulds" in Al-Anon. That helps relieve my sense of shame when I feel I've made a mistake. I am also helped by the Al-Anon saying, "Keeping My Hands Off, And My Heart On." Also, the slogan "Live and Let Live" has saved me many times, especially concerning the lives of my three sons and eight grandchildren. This gives me the opportunity to show my experience, strength, and hope.

I have been learning to trust in a Higher Power whom I choose to call God. There is a story in our program about a Brown Paper Bag God. This gives us the choice to choose whatever conception of God or Higher Power that works for us and that we can relate to. We all put our God or HP (Higher Power) in the brown paper bag. Al-Anon believes that prayer is important, but the Brown Paper Bag idea suggests that each person can freely choose what they pray to.

In this program of Al-Anon we learn that we have choices, and I was grateful to learn I have them. I was raised in a religion

that I carried all through my life. My Higher Power has given me acceptance, courage, and wisdom.

When I entered the rooms of Al-Anon, there hung the Serenity Prayer which is "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." As I said these words over and over, peace covered me. Wanting serenity so badly, I had previously searched books and libraries to find it. I now know that it is an inside job, and I need to find it within myself. Till this day I still use the Serenity Prayer frequently, and particularly in times of doubt and fear.



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Many other slogans and tools are valuable to me, such as "Freedom From Despair," and "Doing The Next Right Thing." The saying, "For Fun and For Free" has been helpful for me and for so many other people to remember that we can have fun for free by going to a park, attending free fairs, walking the dog, and so much more.

Growing up in this disease I was starving to be heard

and to have a little self-esteem. In Al-Anon I found my voice and became proud of who I was. Even today I need to remind myself that "I Am Enough, I Have Enough, and I Do Enough." The doors of Al-Anon were opened to me in nineteen-eighty-six. Thanks to my God, I found them and have a healthier mental, emotional, and spiritual life. There isn't a day that goes by that I do not use some form of Al-Anon support. The literature, slogans, meetings, my sponsor, and of course my phone list are gold to me. Today I never do life alone.

If you are feeling alone, afraid, and things seem hopeless, there are many programs that are available. Al-Anon, open AA, NA, Parents of Alcoholics. Many twelve step meetings are at your fingertips. When traveling, meetings are found in 130 countries. At each meeting you will find our anonymity statement. "What you see here, When you leave here, Let it stay here." Newcomers are asked to try six meetings around your area till you find your fit. We will gladly refund your misery if it doesn't help.

ACCESSING THE POWER OF HIGHER MIND, Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

The human consciousness is more powerful than most people understand. Few people really take time to train their mind. The mind isn't just the brain as a physical organ inside your head. Certainly your brain is an important part of your mind. It is the physical aspect of your mind. But your mind also is your consciousness which is the energy of your thoughts. Some people have deep expansive thoughts, and some people may not think much beyond their next meal or what they plan to wear for the day.

In order to develop one's mind, a good practice is to choose a topic at the beginning of each day and think about that topic off and on during the day. That topic might be related to a creative new idea for your work, hobby, community or other. Depending on your schedule, you may be able to find moments to jot down some of your insights. If you spend time with a friend during the day in person or over the phone, you might ask your friend's opinion on the topic. This might lead to some valuable insights and deepen your friendship as long as you don't take a rigid attitude on the topic and feel that other people must agree with you.

Our thoughts are energy. They can be stored in our body or in our aura energy field somewhat like information or documents can be stored in computer files. This is not more mysterious than using a computer is mysterious. We use many capabilities that we cannot explain nor probably fully understand. We just accept that it is so, and our experience may validate it.

A thought that we think periodically or often may be stored in our aura as a thoughtform. That is an actual energy packet. Related frequent thoughts can join together as an energy cluster. A single one-time thought might not really leave a trace. People who tend to focus on specific types of thoughts a great deal for their work or for their personal life may develop a dense area of thought form energy that can be readily sensed and felt by an energy healer. Some people's habitual thoughts can become such strong energy thought forms that many people in general can unconsciously sense that energy and react to it without knowing why. This is one reason that a person may feel comfortable with one individual and uncomfortable with another individual without knowing why.

Thought forms can build up in such a dense manner in a person's aura that he or she is not able to really have an original thought outside of that repetitive array. This can be very limiting to that person's power of understanding of what is evolving in the world around him or her. It can also make conversation with that person rather boring for someone who is not caught up in the same thought forms. In such a situation, real ideas can't be explored together for mutual understanding and growth. Ideally conversation can be more than repeating well-worn ideas with slight variations.

There is a vast array of possibilities to be explored and understood in all aspects of human endeavor. There are unlimited amounts of important information and inventions and concepts ready to be seeded into human comprehension to ameliorate life on earth for

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humanity. Some of these are fairly simple once they are understood by someone who has the basic understanding of the principles in that field of knowledge that will allow that person to grasp what is being conveyed and put it into practice. Humanity is not really alone on planet earth. There are divine beings and angels seeking to help humanity, There is also the Cosmic Mind that holds all the information ever thought by human minds. Much of that information may not have yet been actualized for the good of the whole. Also, our higher consciousness, creativity, and intuition can come up with new beneficial solutions. Hopeful, right?

This is all quite exciting for those who are open to listen and apply new concepts. Humanity doesn't have to suffer as much as it has been. It is important that people be open to new possibilities, while at the same time carefully evaluating everything in the light of their own wisdom and common sense. There needs to be a balance when opening to new ideas of also at the same time evaluating and testing them within one's own experience.

In order to become aware of valuable new concepts and innovations, it is crucial to raise one's consciousness above the mass mind which is the mindset of the masses of humanity. If one is trapped within one's own old thought forms or within the lower mass mind, it is practically impossible to access higher intuition and these valuable insights. This is where higher meditation comes in. Higher meditation can help one clear one's aura of old heavy thoughtforms and access higher levels of one's consciousness. This is greatly needed at this time for as many people who will step into it. It is helpful if this is pursued in contact with experienced meditation teachers who can watch that old negative thoughtforms and stuck energies are cleared away to prepare for higher consciousness bringing in progressively more powerful energies. As we grow in increased clarity and power of mind, we need to be sure that we use it for the highest purest good of all. Peace.

Bio: Joyce is a Transformational Energy & Emotional Healer providing individual sessions on Zoom or In person. Reiki Master, Master's Degree in Human Development. She's a highly attuned & sensitive guide for Higher Meditation & Spiritual Awareness. Extensive training & decades of experience as a practitioner & teacher of numerous natural healing modalities including Reiki, Spiritual Healing, Chakra Healing, Reflexology. 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

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CLEAN GREEN is Safer & Very Effective For Cleaning Our Bathrooms & Kitchens **by Barbara Bosler**

Take the time to read the ingredients and precautions on the labels of household cleaning products. Does a hazmat suit seem in order?? The EWG (Environmental Working Group) reviewed 2000 household cleaning products and found that 53% contained ingredients harmful to the lungs. 22% of cleaning products contain chemicals known to cause asthma in otherwise healthy people. The National Institute of Occupational safety found 1/3 of substances used in the fragrance industry are toxic! Stop and think about the cleaning of all the bathrooms & kitchens in the world. All those toxic substances are ending up in our waterways and eventually our oceans. Collectively it's massive and unsustainable. The pollution of the waters of our planet is harming the fish that live in the waters and the creatures that live in and along the waters. So here are a few bathroom and kitchen green cleaning recipes that I hope you will try.

TOILET BOWL CLEANER

1/2 cup baking soda
1/4 cup white vinegar
10 drops tea tree essential oil (or lavender)
Combine ingredients to a container.
Pour into toilet bowl, brush, flush, done!

SOAP SCUM REMOVER

1 Tablespoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 drops essential oil (your choice). I love lavender.
Vinegar (white)
Combine all but vinegar in a cup
Add just enough vinegar to make a paste. Apply, scrub, rinse well, done!

BATHROOM OR KITCHEN SURFACES

These surfaces can get grimy. Try this:

1 teaspoon castile soap
1/8 cup white vinegar
1/4 cup lemon juice (I use bottled)
2 cups water
10 drops of a citrus or eucalyptus essential oil
1 teaspoon borax (laundry detergent isle)

Combine in a spray bottle...shake before each use...spray then wipe with a damp cloth or sponge. Wipe dry with a cloth. FYI. cellulose sponges are natural, absorbent, non-scratching, durable, and washable.

FYI...Lavender and lemon properties are antiviral and antibacterial....I use a lot of those two essential oils in my home.



Enjoy your naturally clean home! Barbara



Photo on Left: Addi Gibson, Pixabay. Photo Above: Pixabay, 450596-1280