



Natural Living Journal

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

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Animal Communication

**Courage To Be the
Truth of Who We Are**

The Beauty of Dreams

**Environmental
Protection: Meet the
Platypus**

**Understanding New Age
Spirituality**

**We Can Each Be an
Important Part of the
Solution**

**Enjoying a Good Night's
Sleep**

**Essential Oils for
Emotional Support**

Spiritual Awakening

**Creating a Positive New
Year**

**Poem: Transition of the
Seasons**

**Beating the Winter
Blues**

Table of Contents, Dec.'23-Jan.'24

- P. 3. The Beauty of Dreams, Rebecca Geracitano, MHT, QHHT
- P. 4. Waking & Sleeping, Spiritual Awakening, Gerry Boylan, Ph.D.
- P. 5. Beating Winter Blues, Kimberly LaFollette, PsyD
- P. 6. Poem, Transition of the Seasons, Elsa Lichman, MSW, LICSW
- P. 7. Enjoying a Good Night's Sleep, Dr. Lisa Tostado, ND,.
- P. 8. Courage to Be the Truth of Who We Are, Nicola Bartlett.
- P.10. Understanding New Age Spirituality, Dee Patterson
- P. 11. Animal Communication & Medicine, Fauna Speaks, Kristen Houser
- P. 12. Creating Goals for a Positive New Year, Rev. Valerie Mansfield
- P. 13. Environmental Protection: Platypus, Joyce Freville, Ph.D.
- P. 14. Essential Oils for Emotional Support, Lisa Odom, M.A.
- P. 15. Homeopathy to Ease Holiday Blues, Dr. Victoria Snelliing
- P. 16. We Are Each an Important Part of the Solution, Joyce Gerrish, MA

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THE BEAUTY OF DREAMS

Rebeca Geracitano, MHT, QHHT, LBL

From a young age, I have found dreams to be fascinating, beautiful, and sometimes strange and confusing. I understand now from doing years of dream work that our dreams serve to heal and guide us and are a wonderful gift and tool of the subconscious mind.

So what are dreams? According to Carl Jung, while our consciousness operates in a rational way using reasoning and knowledge “the unconscious is guided mostly by instinctive trends, represented by corresponding thought-forms. Most of the time this represents the personal unconscious, where dream symbols are unique to us, our personality, and our spirit. At other times these ‘instinctive thought forms’ represent the collective unconscious that contains archetypes which represent the belief in something greater than ourselves, such as God, Mother, Father, the Wise Old Woman or Man.” (*The Undiscovered Self* “ by C.G. Jung)

Montague Ullman PhD, psychologist, pioneer and developer of dream group methods felt that all people should have access to understanding dreams. He believed that dreams serve as energy connections for situations in the present -- and that while dreaming, we search out past experiences that have a similar emotional charge. The elements in the dream come to us as highly selective metaphoric symbols that portray the various aspects of our lives. He believed that the content of our dreams stems from elements of our past that we have not fully resolved and aspects of our personality and attributes that we are unaware of. The emotional charge results from past experiences that are similar with a present situation thus creating the dream imagery. (Ullman & Limmer, *The Variety of Dream Experience*, 1999, pp. xiv,xv,4)

Ullman developed a dream group method that was condensed and adapted into a five-step method of dream analysis by the Association of Research and Enlightenment. The steps consist of observing the feelings in the dream, understanding the theme, amplifying the symbols, developing a preliminary understanding, and then applying the dream in some way. Once these basics are applied further exploration can be done by asking oneself questions, journaling, and dream incubation. There are other activities such as making collages, creating dream boxes or dream wheels. You can also write poems, draw images, or dance to move more deeply into a dream and continue gaining insight. After further processing, you may go back and revise your preliminary understanding and plan of action. Since the energy of a dream can stay alive for days, weeks, months and even years - take your time, be creative, and enjoy the process.

To start on your dream journey, your first step is your intention to remember them. Keep a tablet of paper and pen by your



bedside and suggest to yourself each night that “I will remember my dreams.” Upon awakening, and as soon as possible, record words, feelings, or images. If using a dream symbol dictionary, first associate how you feel about the symbol and if it doesn’t fit or feel right don’t use it. If someone suggests to you what they think the dream means, consider it but continue working on it until you get the “aha.”

Our dreams can represent stress or fears or a way to release the previous day’s events. Some dreams can represent subconscious parts of ourselves we’d prefer not to focus on. Carl Jung called this our “shadow self.” Other types include health or compensation dreams which show there may be an imbalance in our thinking or in our body. Spiritual dreams are those that are life affirming, leaving us with feelings of wonder, peace, or harmony. They encourage us and give us insight into the meaning of our lives, and could include telepathic dreams, journeys, and visitations by those who have passed over.

Another way to understand dreams is to use them to explore past lives. Still active issues or unhealed patterns could resurface as past life energy revealing its knowledge in our dreams. Over the years, I have had clients come in for past life regressions who’ve described repetitive dreams with particular landscapes, buildings, feelings, and actions that they cannot associate with current life situations. Often they have had them since childhood and many times they’ve played out in the regression as a past life. My past life as a vocalist in the 1920’s first came to me ten years prior in a dream.

So go ahead and try your hand with dreams. They can be rewarding, transforming and best of all you’re the creator, detective and author!

BIO: Rebecca has a Masters in Transpersonal Theories and Practices from Atlantic University (Edgar Cayces ARE) and is a certified Hypnotherapist. She offers current, past life, Life Between Lives, Quantum Healing, regression and hypnosis for habits and issues, spiritual mentoring, meditation, dream work, Reiki and crystal bowl meditations to help her clients understand their inner life and to heal within. www.integrativemind.net, 502-468-1894.

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WAKING AND SLEEPING, Spiritual Awakening By Gerry Boylan, Ph.D.

In my commitment to growth I sometimes need to ask myself: "What is it that I'm asking for? Is it somehow that all these life lessons become more exciting and stimulating and that they fit my ego's need for uniqueness and recognition? Or can I step back for a moment and realize what the dance is all about."

It's all about honoring our connection with one another, and yet sometimes we forget. Sometimes I forget who I am. Sometimes I forget and when I find myself in a place of remembrance again, I also hold all others in that place of remembrance as well - - just as they have held me when I was in forgetfulness.

There have been times in my life when I have been lifted from a depressive mood as if by magic. I wonder if there was someone praying for me, maybe hundreds of miles away, maybe somebody I don't even know who somehow helped lift me up from darkness?

And then I see that lessons such as this one prompt me to get out of my own tiny, limited identity and realize that you and I are part of everything. Awake to the reality that is a much deeper awareness than thinking everything revolves around me.

And so you see one of the lessons here is not simply about calling someone to mind and praying for them or sending them love or sending them light; the lesson is much more Universal. It is about becoming aware that each of us is a part of all things and that for some time, especially here on Earth, that we will all go through times of awareness and forgetfulness.

In those times of awareness we are asked to hold everyone and everything in light of unconditional love. In other words, when we remember who we are, we hold all other beings in that same Truth. Then there are times of forgetfulness when each one of us become so wrapped up in the circumstances around us that we become totally identified with them and because of that we lose touch with the Truth of who we are.

Once you have experienced a sense of 'awakeness' you begin to realize how painful it is to lose touch with who you are. Please know, that when you are awake you do realize the pain of separation. However, when you are asleep or in forgetfulness, you translate that pain into something else. Sometimes it is blaming other people and situations around you, but most of the time that pain is translated into self-recrimination.

Now you ask "How can I stop this seemingly endless cycle of waking and sleeping?" And that is a key question to your continuing growth. The answer or answers will have many levels and we will return to an examination of these again and again.



Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!

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For now, there are two lessons you can ask and keep in mind. One is that when you become aware again or are awake again after a period of forgetfulness or sleep, rejoice in your awakened state of awareness and embrace it, be grateful for it, praise your soul for its Awakening. In the past when you were awakened you would expend much energy and time beating yourself up for falling asleep. And that is almost as ridiculous as getting angry at a flower if it closes up at night. Putting it in very practical terms, the soul might be justifiably reluctant to wake up if it knows all it is going to receive is abuse.

It is the nature of our learning here on Earth to experience both times of awakening and sleeping, awareness and unawareness. There will come a time when awareness is all of our experience, like Buddha when he described himself as "being awake." Then of course there are also deeper levels of awareness, but for now realize that your learning and evolution is continually involved with the process of awareness.

The second lesson is that you are encouraged to practice during these times of awareness is to take some time to tune into it, be aware of your awareness. Become conscious that everything you do can be an act of love. You can become very Zen-like in your actions being as totally present as you possibly can be.

Both of these practices—gratitude for wakefulness and 'being aware of being aware' will enhance your times of awareness and will shorten the times of sleep.

Lastly, know that what you call sleep or unawareness is not a negative thing. You do not know this consciously, but even when you are asleep/unaware, you are learning. Even in forgetfulness your soul is growing, it cannot be any other way.

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

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BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

By Kimberly M. LaFollette, PsyD.

It's winter. It is dark and it is cold, and after the holidays pass, there isn't much to look forward to except the coming spring -- which for me, seems impossibly far away. As a fellow human being, I understand the dread of winter. As a psychologist, I am not surprised that January is my busiest month. As soon as the holiday season is over, my phone starts ringing with people looking for some help to ease their winter blues.

The winter blues used to be called Seasonal Affective Disorder, now the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders identifies it as a recurrent type of Major Depressive Disorder with a "seasonal pattern." Whatever it is called, it's real and it impacts a lot of people. Most people who experience seasonal depression report feeling tired, unmotivated, and just plain sad.

There are numerous reasons people develop seasonal



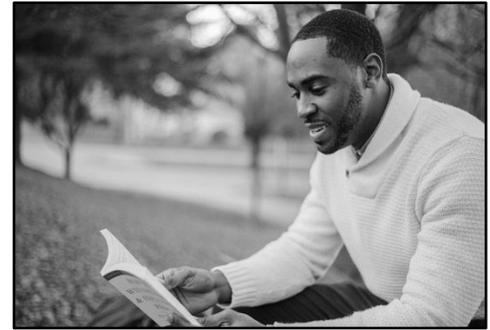
depression, most of it being purely biological. There is a genetic component, so some of us are just more prone to depression. There is also the fact that individuals who experience depression in the winter produce more melatonin than other people. (Melatonin is the chemical our brain produces to make us feel tired when the sun

goes down). So those of us with seasonal depression really do feel more tired and lethargic in the winter months when there is less sunlight. Another somewhat obvious reason is that most people are less physically active in the winter months. Less movement leads to decreased serotonin and dopamine production, which means more depression. Of course, the endless amounts of processed foods we tend to eat around the holidays also contribute to more inflammation in the gut, which further hinders the production of serotonin.

Beyond the biological reasons, there are interpersonal reasons that contribute to sadness this time of year. While the holidays may be joyful for some, for others the holiday season feels very lonely. This time of year can be a reminder of the relationships and people that are missing in our lives. On the other hand, just having family to spend the holidays with does not guarantee joy. Oftentimes, those family interactions can dredge up some very unpleasant memories and emotions that leave us feeling hurt long after the holidays are gone.

So, if you find yourself feeling blue, know that you are not alone. Many people endure the winter blues and for good reasons. The

good news is spring is coming. In the meantime, I am going to give you some proven ways to reduce your blues and help pull you through.



Ways to reduce the winter blues:

Go outside. I know, this is hard when it's cold. However, if you can go for a short 10-minute walk when the sun is out, you will feel better. Be sure to dress really warmly. That can make a huge difference toward enjoying winter outdoor activities.

Eat well. Reduce your consumption of processed foods and foods high in sugar. These foods increase inflammation in the gut. By reducing the inflammation in your gut, you will decrease your feelings of depression.

Move. Move in any way that will make you happy. Do a short dance, go skating, go for a walk, do anything that increases your heart rate for at least 10 minutes. Increased movement will increase serotonin and dopamine, and therefore, make you naturally happier!



Practice gratitude. Take time to notice what is good in your life. Just spending a few minutes a day focusing on the good can do wonders for your mental health.

Buy a light therapy box. Light boxes mimic natural sunlight and can cause a chemical shift in the brain to improve your mood.

Travel to a sunny destination. I know money is tight, but as I always say -- a trip to the beach is cheaper than a stay at your local psychiatric hospital!

BIO: Kimberly LaFollette, PsyD. is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Certified Integrative Mental Health Professional. You can find out more about Dr. LaFollette and her practice by visiting her website kimberlylafollette.com, 502-541-1289.

PHOTOS: Man Reading, Stock Snap of Pixabay; Vegetables, 419638 of Pixabay; 2 Women Walking, Suprising Shots of Pixabay.



TRANSITION of the SEASONS

by Elsa Lichman

Transition.

As autumn fades,
My maple shimmers with
Soft yellows, pale oranges.
A small tree lets go of
Golden heart shaped leaves,
As one drifts across the road
To land near me.
A ginkgo biloba tree
Pours molten gold
Onto the ground below,
As it sheds its healing leaves.

Geese and ducks create
A cacophony of sounds,
As mute swans slowly preen.
Dried leaves and berries
At the edge of a cove
Are silhouetted against
The still, silvery water.
Change is in the frosty air;
Icy winds replace zephyrs.
A skim of ice forms at the river bend,
Seagulls tentatively sliding,
Like skaters starting a new season.
Jack Frost makes his appearance:
A seasonal art form,
Designs on windows left
Overnight to morning's delight.



May we protect precious Mother Earth



Bio: 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.

Photos: Frost on Window by Elsa; Geese Flying by Charles Jackson of Unsplash; Late Autumn Leaves by Kazuend of Unsplash.



A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP, Improve Health With Rest!!! Z-Z-Z-Z

Dr. Lisa Tostado, ND

Nature reminds us that rest is important. The winter season brings us shorter days and darker nights. With less daylight, sunshine, and time to be outdoors, we may also find the need to slow down and retreat.

Rest is a crucial part of our health and wellbeing. Without enough rest, we may experience a decline in our mental and emotional well-being, develop a weakened immune system, and become physically depleted. Wintertime is here to show us that we must find time for rest and renewal in our daily lives. Although we can't completely avoid life stressors, studies show that finding balance between productivity and relaxation promotes longevity and a more fulfilling, joyful life.



Take A Break

It is important that we take regular breaks – whether it is stepping away from our desk for a few minutes or getting away for an extended vacation. Taking breaks helps us conserve our energy, which in the long run, can help us stay more motivated and productive. Studies show that those who take vacations regularly return to work feeling more

rejuvenated and relaxed.

Carve Out Time for Ourselves

Taking some time for ourselves (whether a few minutes or a dedicated self-care day) can make a huge difference to our health and wellbeing. Personal time allows for self-reflection and for engaging in activities that promote relaxation. Some things we can consider doing during our self-care time include a 10-minute meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga, journaling, a warm bath with Epsom salts, getting a massage or spending time in nature. These activities will help lower the stress response and boost mental and physical health.

Stretching & Exercise

Engaging in a regular exercise routine helps improve energy and helps us manage stress better. Our stress



hormone, cortisol, when high enough can lead to anxiety, depression, insomnia, and an inability to relax. Exercise is one of the best ways to support a balance of cortisol and other

Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.

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hormones in our body. Exercise also helps us get better quality sleep.

Whole Foods Eating Lifestyle

Caffeine, processed sugar, and processed foods in general can interfere with our ability to rest properly. It is important that you aim for a whole foods eating lifestyle with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. These foods provide the minerals we need such as calcium and magnesium that support relaxation. Be sure to eat regularly and include lean protein with every meal. Drops in blood sugar can cause the nervous system to switch into “fight or flight” mode and trigger a stress response.

Sleep

Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep at night. Sleep hygiene is a very important part of making sure that we get adequate sleep. Turn off all screens at least an hour before



bedtime. Do not go to bed with a full stomach, this can also interfere with digestive processes and sleep.

Although our bodies are designed to be productive and get things done, we also need to make sure we are balancing work with rest. It is when we activate the “rest and digest” part of our nervous system (parasympathetic aspect of our autonomic nervous system) that we turn on the switch for repairing and healing. Self-care activities boost overall wellness and satisfaction in life. This is of tremendous importance!

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 14 years. Her office is at Louisville Lifestyle Medicine, 3012 Eastpoint Pkwy., Louisville, KY 40223.

Photos: Woman Walking – abbot1 of Pixabay; Man Doing Yoga – keifit of Pixabay; Woman Sleeping – slaapwijnshield of Unsplash

COURAGE TO BE THE TRUTH OF WHO WE ARE and Follow Our Dream. By Nicole Bartlett

In asking Spirit for guidance on this article as to what topic comes naturally to me and what would be the most helpful to share, I received the answer of courage. Taking risks is not just something that lights me up—it's my way of playing out my relationship with faith on this earthly plane. Calculated risk waters down the potential to leap when everything else says not to. When you do, I've found that what is on the other side is by Divine design.

I built the first halotherapy business in Louisville when there were only around fifty in the U.S. Most people I told before it was completed and opened either laughed or couldn't even conceptualize such a thing. Shortly after, one was built in Bowling Green; four years later, a salt room opened in New Albany, and now there are over 3,000 in the U.S.

It's similar to breathwork. I love being a pioneer in my craft. This doesn't come without challenge; half of my role is as an educator. The other time is spent learning. I think that's why I enjoy it so much; I am a lifelong learner and yet have a knack for sharing information. Breathwork is a major trend now in the wellness world, focusing on everything from vagal nerve stimulation to altered states comparable to psychedelic psychotherapy.

In November, I spent a workshop in Vancouver with Caroline Myss where she shared with us the path from our third energy center to our fourth, with the grace of fortitude. I suggest reading Anatomy of the Spirit if you haven't—it covers all of this in great detail.

The aim here is to get really comfortable knowing what may cause us to harm others and where we use our wounding as currency. The third power center is where we hold our storytelling about our lives. This is where our wounds reside. If we look closely at why we hang on to these wounded stories, we might



see that they give us some power, a manipulative reason to be loved.

What it comes down to is truth-telling. We aren't being honest with ourselves when we're living and acting from our woundedness. Courage is required to reach the part of ourselves we cover



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up with our cravings and addictions. The first step of deepening our intuition is recognizing that there are likely things that we would be willing to hurt others over in order to be comfortable. When we operate from our wounds, we manipulate to keep ourselves in a higher power dynamic. That's a rough space to excavate ourselves out of. Taking responsibility for our part is the first path to complete healing. When you heal, I heal.

Fortitude is necessary to bridge this understanding. To find forgiveness for ourselves for wrongdoing is where mercy lies. Our fourth center is the bridge to the heavenly realms. In the Bible, Jesus told a man at the pool of Bethesda to pick up his mat and walk. The role of this message is that despite what others might see or the laws that are created, healing is immediately available when we trust in God.

I use courage to live out the day-to-day choices of doing what is in line with truth versus what is easy. This requires a dedicated commitment to discernment through daily meditation, breath work, coaching, and movement. Faith has allowed me to heal deeply by drawing on spirit and expressing vulnerability in safe places. When living in this alignment, the unexplainable can occur. It is the grace of fortitude that causes the ripple in the universe.

Bio: Nicole Bartlett founded the Louisville Salt Cave in 2015. The Cave is a community space for spiritual and self-discovery and has eased allergy symptoms for thousands in the Ohio Valley over the past 7 years. She is a Reiki Master and Breathwork Practitioner. She enjoys the small gifts in life like greeting the day, watching her children grow, and listening to Earth's whispers.



Photo: Woman Leaping by Sammie Chaffin of Unsplash; Man Seated by Muhammad-irfam-baloch of Unsplash.

UNDERSTANDING NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY

By Dee Patterson

In the early 1990's I was asked to speak at the Comparative Religions course at Southern Baptist Seminary. The topic was New Age Spirituality. I was a bit nervous explaining what I believed, since I felt that Southern Baptists would not look favorably on anything deemed "New Age."

I began by giving my upbringing in the Catholic faith and why I left it. I then went on to explain that there are various interpretations of New Age and I would give them *my point of view on the matter*. This is what I told the class. We believe there is a Universal God, and that the presence of God is in everything, be it mankind, plants, animals, whatever. We believe that God's hand touches all living things. I emphasized we also recognize other religions but believe that many paths lead to God.

I went on to say that most of us believe we do not need an intermediary to talk to God; we can do that ourselves. We believe when we pray, we are speaking directly to God and when we meditate, we are opening to receive God's answer. Therefore, meditation is a big part of what we believe both to find an inner sense of peace that calms the mind and to be closer to God.

We also believe in Karma and Reincarnation. I explained Karma to us means we come into life to learn lessons. We believe it is not just God's plan that you will have all kinds of experiences, but you have far more control over your life than what you perceive. It is a journey of the soul where we learn life's lessons. It is not always easy to understand what is the lesson you are trying to learn. Reincarnation is simply that when you die the soul goes on and you return to the afterlife. You decide when to return to learn

more life lessons by reincarnating. We believe you came into a body where you became trapped in the material and probably lost sight of God to a large extent. The lessons are the way we return to God in a purer form, which we accomplish through Karma and Reincarnation.



We also believe in hands on healing and the power of prayer to help affect changes not only in the body but in the spirit. We





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believe in the energy found in Crystals and Gemstones and use them to send energy out to others. We also believe in Angels and Spirit Guides including deceased loved ones that can be of help to us.

One of the most significant beliefs is that God is a loving God and not a vengeful God. We don't believe that you can barter with God. We believe that what you do is what you are creating yourself. We feel the world is filled with abundance and there is enough for everyone.

Most of us do believe in Jesus Christ and that he did perform miracles. We also believe that he was what we call an Ascended Master but that he was one of many who came to teach us. We very much believe that his mission here on Earth was to teach Love not Sacrifice. We feel religion has focused on the sacrificial part of his life and not enough on his message of Love. We do not believe he died for our sins, but to show that we go on and our time here is temporary.

After the lecture, one student came up to me and thanked me for the presentation. He said that when I said Jesus' life was about Love and not Sacrifice, it resonated with him. He felt it was a message that he needed to incorporate into everything that he would be doing as a minister. I was touched to know that my lecture that day had a profound effect on at least one member of the class.

BIO: Dee Patterson is a professional psychic. She reads the past, present and future, is a medium and medical intuitive. She also does past life regressions, spiritual counseling, and emotional release. She also has a wide variety of Crystals and Stones for sale. Call 502-426-2220 or text 502-295-0788. deepatt@bellsouth.net and www.deepatterson.com.



PHOTOS: Woman Praying, Ben White of Unsplash: Man Lifting to Heaven, Ismael Parmo of Unsplash

A CONSTELLATION OF HEARTS: Animal Communication & Medicine

Kristen Houser (Fauna Speak)

I began remembering my ability to communicate with the animal kingdom in 2015. My teachers ranged from lineaged human communicators to matriarch orca, wildflowers and Tibetan yaks dwelling in the foothills of my Kentucky home. My curiosity and heart for this field of connection has only grown since, blossoming into my wildest dream. Every day the vision I held in my heart since childhood comes true: to speak and be friends with the animals. I now live beside the Salish Sea, home to such inspiring beings: from curious selkie seals to the orca who have been my guiding light all along. You can most often find me beneath trees with my cat best friends, befriending beings I meet or swimming in the sea.

In my conversations with wild animals, they often enjoy the concept of 'constellation' to describe a constellation of hearts, ideas, dreams, dreamers or even physical places -- a web woven with translucent strands of connection amongst intersecting points aglow. They also love the present and dwell within it so excellently. Thus, where we shall begin -- a prick of light in such a wonderful moment connecting all who will read this and a speck of stillness to be with the wonder of ourselves and the animals (ones we love and ones we've never even met).

My favorite things start small, born from imagination yet rooted, woven into warm earth. The animals are my most impeccable teachers in this regard, keeping me honest and aligned with the dream I came here to dream; how all the sinews of our many desires continuously braid together and form the whole heart of what guides a person. Yet we may encounter challenge in how to prepare the needle with the entwined thread of our most hallowed imaginings.

Many dreams are born from a lack we identify, feel or experience. There is tremendous grief courageous feelers can feel regarding both energetic and planetary imbalances. It can be overwhelming at times to both wade through the swamp of something and sense your direction is true (stars above are so helpful in swamps). Not to mention the myriad of human stories told that forgo a bright future and refuse to see our kind as sensitive beings full of potential. Even the stories that are meant to mobilize us can often hold us back in the very cycles we are trying to transcend.

Animals speak in the most sincere way (like trees feel), cushioned in such incredible frequencies of love and lineages of lived wisdom (the ones we are remembering and they example to us). They help us understand a bigger picture within our capacity to do so, often recontextualizing some things to



journey ahead.

expand our perception and ability to receive, then knowingly gift just what is the next course of action. This is all in good time, all in right order; the perfect dose of animal medicine for the

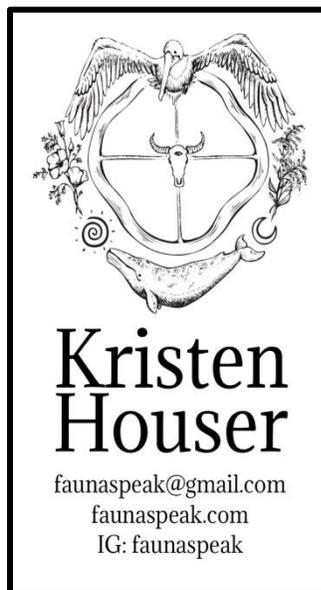
I am always deepening into the concept and potential of animal medicine. Just like plants have medicinal properties that nourish and heal, the animal kingdom offers that to us on an energetic level (with physical implications). We can draw from the wisdom of an animal's medicinal way of being to inform our own journey of balance. They know the way, help us connect with the parts of ourselves that know, too, so that we may experience our own medicine more acutely and share it with others.

I always tune into the animals. Especially the 'noisier' or 'darker' the world feels, we require the corresponding wisdom of someone who lives in a cave (cricket), speaks in song (whale), travels by night (owl). Each animal has an expertise, carries a unique frequency and is connected to their heart/collective heart in such a wonderful way. We can't help but glean insight and feel the foundation of reciprocity forming beneath our feet when we relax into a more holistic network of support.

That loops us back to the idea of constellation with hearts aglow. -- Discovering parts of ourselves remembered and threading lines of connection between light revealing and then naming it. Our own candle mingling with the resonance of increasingly more interspecies and interrealm folk, too. To mirror not only the biodiversity of life we hope to cultivate below, but the same abundance reflected above and within. An inner world harmonizes with a physical world that we dream for and an intuitive redirect of how our river flows.

Consider a moment of pause this day to relish your body's connection to earth and your vast spirit who dwells there. Experience the peace of bear hibernating, a world full of water, dormant insects dreaming, seeds of excitement and all the waking ones who join you in winter.

BIO: I offer both Animal Communication sessions for companion, domestic and wild animals as well as Animal Guidance sessions where one can receive clarity and direction from such wise beings. The Whales are my oldest, dearest friends and I offer specific sessions with them, as well. We can also study Animal Communication together in a variety of ways. Visit faunaspeak.com for details or to reach out. **PHOTO:** from Kristen.



CREATING GOALS FOR A POSITIVE NEW YEAR

By Rev. Valerie Mansfield

Winter is a great time to review the past year and look at growth opportunities for the New Year. As the world slows down and nature takes a winter nap, it's a perfect opportunity to turn inward and reflect on our lives. Many people use this time to meditate, do yoga, or engage in other spiritual practices that help them connect with themselves on a deeper level. Whether through solitude or community, winter can be a powerful time for personal growth and spiritual renewal.

Take this opportunity to ask yourself if you're happy with what unfolded this year. If change and growth are calling you, one place to start is by creating a vision statement. Think about how you see yourself growing in the coming year. What steps can you take to make that growth a reality? Put those steps into new smart goals to assist you along your journey. Smart goals are a good starting point for visualizing what you want to achieve and breaking it down into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound steps, so you are successful.

Other good tools to use while setting intentions are denials and affirmations. This is using the word denial in a way that you may not be familiar with. This use of the word denial means that one is denying that "something" has any power to control or limit oneself. Denials and affirmations are necessary for spiritual growth. We all express ourselves through thinking, speaking, and feeling. We must pay attention to what we are thinking, speaking, and feeling so that we do not fall into the habit of expressing negativity about ourselves and our lives. As mentioned, denials deny a person, place, or thing has any power in our life. Denials are about keeping our power and assisting ourselves in releasing error thinking, negative self-talk, or victim consciousness. We must let go of the old ideas or beliefs which no longer serve us. We erase all error

consciousness through the use of denials. The release of the denial opens us up to the good we are seeking.

I use denials when I am working through a challenge with a belief, situation, or a person by releasing any attachment I may have given to that belief, situation, or person. An example is "I retain all my power and let go of



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any false beliefs or errors in my thinking about this situation or person right now.

We affirm the good through the use of affirmations. When we use an affirmation, we are stating something true. We must have faith that it is done and move forward as if it is complete.

Frequently affirm it silently or out loud with conviction. An example of a good affirmation is "I am standing in my power to accept the good I receive from releasing this belief, situation, or person. I am guided to my good, my strength, and to my life moving forward with joy, ease, and grace."

When setting intentions and goals with the use of affirmations we are claiming our good and complete that which we want to manifest in our life. We grow through an understanding of the use of practice in our daily lives. We change by the practice of listening to the still small voice, following the guidance, setting intention, and creating steps to achieve that which we have visioned for ourselves to grow with ease and grace.

Once our smart goals are achieved, we create additional goals that continue to propel us forward in our daily life.



BIO: REVEREND VALERIE MANSFIELD. She is an Ordained Unity Minister, Life Coach, & Holistic Healer. She is manifesting a new enterprise "Pathways to Harmony". Pathways to Harmony is a threefold operation. 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. Consulting for non-profits and small businesses focusing on harmony, efficiency, and effectiveness. Valerie currently serves as the Minister of Record at Unity of East Louisville, Inc., and the Treasurer of Unity Worldwide Ministry. Valerie's mission in life is to create a harmonious, loving, conscious experience daily. Reverend Valerie Mansfield is a lifelong Unity Truth Student and welcomes you to join her on a spiritual journey of harmony, love, and transformation. Rev. Valerie lives with her husband Bruce of 40 years and loves time with her children & grandchildren.



Photos: Nurse, Mathekarm of Pixabay; Bicyclist, Ben Kerckx of Pixabay

Environmental Protection Series
THE PLATYPUS—IT'S OUR
FRIEND! By Joyce Freville, Ph.D.

It is so crucial that we as part of the Human Kingdom be good stewards and honor the Animals, Plants, Minerals, and the Waters with whom we share this beautiful planet Earth.

All of us animals on Earth are connected in some way. And the actions of one species can greatly affect the life of another – all too often in negative ways. Let's look at one example. We have heard of the horse whisperer, but have you heard of a "platypus whisperer?" In fact, one man did make a special bond with a platypus, and he is now known as the "platypus whisperer!" It all started when he freed a platypus that was tangled in a mix of plastic netting and industrial waste on a riverbank in Australia. Another time, he saw a platypus with a plastic ring around its bill swim by him. He was not able to help this platypus that had the plastic ring, so he organized a group of locals to help monitor the platypus. As a result, one platypus has bonded with him. Every time he sits by the creek, the same platypus zooms across to him, climbs up on the rock, and looks at him. Although platypuses are shy animals and avoid confrontations with humans, they are very affectionate.

The platypus is one of the most ancient semi-aquatic mammals on the earth. It has lived and cleaned the rivers of Australia for tens of millions of years. It combines the characteristics of many species in one. For example, it has webbed feet like otters, leathery tail and furry body like beavers, broad bill on its face and lays eggs like ducks. It does not have



teeth and its only form of defense is poisonous spurs in its heels. It navigates entirely by detecting the tiny twinges of electricity given off by the muscle contractions of its prey which are primarily crabs, lobsters, shrimp, krill, copepods, and amphipods.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature classified them as near threatened because sadly they are losing their habitat to development and the waterways are becoming polluted. Platypuses make their homes in burrows on riverbanks. Due to development, farming and ranching, their habitats are being destroyed - - and they have nowhere to make their homes. In addition, farmers build dams and withdraw water from streams, lakes, and rivers. This changes the flow of the waterways and profoundly changes the platypus' environment. They (like all creatures that live in the waters of the planet) are also susceptible to pollution from pharmaceuticals. Pollutants such as painkillers, antidepressants, and antibiotics which end up in waterways from sewage



systems, septic tanks, and runoff, accumulate in the bodies of animals they eat. In fact, the researchers estimate that a platypus in a contaminated stream might ingest half a human dose of

antidepressants every single day. Nets and traps intended for other animals also kill hundreds of platypuses yearly.

The "Platypus Whisper" and his Platypus friend are in Australia, but he did something very important that can perhaps inspire us wherever we are. He felt so strongly about wanting to protect his furry friend and the other creatures in that stream that he started reaching out to local groups about the serious need to clean up their local streams and small waterways. Though a shy man, he began public speaking for this cause. Enough people listened that groups gathered and went to the streams with big bags and poles with hooks on the end and actually cleaned up the local streams. He and others continued that periodically. They got the local T.V. and radio stations to encourage people to dispose of medicines properly. Through this one man's awesome efforts and the people he inspired, enough change occurred that the streams became better homes for the creatures living there. One person can make a real difference locally as we inspire others or join in with an established environmental protection group.

So, next time you may think that some "small" action on your part won't hurt another creature you may not see, then think again. Remember, the actions of one can greatly affect the life of another. The platypus may be in Australia, but there are countless other precious animals here in the United States for which we need to be protective.

BIO: Dr. Joyce Freville earned a doctorate in Human Services with a specialization in Health Care Administration from Capella University. In addition, she earned an MBA from Webster University, a BS in Accounting from Arizona State University. She has been in healthcare reimbursement, finance, and compliance for over 35 years. She is a retired Command Sergeant Major in the U.S. Army. She is a member of Zonta International a global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy.



PHOTOS: Platypus by Dave Watts, Alamy Stock Photo, NRDC. Photo of Earth, from the New York Public Library and Unsplash.

ESSENTIAL OILS, Ones to Choose When Emotional Support is Needed

By Lisa Hobbs Odom, MB

We know that essential oils and plant extracts were used in daily Egyptian life as early as 4500 BC. The temple walls as well as the tombs were painted with images of oils being used in daily life as aromatics for the royals but also as medicine. Since then, we have learned a tremendous amount about these gifts of the earth. Science tells us that it takes less than 90 seconds for an essential oil to go from the skin straight into the blood stream. To go to your brain, it's even faster. The nose takes the smell straight to the hypothalamus which is located in the center of the brain and controls things like body temperature, hunger, thirst, mood, blood pressure and sleep. It is also responsible for telling your pituitary gland to release hormones.

That explains a bit about how smell is so important to us. It affects feelings, emotions, and mood. When I first started my education with essential oils, all I knew was they were used in massage, and they were good. Nine years, many classes, seminars, and conventions later, I have a strong working knowledge of essential oils and a life that was totally changed due to EO (essential oils). Today we are going to look at essential oils that affect mood and emotions. EO's can be a bit daunting at first knowing what to use when. I hope to simplify that for you today and provide you with a good reference.

Feelings of Shame, Sadness, or Grieving – look to put tree oils in your diffuser. My favorites are Cedarwood, Cypress, Frankincense, Eucalyptus, and for the entire holiday season use Douglas Fir.

Feelings of Discontent, Bitterness, and Anger – use oils from herbs and grasses. Lemongrass, Citronella, Peppermint, Spearmint, Cilantro, Thyme, Rosemary, Basil, Patchouli, or Marjoram.

Feelings of Boredom, Disinterest, or Somberness – use Black Pepper, Cardamom, Cassia, Cinnamon, Clove, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Fennel, Ginger, or Juniper Berry.

Feelings of Discouragement, Gloom, or Distress – use Citrus Oils. Bergamot, Grapefruit, Lemon, Lime, Tangerine, or Wild Orange.

Feelings of Apathy, Insecurity, and Anxiousness – Mint is where you want to look. Consider Spearmint, Peppermint, or Bergamot Mint.

Feelings of Hurt, Fear, and Worry – look to the flowers. Consider Rose, Jasmine, Clary, Sage, Lavender, Geranium, Helichrysum, Roman Chamomile, or Ylang Ylang.

I have a device called iTOVi that measures the galvanic response of your body to different essential oils. Everything has an energy frequency; the device records your body's response to



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the different frequencies. It will make suggestions on which oil your body says it needs.

Now that you are armed with all this information, now what? What do I do with them? You have lots of options. The simplest is to put the oil on the bottom of your feet, 1 drop. The feet have the largest pores on your body and aid in the quick absorption of the oil. If you want the oil closer to your nose, just remember that citrus oils react with the sun. Pro Tip: DO NOT put on exposed skin if you are going to sit in the sun or go to a tanning bed. If you have sensitive skin or are using EO's on children, dilute the EO with a vegetable oil (jojoba oil, olive) using 1 drop EO for 1 drop of vegetable oil. You can put several oils together in a roller ball for easy use. Pro Tip: I'm never without my migraine buster of equal amounts Peppermint, Lavender, and Frankincense in a roller ball.

You can also just put the oil in the palms of your hand, rub them together, cup them around your nose (Being VERY careful not to touch your eyes) and inhale deeply.

I love to diffuse the oils too. It is easy to buy a diffuser and add 5 to 7 drops of your favorite oils and let it fill the air. Pro Tip: If you have issues getting stuffy at night, using a diffuser while you sleep is a great way of keeping your sinuses clear.

I know several folks who are afraid of EO because they have cats or dogs. There are several oils that are not good for animals as they don't have a way to process them. If you have cats or dogs, you should **not** diffuse wintergreen, sweet birch, citrus oils, pine, ylang-ylang, peppermint, cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus, melaleuca (tea tree), thyme, juniper, yarrow, and oregano. (This is not a complete list, please check with your vet and research)

BIO: Lisa Odom has been leading instructional classes in Doterra Essential Oils for over 9 years. She has received certificates in the Aroma Touch technique as well as the Symphony of the Cells. Her training has been exclusive to Doterra Oils. She holds a BA from the University of Louisville and a master's from Eastern Kentucky University in manufacturing. She is available for teaching groups at any level. Odomoils@gmail.com
Editor's Note: Please consult your primary health care practitioner before trying essential oils.



HOLIDAY BLUES?

By Dr. Victoria Snelling, DC, DHM

I've spoken with so many people who dread the holidays for one reason or another. Most often, they are missing a loved one and they can see no reason to celebrate. This can occur to someone who has moved away from family and friends, to those who are widowed or divorced, or to those of us who have

lost a very significant person in our lives. Another reason for holiday blues is that some people just don't care for the traditions that some people love, and some just don't like the hype that is so prevalent this time of year. If your experience is the latter, you may have found ways to cope. But if not, keep reading!

If the holidays aren't a fun-filled time for you, consider how you can celebrate in your own way.

It can be fun to discover what traditions someone else observes during the holidays. You might be amazed at how much we all have in common. Create new traditions. Is there something you've always wanted to do over the holidays and never had the time? Would you like to invite friends and neighbors over for a meal or snacks and cards or a board game marathon? Would you prefer to have a great meal in a restaurant and leave the dirty dishes to someone else? Make new memories that you can treasure and that make you smile.

Another option is to be the instigator. Look at your circle of friends, colleagues and neighbors. Find out who is alone, or lonely during the holidays and invite them to dinner, or to share a cup of coffee or tea, or out to a movie or concert. Togetherness can be the best antidote to loneliness whether it's a holiday, or just another ordinary day. Think of the things you do that make you happy. Does a brisk walk in the woods give you a mood lift. Take a hike in one of the many parks we enjoy here. Make sure you are eating well and getting enough sleep during this time of year, as that will affect your mood and emotions.

Nutrition can be a major factor in how we feel emotionally and physically. Homeopathy offers a great deal to assist us with loss loneliness during the holidays. Ignatia is a homeopathic remedy that is helpful with loss and grief. Coffea is good for the inability to sleep due to having a lot on your mind, racing thoughts or anticipation. Gelsemium is useful if you are nervous about entertaining or having friends over for a meal. If you're feeling a little resentful, Staphysagria can improve your mood. If you have indulged a little too much, Nux-vom can ease the affects of too much food or alcohol. (Just remember, don't drink and drive!)

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukah, or Kwanza, and New Years, reach out to your friends and loved ones if you'd like the contact with others you care about. This can be in person, by phone or by a remote video call. Connect with them and make your holiday a special time.

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



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WE ARE EACH PART OF THE SOLUTION, Each in Our Own Heart Felt Way. Joyce Gerrish, M.A.

As many people as possible need higher meditation and energy healing to help fairly quickly raise themselves into higher consciousness. This is to get above the lower mass mind of so much despair, violence, and self-destructive behavior. When we raise into higher consciousness, we can access higher spiritual awareness and the knowledge of tools, inventions, and ideas to help save our planet from extremely destructive behaviors, selfishness, and putting financial gain ahead of the good of all people.

Life is ideally a process of growth emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. That is why we are here on planet Earth - - to learn and grow. After all this is the "schoolhouse of Planet Earth." Our soul comes here to Earth lifetime after lifetime to keep developing our capacity and understanding of embodying the "Divine Qualities of God." As you may recall, these include Divine Wisdom, Divine Truth, Divine Compassion, Divine Peace, Divine Love and so much more. Do these sound like the qualities that are tremendously needed on planet Earth right now? You're RIGHT! We can invoke and pray for these Divine Qualities to bless ourselves and others. The Earth desperately needs these qualities of God to help mend together the suffering lives of people in war torn areas and all over the globe.

We each as a soul chose to be here on Earth at this time to help with this massive transformation Earth is going through right now. I feel that we each have a soul purpose (soul mission) that we are here to do. We have been preparing for this for many lifetimes. That doesn't make it easy, but it does mean that we are well practiced. We have the skills that we need to do what we are being called to do - - the service that we can provide. The "call" comes through our heartfelt feelings, through our yearning, intuitive flashes, and mainly through our higher consciousness.

People everywhere throughout our planet are working quietly doing what they know needs to be done to help and mobilize the people around them in meaningful ways. When we look around us it may seem that what we may have considered normal life is falling apart here and there, and that basic decency is somewhat deteriorating. Yes, there is plenty of that going on in some quarters. But we must not despair and give up. We can lift our consciousness above the mass mind and mass emotions into the clarity of our higher consciousness. That clarity is there above our head and above the crown energy center located there. There is just matted stress energy around most people's body and above most people's head. As an energy healer I can feel it and see the heavy energy, and yet I know that there is clear peaceful energy beyond it. It is one's own beautiful consciousness that one may be feeling partially divorced from as well as the divine energy of the truly high levels of reality. Lift, lift, open, open to the truth of who you are. We are each needed as part of the solutions for humanity and our planet.



Many people have been mindlessly polluting our planet and living a selfish lifestyle for a very long time, and it perhaps seemed that the planet was so vast that the pollution could be absorbed harmlessly

forever. Also, prior to 80 years ago people were using more natural materials and living in more natural ways. Prior to the 1960s products mainly came in glass containers and bottles rather than plastic. The containers were then returned, sterilized, and used again.

In addition to going back to some of the "tried and true" non-polluting methods from the past, there are also new environmentally friendly solutions being invented and shared out to the public. These harmless solutions are often coming through people's higher consciousness - - seeded to us from the spiritual levels. We are not alone in the Universe. We are being helped by the spiritual realms. Prayer is powerful for invoking the messengers of God and the angels to help the people of planet Earth. Humanity does have free will to accept or block this divine assistance. So it is important to pray and ask - - and to lift our consciousness in higher meditation and get in touch with our own higher consciousness where we are one with God. This is a time for awakening from "slumber" to our higher possibilities. We can co-create a peaceful joyful planet together with people from all over the planet and in collaboration with the divine realms. This is true. Peace.

Bio: Joyce Gerrish has a Master's Degree in Human Development. She has extensive training and decades of experience as a practitioner and teacher of numerous natural healing modalities including Reiki & Chakra Healing/Clearing & Advanced Reflexology. She is author of the book "Secrets of Wisdom - - Awakening to the Miracle of You" and is publisher/editor of the Natural Living Journal. She is a Holistic Life Coach, Past Lives Therapist & Reader, Spiritual Healer, Counselor, and Energy Therapist. Weekly Zoom meditation available. Louisville office or Zoom individual sessions 502-572-4871. www.joycegerrish.com

