

# *Natural Living Journal*

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

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Keep Our Mind Positive**

**Manifestation at a  
Higher Turn of Spiral**

**The Power of Listening**

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

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# JEWELS OF GRACE, Created by The Acorn Ladies as Gifts of Hope, Love, and Protection for Women in Need.

For the past eight years, a group of ten or more women meet weekly to make HOPE necklaces that feature a real acorn cap. Paula Matthews, the leader of the group, reflects upon how it all started. "We wanted to turn our jewelry-making hobby into something helpful and hopeful to others. We chose The Healing Place where 500 men and 250 women are provided a place to live while recovering from their addictions. Eight years ago, we walked into their classroom as strangers and saw 120 women sitting in a circle. They sat quietly waiting to hear our story. We held baskets of acorn necklaces and explained that we made each necklace with love, hope and prayers. As they received their gift, they were grateful but wondered why we cared. They noticed no two necklaces were alike and were touched that their necklace was made just for them. They soon lovingly named us "The Acorn Ladies."

The HOPE necklace is much more than a piece of jewelry. It creatively communicates hope and love from one person to another and connects our differences in age and backgrounds by creating a bond of love, hope and respect. Eight thousand necklaces later, we are amazed at the stories we hear from the clients about how their necklaces became their symbol of hope as they progressed through the 12- step program. The tenacity of our friends at The Healing Place shows us hope and healing in real time, with real people, real addictions, and with real results.

The HOPE necklace reminds all who wear it or make it, that we are connected by this acorn symbol of hope. The card that is given with each necklace states, " **WITHIN EVERY ACORN IS THE HOPE OF A MIGHTY OAK TREE!**" Every Acorn Lady considers it an honor to be accepted and loved as a friend of The Healing Place. Our lives have been enriched by getting to know thousands of clients



*Photo symbolizing one of the thousands of women helped by Jewels of Grace and The Healing Place*

through a necklace that started with an acorn cap that we picked up off of the ground and turned it into a symbol of hope for all of us!

Through the years we have provided bookshelves, books, cards, clothing, bus tickets, family Christmas parties and established the Grace Learning Center for GED



assistance. We appreciate the support from Christ Church United Methodist, where we meet each week, and Little Mount Lavender store in Simpsonville, KY where our necklaces are sold and proceeds go directly to The Healing Place.

The Healing Place is a nationally recognized recovery program that has served Metro Louisville and surrounding areas since 1989. The mission is to reach individuals struggling with addiction, provide the tools for recovery, and restore meaningful productive lives. Detox and their long-term residential recovery programs are offered at no cost to the client. Donations keep this highly effective program running and 90 cents of every dollar goes directly to fund the program. The Healing Place model has been replicated in fourteen Recovery Kentucky facilities as well as in facilities located in Richmond, VA and Raleigh, NC.

**BIO:** For more information go to: [www.TheHealingPlace.org](http://www.TheHealingPlace.org) (502) 585-4848.

The "Acorn Ladies" are a group of women who meet weekly at Christ Church United Methodist in Louisville, KY to create these HOPE necklaces for the clients at The Healing Place. They feature acorn caps that protect the acorn seed until it is ready to emerge and grow. Over 8000 HOPE necklaces have been crafted since the group started in January 2015. May these prayerfully handmade jewels be a symbol of God's love, hope and protection.

**PHOTOS:** Middle portrait by Krill Balobanov.of Unsplash. All Other Photos: courtesy of Paula Matthews and Jewels of Grace Group.



## **USING MANTRIC SOUND TO KEEP OUR MIND POSITIVE**

**By Swaran Kaur**

The subconscious mind can get filled up with unprocessed thoughts. Kundalini Yoga, Buddhism and other modalities are always talking about clearing the mind. That is not only talking about keeping the conscious mind clear of clutter, but it is also about clearing the subconscious mind. I will share this quote. "Whatever you focus on, you become." Whatever you are focusing on is what you are pulling into your life. Sometimes that is negative and sometimes that's positive.

The crown chakra, the seventh of the body's eight energy centers, is located on top of the head. Also known as the "thousand-petal lotus," it works like an antenna to pull in 1,000 thoughts per wink of the eye. Because, as noted above, what you focus on you become, and you can accumulate a bunch of a certain type of thoughts. Those thoughts start to get organized into what we call "thought forms." Those thought forms can be perceived by others who might say, "He has so much baggage." Thoughts can keep accumulating until they become a kind of entity of their own, exerting their effective influence on a person to go in an unhelpful direction.

An example of this is someone who dates or marries the same person over and over again. I know someone who has been in three major relationships in her life. These three people have different names, and they look completely different, have different jobs, and have different environmental circumstances - - but the personality is exactly the same. The personality type described here is not healthy, but is an abusive, negative, mean personality. It is sad. Because that subconscious thought form had built up over time, and without her realizing it had caused her to pick the same person over and over again even though it was not healthy for her.

Now that I have described that, look at your own life or look at someone else's life and you can perhaps see where you or someone else may be repeating a pattern that may not be healthy. The good news is that those negative patterns can be dismantled through the practice of Kundalini Yoga, meditation, and mantra. That's one reason Kundalini Yoga and other modalities are always telling you to meditate, to focus, and to clear the mind. In this article we'll focus on the usefulness of mantra. If you are having a challenging day, you can just keep reminding yourself to recite internally a helpful mantra. Kundalini Yoga mantras focus the mind in a positive direction so you won't go down a rabbit hole.

"Alice in Wonderland" is a great illustration of the subconscious landscape. You don't want to go down that rabbit hole because it is not beneficial. Sometimes looking at how you got in a hole can inform you how to get out. You want to look at how you got into the hole through the lens of what's going to help you get out. Talking about how it makes you feel is only going to amplify your negative feelings. Again, what you focus on you become. Kundalini mantras can help a person get out of the rabbit hole by lifting the vibrational frequency of the consciousness. Lower vibrational frequencies



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such as anger, fear, resentment, jealousy can make a person feel depressed, sad, and can perhaps incline a person to physical ailments. The higher more elevated feelings of peace, joy, love, and hope can lift the vibrational frequency of a person's consciousness,

In recent years, medical doctors and researchers have begun to study the effects of mantra on the human mind. Results of these experiments have shown that mantric sound waves have a profoundly healing effect on the brain. In addition, while the history is somewhat hidden, some scientists over the years, such as Dr. Royal Raymond Rife, have studied the effect of different frequencies on the human body. Their findings revealed that certain higher frequencies can heal the body of illness. If a person can stay on a higher frequency, he or she is more able to be healed, as well as maintain a positive head space.

There are even chiropractors now who are using laser frequency technology. Depending on what a patient is going through, the chiropractor sets his laser at a certain energy frequency to target the needed area of the body for healing. Coming back to Kundalini Yoga mantras, which are in the language of Gurmukhi, they vibrate at these higher, healing frequencies which will have a very positive beneficial impact on the mind and body.

In Kundalini Yoga, we highly recommend a "walking around mantra." This is a mantra you keep mentally repeating in your brain all the time, as much as possible, It takes practice to do that and to get there. What it does is that instead of obsessing on a worry, a person can focus on peaceful feelings. You can keep that mantra going in your brain all the time as much as possible. It takes practice to do that and to get there. What it does is that instead of obsessing on a worry, a person can focus on peaceful feelings. A helpful mantra a person can practice is: Sat Nam, pronounced "Sut Nahhhm." It means, "I am truth," and in practical terms elevates you to a place of neutrality and clarity. Another powerful practice is to inhale, hold the breath, and mentally say, "Victory," one time, then exhale. Consistent application of mantric practice can bring you to victory over your own mind and its intrigues.

**BIO:** Swaran is a yoga teacher, and founder of Voyager Yoga, Hidden Treasures book club, and Not Your Average Bear, a playgroup for neuro-divergent children. She has been practicing and teaching Kundalini Yoga for over 15 years. Swaran received and continues to participate in trainings through the Ra Ma Institute for Applied Yogic Science and Technology. To learn more, visit voyager-yoga.com.



# **SUPPORT FOR PREVENTING OR LESSENING LONG COVID**

**By Dr. Lisa Tostado, ND**

Up to twenty-three million U.S. adults have symptoms of COVID-19 long after their initial diagnosis. This is termed Long COVID and is often characterized by at least one or more symptoms for at least 4 weeks from the onset of infection. These symptoms include but are not limited to fatigue, cough, shortness of breath, joint and muscle pain, brain fog, dizziness, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and loss of taste and smell.

Early treatment appears to lessen the impact of the initial infection, while co-morbidities such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity greatly increase the risk for developing Long COVID. Additionally, those experiencing severe cases appear to be at a higher risk for developing blood clots and heart problems. Working closely with your doctor is ideal so that they can monitor your condition. One test that can let them know if clots may be a potential issue is called the D-dimer test. D-dimer levels increase when blood clots are present.

While there is no cure for COVID-19 or Long COVID, there is evidence that a holistic and integrative approach can be very helpful in improving health outcomes. Here are some nutritional and botanical considerations for addressing COVID-19 long haul challenges.

**REDUCE ADDED SUGAR INTAKE:** Did you know that spikes in your blood sugar can suppress your immune function? One study found that the effectiveness of white blood cells, our immune cells which fight infection, decreased up to 50% for several hours after eating sugar. Furthermore, sugar seems to feed the virus and inflammatory processes. Choose natural sweeteners such as whole leaf stevia or monk-fruit.

**SUPPORT IMMUNE FUNCTION WITH AN OPTIMAL DIET:** Aim for a whole foods diet rich in vitamins A, C, D, zinc, and calcium. These nutrients have either anti-viral effects and stop the replication of the virus and/or support a robust immune system. Deficiencies in these increase susceptibility to infection and respiratory illness. You can work with your health care practitioner to determine if supplementation is also necessary. It is worth noting that zinc depletion may play a role in loss of taste and smell.

Eating enough protein to maintain muscle mass is also very important. Many with long COVID experience dramatic weight loss and/or loss of muscle tissue. I suggest having protein with every meal. Good sources of protein include lean meats, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, and legumes.

**SUPPORT A HEALTHY GUT:** Having a healthy gut microbiome is key to immune health. Our friendly flora help protect us from viral infection and other pathogens. Their levels may play a key role in whether you get sick or not. According to one source the probiotic



**Dr. Lisa Tostado, N.D.**

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Bifidobacterium is among the leading bacteria to fight off COVID-19. Regularly consuming foods rich in probiotics such as kefir, fermented vegetables and plain yogurt helps to support good flora balance. Certainly, probiotic supplements are available with multi strains.

**BOTANICAL MEDICINE:** Some key botanicals for fighting off the infection early on include Andrographis, Artemisia (sweet wormwood), Garlic, Myrrh, Black Cumin Seed, Astragalus and Elderberry. It is also important to mention that herbs and spices such as Ginger and Turmeric have anti-inflammatory effects and support healthy circulation, along with Ginkgo.

Adjunct therapies that can also assist in reducing symptoms and overcoming neurological and cardiovascular syndromes include acupuncture, nutrient IV therapy (vitamin C, glutathione etc.), and hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Keeping well hydrated with water and getting adequate sleep are also important factors in the road to recovery.

The virus uses spike proteins that attach to receptors found throughout the body, including the lungs, blood vessels, kidneys, brain, and GI tract that trigger an immune response that often

causes inflammation in multiple organs and systems. In more severe cases, the spike proteins attaching to the endothelium (lining of the blood vessels) can lead to cardiovascular events such as blood clots and an increased risk for heart attack and stroke.

This information gives you significant tools to help you support your general health and immunity to COVID. It is so very important that we avail ourselves of the resources available to help us stay well and to heal when needed.

**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.

**Note:** Please be sure to consult your primary health care provider before making changes to your health care regimen.

**Photo::** from Pixabay

# THE SEEDLING

By Gerry Boylan, Ph.D.

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” Anias Nin

In my work on myself I keep coming back to the sense that I am missing something, yet all the books and teachers keep telling me “It is all here” and are letting me know that I am not missing anything, except in my perception.

Well, how come I still lose it, get annoyed, depressed, lost, angry (again) - - another continuing litany. It certainly seems as if I am missing something and so I read, meditate, and study more and more. What I'm told is that my doubts, my fears, my anger, my impatience and all come from my inability at the moment to embrace the unlimited truth and love that I am. I get that-- but I think there still must be something wrong with me because I can't stay with it.

What's missing is my active involvement with the truth of who I am. This is the planting of the seed, the nurturing of it, reveling in its growth, the claiming of it, owning the potential and seeing it through. This is about inner work going beyond and going deeper than thinking and feeling. I do not *think* I am in Oneness or in the flow of life around the Christ consciousness, *I know it*. It is already here. It is not a thought it is an experience.

Then there is all that growth and transformation that is occurring invisibly in the roots underneath the surface of which I have little or no comprehension. This is not The Little Engine That Could. That story always freaked me out as a kid. I figured if I think hard enough and pray hard enough my dad will quit drinking and my mother will stop being so sad and we'll have more money, and they won't be fighting all the time. And so, I thought and thought and thought and prayed and prayed and it didn't happen. So here I was left with the seed/the thought that I am doing it wrong. I'm not enough--again.

It was not until much later in life when I learned to say to myself, “You are enough; you are unconditional love.” And that is a wonderful seed/a wonderful thought. But by this time my garden is filled with weeds of not-enoughness, fear and scarcity. So I start spending quite a bit of time pulling up all the weeds, all the stuff of separateness that grew from my seeds of shame, not-enoughness and incompleteness. It was like a cartoon, pull up one and there's another. It was whack-a-mole.

And then I finally got it. Let me just clean up this little patch here in front of me. Let me focus on planting seeds of love, joy, gratitude, healing right here and right now. That's step one. Because now I'm going to need to keep the ground clear, and I'm going to need to nurture this little seedling because many of the old thoughts and behaviors like weeds and thorns are going to intrude. Yes, there are going to be times when I am distracted, when the weeds take

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my attention away from the Holy Ground. But I will return. I don't get angry about becoming lost in the weeds. I come back to my piece of Holy Ground, and even though I noticed my seed thoughts of truth have gotten a bit wilted and perhaps stomped on, I need to nurture them back to health again and again and again.

There will come a time when I ask myself, “Who is it that is caring for and nurturing this thing, this tiny shoot that has emerged from the seed?” I will begin to realize that I am not just a tiny seed growing, I am also the gardener. I hold within me now, I affirm the truth that the mysterious and creative power of God is not just within me but I claim it as my truth as me. What would it be like if

we could love ourselves and be as gentle as if we were nurturing a tiny seedling?

From the German mystic Meister Eckhart: “The seed of God is within us. Given an intelligent and diligent farmer it will thrive and grow up to be God whose seed it is and accordingly its fruits will be God nature. Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God seeds into God.”

From Scott Peck: “The point is to become God while preserving consciousness. If the bud of Consciousness that grows from the

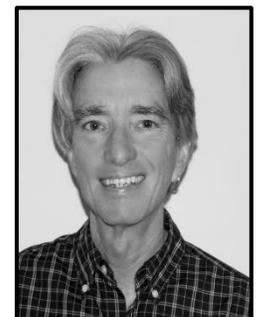
rhizome of the unconscious God can become itself God, then God will have assumed a new life form. This is the meaning of our individual existence. We are born that we might become as a conscious individual, a new life form of God.”

page 283 in The Road Less Traveled

That is my job. Not pulling up all the weeds but to nurture the healthy seeds that I have planted.

**BIO** For 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.

**PHOTO:** Nikola Jovanovic of Unsplash



# MANIFESTATION AT A HIGHER TURN OF THE SPIRAL

**By Leah Bomar, Author & Life Coach**

A popular activity around the beginning of the new year is to create a vision board or dream board. Intentionally calling your wants, dreams, and desires into reality by using the manifesting tool of pasting pictures, words and phrases as a visual reminder is a powerful way to co-create. The practice of using magazine cutouts glued onto cardboard was born out of 1980's consumerism culture where happiness meant hustling for more material things. Manifestation movements were later born out of learning about the law of attraction through books and movies like "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne.

While many of these earlier manifesting tools worked, we are now ushering in an era of greater spiritual growth where manifesting is focusing less on the materialistic acquisition of things and more on an experiential process of actualization. An elevated vision board concept is one focused on using visualization and positive words of affirmation to create the feeling that would accompany a desired experience - - and less on simply acquiring in physical form the dream you wish to materialize into your life. This means less stress over a goal orientated to-do list or worrying over how to attract more things into your life and instead focusing on the belief and allowance of miracles to emerge alongside divine trust. Practice nonattachment to form and timing.

One way to use a vision board is to place affirmations alongside images and then spend time daily meditating on the board to gain more clarity about the direction you want your life to go. For example, the following is what I am seeking to manifest - - "I believe I am a protector of joy and love because *I choose to create* out of joy and love. As life inevitably evolves, I allow life's changes to help me create my future as it happens in and around me. I do not allow myself to become immobilized or stuck by any person or event happening around me. Peace, happiness, and my definition of success comes from the inside, not the external validation of getting more stuff or achieving accolades."

There is power in creational energy. When we create from our heart and not our head, we are automatically inclusive of allowing in a co-creator greater than ourselves. When we connect into spirit, the universal law of attraction and abundance flows. Spirit/God/the universe works through us. When we say "Thy will be done through me" we surrender to an outcome even greater and grander than we could have ever planned for ourselves. We dream a dream, create a vision for ourselves, then surrender to the outcome.

Ask for... "THIS or something better." Commit to the essence of your dream appearing instead of focusing on the form you think it should appear in. Allow space to be served something more delicious than anything our human minds can conceive. This is because the inherent all-knowing love of spirit always serves us up exactly what we need to learn - - the lessons and experiences of life necessary for us to grow into our purpose on this earth.



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Author Leah Bomar Learn more at [LeahBomar.com](http://LeahBomar.com)

We cannot sit idly after pasting an image on our vision board and wait patiently for something material to materialize. Surrender as to the form of how what you desire will be manifested in your life. Be open and aware of the many blessings and miracles that appear in your life daily. Tap into the gratitude of receiving before the item or experience physically appears. Gaze at your dream board and rehearse the feeling of that particular moment as if it has already appeared and occurred in your life. Your brain will flood your body with chemicals and hormones to match the desired outcome. Instead of suffering from anxiety or doom-thinking where we constantly rehearse all the things we do not wish to happen, train yourself to experience the state of receiving now what you want in the future. You will instantly feel better.

Items placed on a vision board represent the *feeling* you wish to experience when you obtain the object or scenario of desire. So maybe it's not really about the new house, it's about *feeling* safe and secure in that home of belonging. Maybe it's not about having the perfect romantic partner or dream wedding dress, it's more about *feeling* loved, chosen, seen, adored, heard, valued, treated equally and romantically. Perhaps it not about getting the promotion at work or award at the banquet, it's about *feeling* seen and valued.

When manifesting, we are co-creating a life of fulfillment. Trust that everything placed on your dream board is coming into your life not only your highest good, but for the betterment of the whole planet. When we learn to share ourselves with the world through art, service, and creative expression in how we dress, act, and choose to show up as our authentic selves, our inner light shines bright. We live by example for others and give instant permission for them to do the same. Our contribution of showing up as our BEST selves automatically serves the greater good of the world. When you are living vulnerably, authentically in your purpose... dreams DO come true.

**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](http://LeahBomar.com) or email [AuthorLeahBomar@gmail.com](mailto:AuthorLeahBomar@gmail.com)

# THE POWER OF LISTENING

by Nicole Bartlett

Our planet sustains us. To begin with, everything we consume comes in some form of an earthly element. I studied Agriculture in college with the desire to work in alternative fuels, but I spent the first ten years in the workforce of the animal nutrition industry. The big question, then and now, is how do we feed eight billion people sustainably?

Shortly after leaving that industry, I opened my first Wendell Berry book: *A Continuous Harmony*. This book started my admiration for this Kentucky literary legend who understands relationships among species. He knows ecology requires the listening and agreement of interspecies relationships because he's lived in relationship with the land all of his life.

This is why I'm so passionate about quieting the mind. It is my way of being tuned in, not just with the less obvious parts of myself, but also with the world around me. It's a practice of listening in a way that we begin to understand a new language. Did you know there's interspecies music available? Check out. Masterplants Spotify Album.

What if the purpose wasn't just to save the planet from the destruction that we as a human species have caused, but even more so to learn reciprocity? What if all that was asked of us was to listen deeply? What would the natural world have to say? Would they create music with us?

We must make ourselves gracefully aware of the damage we're doing as a human race while also understanding that individual contributions to healing the environment have a more significant impact than we may think. We must cut consumption, but what other measures can we take? There is no better teacher than experience, and my devotion for that comes from listening specifically to the physical earth. This comes through composting, gardening, tuning in to the plant and animal species around me, and researching efficiencies for places where I expend energy. Some find companion planting a beautiful way to work in harmony.

It's also an important part of my spiritual practice of symbolic rituals to the earth through flower offerings and prayer. We can create meaningful change by seeing the plant, animal, and microbial community as something to be in a relationship with versus having power over.

Could our issue of not seeing radical improvement in environmental protection come from our need to justify everything through statistics and data? Does removing the heart from the equation reduce the ability to create impact? What if we began looking at environmental justice in the way we're looking at mind, body, and spirit whole healing for the human species? If listening to



the world around us was valued in the same way as recycling, we open ourselves to the possibility of quantum leaps

Animas belief is that all things have a soul and that we can form a relation to that energy. In a world where we are willing to throw a ton of money into technological advancement, could we have access to as great if not better information for our planetary solutions through a closer connection with our natural environment?



An herbalist taught me that to work with the plant meant not only consuming and studying the physiological components, but also with meditating, bathing in its essence, sleeping with it under a pillow, and honoring the plant through intentional understanding. One of the most remarkable healing experiences I've had came from working with chickweed with clear intentionality behind a month-long relationship. The gentleness of the plant put me in direct contact with my vulnerability, the part of me that needed protecting -- and a vow that I would show up unfettered to keep my sensitive heart safe there forward.

The practice of appreciation for the smallest most gentle aspects of nature provides us with awareness and depth of feeling we may not have realized existed within us. By becoming a better listener, I've been able to bring greater meaning to my life. We step into our wholeness when we live from a place of reciprocity and reverence.

**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:** Caique Nascimento of Unsplash

## ***CREATIVITY FOR HEALING AND JOY***

***By Ann Hemdahl Owen, MFA, MA***

Creating is a wondrous exploration. It is filled with both anticipation and anxiety and sometimes fear. Whether you are writing, cooking, sewing, dancing, weaving, making ceramic pots, or painting...all are creative. There is the unknown dream ahead which may evolve or might fail. Sometimes if it is a familiar theme, everything falls in place easily guided by experience. Yet, if it is an unexplored quest it might develop into something entirely new and challenging. This is when I feel a sense of “pins and needles” of stepping into the unknown. Currently, these activities are part of my history. I need to confess that I have not done any sewing for years, yet in the past I reupholstered a sofa because we could not afford a new one. It turned out well, we lived with it for years. Necessity is sometimes the push toward creativity. Currently I’m painting with acrylics. Think about your own creative activities. Maybe make a list and surprise yourself with how creative you are.

Today I begin a new painting, “Ocean in Early Morning.” It will build from a photo my dear friend Anne sent me from her current vacation. I have unease in my stomach because my last painting “Alpha and Omega” is still unfinished. The waves are not working. So, I find myself challenged by a new concept that is all waves and sky. I am scared! Creativity dovetails in and out: permitting the earlier incomplete painting to wait while I begin the new painting. I will practice making waves and later return to the incomplete one. This is an example of how being sensitive to what is offered each day brings answers to problems. Life brings both questions and answers. I have the opportunity to weave a new yet tenuous learning experience gained by creating a new painting that will help me finish the older one. My painting shown here is the black and white greyscale of my painting of a very colorful orange sunrise.

One way to practice creativity is to expand on something you have already done by being more aware. For example, you can superimpose and play with images on your phone using built-in capabilities or free apps. It is easy and fun to add and subtract from a photo. Why not start with a selfie and explore possibilities? No one else ever needs to see what you have done. It is a fun way to laugh at yourself!

An easy experience for reinventing yourself is by visiting a secondhand clothing store. Consider what would be fun to wear to embolden a new aspect of yourself, a personality that you can safely explore at home. It might surprise you when the clothing



**Ann Owen**

Author, Painter, Healer,  
full Prof, Counselor



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actually becomes useful! It happened to me this New Year’s Eve. My sister had previously sent me a long, fancy dress from a yard sale. I felt that I would never “in a million years” wear it. I tossed it in a plastic bag in a corner. Then came an invitation to a New Year’s Eve party. The invitation said, “Wear something sparkly!” That dress had the most sparkle I owned. Everyone loved it! (Including me!)



This new year is the perfect time to look at a calendar from last year and think about what you did. Begin by taking old magazines, scissors, glue, and search for photos that suggest last year. Cut them out and glue them on paper or cardboard. You might even add colored paper behind the photos to make the collage more colorful. Consider using color pens to add explanations or more details. Another collage might be made for “what I learned last year.” Yet another collage could be “my goals for the year ahead.”

My last idea is one I plan to explore. I want a symbol of protection. I might start with a circle by laying a dinner plate on a piece of paper and drawing around it. I need to decide what is important symbolically for protecting me. Is it angels, butterflies, birds, trees...all of these are special to me. Will there be light and dark? Waves? Lots of unknown. It might be a collage or maybe a painting? The symbol might be something that fills me with courage or inspiration.

Enjoy the adventure of your creativity! Maybe allow it to open you to parts of yourself you haven’t explored before. It may feel freeing and healing. Enjoy the journey.

**BIO:** Ann Hemdahl-Owen, MFA in Fine Arts, MA in Expressive Arts Therapy, retired Full Professor, Hypnotherapist, Hypnobirth Coach, Counselor, Author, Reiki, Healing Touch, and more.

**PAINTING:** by Ann Hemdahl Owen.

# LIVING THROUGH CHANGE

Rev, Valerie Mansfield

Life unfolds through change. When we stand as love, individually and as a community, we empower ourselves and others to move with grace. We must learn to recognize our feelings and desires and take time to understand them and shift more fully into loving ourselves.

When we feel anxious we must stop and take a deep cleansing breath. The breath allows us to shift our physical and mental bodies. The breath is like putting empty space in our mind and body and



allowing the tension and stress to melt away. Three deep cleansing breaths can change our outlook and create a new perspective, a new idea or a new way of living.

What is your vision for the next three months? Are you willing to grow to be more loving and peaceful? Are you willing to do the work to get to a more loving peaceful state?

There is a quote which I love from Heraclitus of Ephesus who was an ancient Greek philosopher. "Change is the one constant in life." We are always changing, always growing. We get to choose how we are going to show up in life. We can show up stressed, anxious and mean. We can show up as loving, kind and fun. Which is appealing to you? Which do you choose?

Never regret your past and please stop re-living it. Live in the now. Life is perfect just as it is, we get to learn and grow through divine law. The purpose of divine law is to raise the consciousness of humanity. The unfoldment of the journey is merely the path we are walking to find happiness.



Be the joy you want in your life. Be the love you are seeking. Kindness is a positive act of giving and you never know whose life you are impacting, including your own.

We all journey through hardships and fear. The

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physical body may not be as healthy as we might like. When you are at a crossroad or just crossing the street go within and connect with your inner self - - your soul. Slow down, breathe, sit with yourself. Offer yourself love and forgiveness. Allow the light within to lead you to your heart. Feel the love flowing as healing energy - - shift your whole being into a new dimension.

Let go of the past, you cannot change it. You can ask for forgiveness and change your direction. Learn to laugh and be present in this moment. Listen to your thoughts, hear the words you are saying. Love yourself just as you are. Now you are growing into a greater consciousness as love. Listen to your loved ones, hear the words they are saying. Know they are doing the best they can to live in the moment.



Now, I invite you to take a deep breath and feel the energy move through your being with ease and grace. Lighten the way for your understanding and unfoldment on your journey today and every day. Remember you are blessed and that you are a blessing in life. Breathe deeply and enjoy your day. Namaste'

**BIO:** Reverend Valerie Mansfield 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:** Top: Elizabeth Wales of Unsplash. Woman: Fa barboza of Unsplash. Man: Gautier of Canstock Photos.

## **WE ARE CREATORS WITH FREE WILL, By Tom Isaacs**

Thought creation is a complex consideration involving one's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. This involves:

- (1) Imagination / intuition - - a mystical reality available to everyone. It is a conceptual treasure trove where one can tune into one's vibrational signature or brain wave frequency which can come to one as an aha moment or as voices or as images as an active response.
- (2) Intent - - purpose to focus a thought or concept.
- (3) Emotion/Energy in motion - - passion or driving force to propel thought manifestation.
- (4) Visualization - - the sum total of the first three elements bringing thought into form.

As of now, we are in ever-changing times which necessitates the breaking down of structure (norms) which in turn presents opportunity for accelerated creativity out of necessity to fill in the void. This can be termed a renewal - - a creation of something new to replace the old. All manner of authority and control representing non-diversity such as gender bias, race bias, and non-inclusiveness are under siege.

With the virtual (digital) world, we have created a platform which cuts us off from our biological lineage as well as our emotional perceptual base. It likewise rewires parts of the brain to make cognitive reasoning absolute (extreme), dramatically reduces attention span, and increases visibility and verbal extremism.

Personally, we have essentially created ourselves through experiences, teachings and adaptive cultural norms. We have developed attitudes, habits, likes and dislikes, and made choices to create an environment / context in which we can operate. This is where we find ourselves in relationships where we can create any number of scenarios where we can interact with and influence others and be influenced as well. We adopt and create labels and descriptions of who we are and what we do to assume a persona / personality and to define ourselves as part of a collective to which we want to belong.

In terms of thought, we shape many facets of who we are including how we respond to sets of circumstances. When we seek to grow, we redefine ourselves (create ourselves anew) by making different choices regarding who and what we want to be or not. Remember - - no choice is a choice. Creativity is the essence of what we are about - - it is our journey.

What we are not taught is that 3D is a dimension of duality - -a context of opposites in Time and Space where we can locate ourselves in a perceptual world of contrast. This world of opposites (yin / yang) forces us in a matter of speaking to make conscious choices regarding what we value, what is sacred, and allows us to set priorities concerning how we live, how we learn, and how we



relate to ourselves and others. We create action and we create response, and there are obstacles along the way.

Despite what we are taught, we all CHOSE to be here. We did not "fall from grace," there are no "locations" designated Heaven or Hell. They are states of consciousness. There is no Divine Judgment or context of sin - we are here in a classroom of choices (experiences) to learn on our own and in groups in a broad context of personalities and cultures. We are here to make mistakes and grow through our differences to create anew.



By being creators, we give ourselves in the moment choices and those choices define who we are. When we want to redesign or change ourselves, we make different choices and we choose to create a different version of ourselves by changing circumstances pertinent to our lives, our environment, and the lives of others (i.e.) relationships.

So, what are we doing here? We are creators (free will), created by the

Creator to create.

**BIO:** Tom Isaacs has been a practicing Foot Reflexologist in Louisville since 1996 and has developed a unique nutritional approach based on his experience and wellness acumen. He has been involved in wellness and fitness programs since the mid 1980's and also uses sound therapy as a tool to balance and relax various systems of the human bio-energetic field. 502-417-3710, [tom@LivingpHure.com](mailto:tom@LivingpHure.com), [www.LivingpHure.com](http://www.LivingpHure.com)

**PHOTOS:** Below, Alexi Lamm, Pixabay. Center, Joseph Mucira, Pixabay.



# ***LAST SNOW BEFORE SPRING***

## ***Twilight in New England***

***By Elsa Lichman, MSW, LICSW***

That magical moment  
when the drab black and white scene  
turns snow-coated,  
like a confectioner's dream.

The ground is thick with  
untrammelled snow with nary a  
hare, coyote, or human track  
to be seen.

Evening falls-- maple branches  
take on a startling beauty as  
stark branches are coated in white.

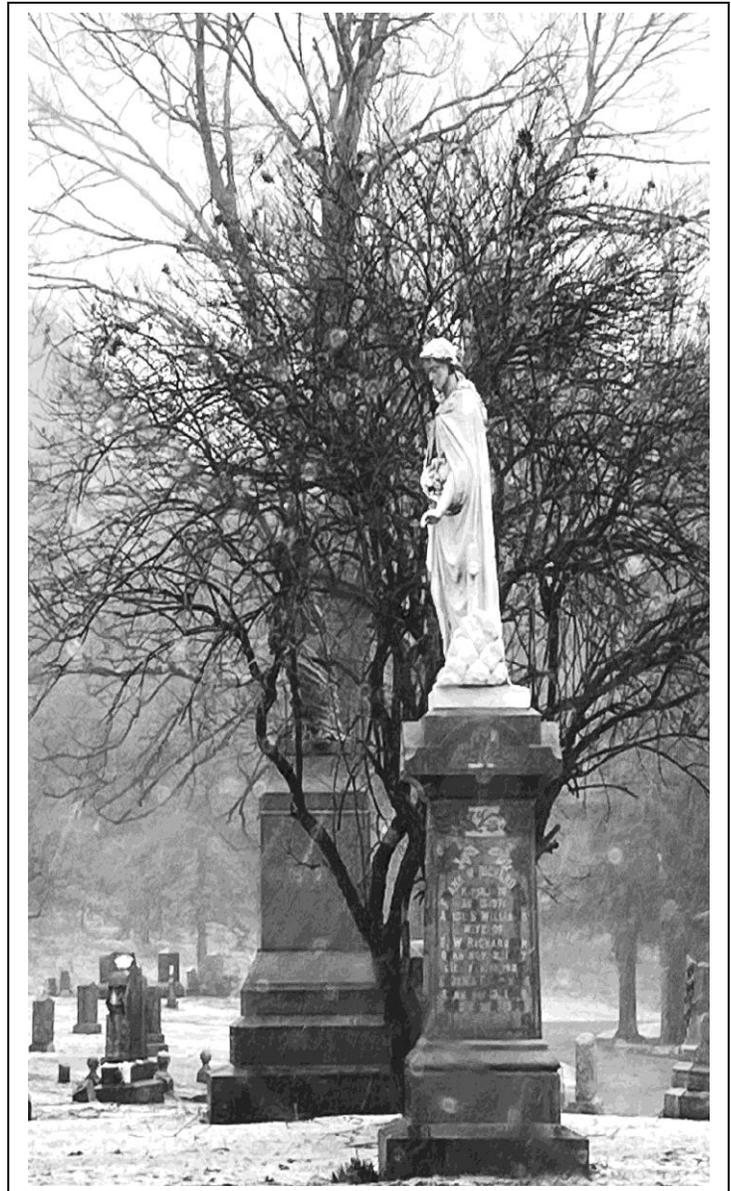
Sleet by the river falls  
in clumps on the windshield,  
as wet streaks stream down,  
making a soft, subtle sound.

The sun sets over a snow-covered field,  
the sky streaked with pink jet trails  
in the afterglow,  
as a sliver of crescent moon  
hangs delicately above.

Just as the sun lowers  
to the horizon, beams of light  
create a mystical moment,  
as if for a brief interlude  
the higher plane  
reaches down to us.

A cemetery statue on a tall pedestal,  
on pale white-green grass,  
rises from a misty background.  
She strews petals from her basket,  
a harbinger of spring to come.

**PHOTO:** Photo of Statue by Elsa Lichman,  
Photo of small Snow Scene by Lynda Wells



**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.



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## ***PRECIOUS ELEPHANTS***

*By Patti Carpenter, M.D.*

While I was working in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Ringling Brothers circus came into town. Every year the first place it went to start out its travels around the U.S. was in Milwaukee. The three tents were set up near Lake Michigan. It was a beautiful sight to behold.

When it was time for the show to start, the acrobats and clowns came out, and then it was time for the elephants. There were three elephants who came out with their master. They began to do all types of tricks for the audience and children, who were waiting in anticipation. The wonders of the majestic animals were awe-inspiring.

I was also sitting there in anticipation when I happened to look straight into their beautiful, full, large sad eyes. I had never been this close to such sublime creatures. As I looked, I noticed tears that were large enough to be seen from fifty feet away. It shocked me to my core. I knew there were many traits that they exhibited but did not know that they cried. I have never been able to get that out of my mind for all these years. Being very curious, I went on YouTube and, not by chance, I saw a man at a piano playing a classic melody for an elephant. The elephant was so moved by the melody that she started crying and swaying back and forth. I had heard the old saying that music soothed the savage soul, but I had never experienced this before. I cried right along with her.

This experience in Milwaukee shed new light on the plight of all animals big and small. Elephants are an endangered species. History has shown us that the largest mammals on earth are the ones who are most at risk of being murdered. Right now, there are only 450,000 elephants left in the wild. Humans have hunted these majestic creatures for their meat, hides, and tusks. There are two types of elephants still on this planet, the African and Asian species. The ones with tusks are the male Asian elephants and the African male and female. The way you tell the difference between the Asian and the African elephants is by their ears. The smaller ears are associated with the Asian and the larger ears with the African elephants. It is by far the Asian elephant that is in most danger of extinction as only 40 to 50,000 are left. There are two types of African elephants, the elephant of the forest and

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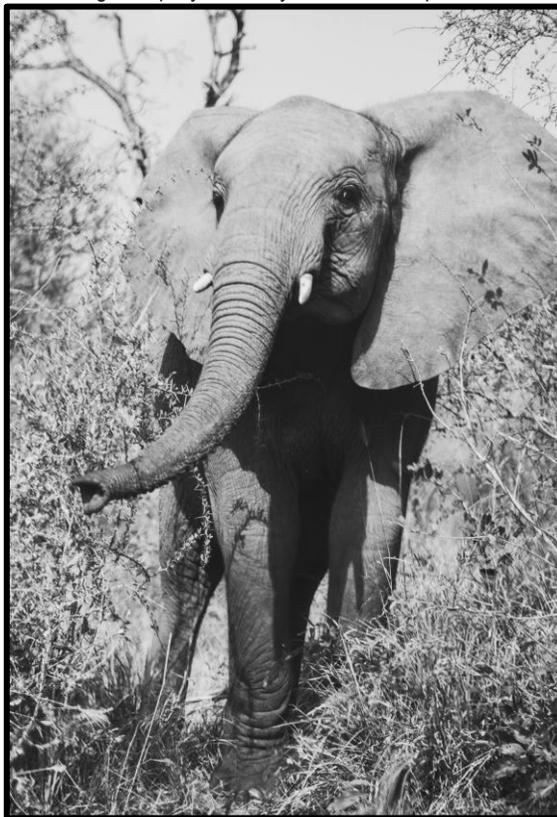
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the elephant of the savannah. The forest elephant is listed as critically endangered. There is a way to measure increasing or decreasing, it is called the "carcass ratio." The carcass ratio is determined as the number of dead elephants observed during survey counts as a percentage of the total population. A carcass ratio above 8% is an indication that elephants are decreasing. We pray that they will be better protected in the future.



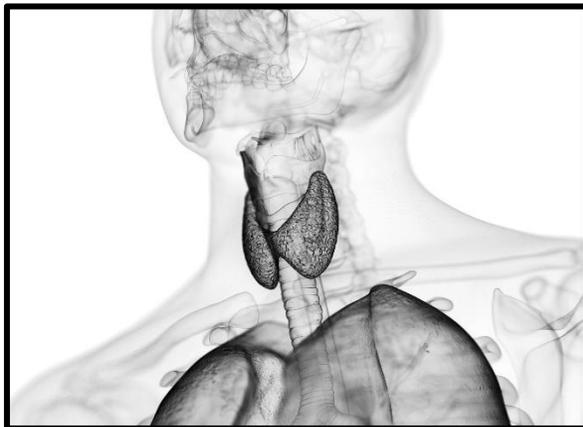
**PHOTOS:** Elephant Family by Tobin Rogers of Unsplash. Elephant Eye by Szabolcs Toth of Unsplash, Elephant Walking by Zeke Tucker of Unsplash.

## **“HELP!” I CAN’T UNDERSTAND MY THYROID TEST RESULTS.”**

**By Dr. Victoria Snelling**

My neighbor called and asked if I could explain the test results she found on her MyChart. She wouldn't be seeing her physician for a few days and she was concerned. Her test was simple, too simple even to give very much information. Her TSH, or thyroid stimulating hormone, was elevated for the first time. We knew her thyroid needed some TLC, but we didn't have enough information to consider an effective treatment plan. The thyroid is important for so many reasons. This important gland is involved in body temperature, metabolism, and growth.

You might have had a TSH test. A TSH test tells us how hard the thyroid is working, but that isn't enough information to evaluate this very important gland.



Testing thyroid antibodies will give much more information and can explain why TSH is not within the expected range. Antibodies form when the gland is under stress, for example from battling viruses or bacteria. They help to fight them off as part of our immune system. If the thyroid antibodies wrongly attack the immune system; inflammation, damage to the thyroid and disruption of thyroid activity can result. This can lead to Hashimoto's thyroiditis or Graves disease.

A more complete blood evaluation would include TPO (thyroid peroxidase), Tg Ab (thyroglobulin antibodies), and TSI (thyroid stimulating immunoglobulin). I would also add a test for iodine since this mineral is crucial to the formation of thyroid hormone.

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It's important to test these antibodies, along with the usual TSH, since this information can inform the best possible treatment plan. There are occasional patients with 'normal' TSH who have high thyroid antibodies when tested, and this needs to be uncovered. Monitoring the body's level of inflammation is important and it's a good indicator of improvement, too. A blood test for C-reactive protein is very useful.



Functional Medicine and Homeopathy are complementary, and together they are very useful in restoring a struggling thyroid.

**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](http://www.DrSnelling.com).

**CHART:** Eraxion from Canstock

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland located at the front of the neck as you see in the chart. It is one of the very important endocrine glands that secrete hormones that significantly help to regulate and normalize our body functioning. Among other roles, the thyroid gland helps to control the speed of our metabolism and how our body transforms the food we consume into energy. Many people (including myself) have a hypothyroid condition which means that the thyroid gland is somewhat under functioning. This can be corrected in various ways but is important not to ignore.

## **TODAY'S CHALLENGE & AWAKENING, Joyce Gerrish, M.A.**

These are awesome unusual days. Life on Earth is in the midst of reinventing itself. Our planet is cleansing and shaking itself free of accumulated greed and abuse, violence, and willful negligence of our responsibilities to nurture each other (including those in profound need) and our Mother Earth. Many people feel that our planet is moving ahead into a more spiritualized way of being at a higher turn of the vibrational spiral. Many spiritually attuned people feel that as these higher spiritual energies are intensifying, they are flushing to the surface of people's consciousness old repressed negative behaviors that need to be worked through, healed, and let go. The idea is that those old negativities can be dissolved and replaced with positive attitudes and behaviors of peace, goodwill, wisdom, and divine love. But getting from here to there won't necessarily be easy or quick. The following is an overview of what might eventually need to be accomplished in order to thrive in transformative times ahead.

1. We each need to steadily more fully activate our chakras, aura energy pathways, and Higher Consciousness. (See charts on my website) In most people these are more latent than active, though ready to be awakened. We are all being called to awaken to our Higher Consciousness and "remember" the truth of who we are -- that each of us is a spiritual being in our body temple. We have each come from our Heavenly home to help create Heaven on Earth." We each have the seven major chakra energy centers which are equally spaced up the center of our torso from the base of our spine up to the top of our head. As these are awakened, each one enhances a different aspect of our life, consciousness, and functioning. Each also enhances the health of the part of the body where it resides.



In addition to the chakras there are numerous other energy pathways and levels in our aura energy anatomy. All of these levels of our consciousness need to gradually be kept clear of old limiting thought forms and negative energies. This requires a steady process of letting go of old feelings of anger, fear, frustration, or depression. As we gradually clear all these levels of our energy anatomy and open more fully to positive divine energies, our aura is transformed into our Diamond Body -- ready to receive and express the beauty of our Higher Consciousness and God.

2, Simultaneously with the above description we need to be preparing our physical body to be the "Temple of our Higher Consciousness," This is extremely important and too often overlooked by some eager spiritual aspirants. An average American diet of processed foods, fast foods, foods full of pesticides, preservatives, colorants, and foods high in sugar, salt, and hydrogenated and fried fats tend to not to sustain a body ideally prepared to safely handle the higher energy frequencies without gradually developing health issues. Our body needs fresh natural healthy foods in order to be resilient and harmonious with Higher Consciousness. Yes, there are genetic conditions which unfortunately can afflict some people no matter how conscientious they are in their health care. But for most people our body will really

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only thrive in the long term if we give it the care it actually needs, People with special health needs, I encourage you to consume as healthy food and drink as possible, lower stress, exercise, and utilize energy healing and other holistic wellness modalities and your health may improve.

3. As we daily pause to commune in higher meditation, we will start becoming more aware in many ways. This may come in the form of intuitive insights as to possible solutions for the looming challenges of our times, possibly including fresh insights for:

environmental problems, health crises, serious emotional devastation of many, mass loss of confidence in the government, drug and alcohol abuse, and so much more. Each of us as a soul is here on Earth at this time to help bring us all up to the higher turn of the spiral of healing for humanity. We will be guided by our own heart and soul in our quiet contemplations. We need to listen to our inner heart yearning as to how we may want to contribute for the higher good of the whole. This is the next step of our Soul Purpose or Soul Mission calling us.'

4. Now is the time to begin embodying and activating the next step of our Soul Purpose. However small a move that we take toward that next step, it is important that we begin to take it, if we haven't already. Know that you don't need to do it alone. You will be drawn to others with a similar vision, and you can work/seek together to help bring that vision into manifestation. This is happening everywhere all over the planet. Souls are "waking up" and remembering why they are here on planet Earth at this time. This is an exciting time of the blossoming of the more just, inclusive, wise, balanced humanity -- and we are all meant to be part of helping it to materialize. God bless you,

**BIO:** Zoom Transformational Meditations Weekly Wednesdays. In-person class 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday monthly. See website events page. By donation. 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. 502-572-4871 [www.joycegerrish.com](http://www.joycegerrish.com) .

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**LOW COST COLLEGE DEGREES, Joyce Gerrish, MA**

Here are a few insights which may be helpful to you, or your extended family, or friends regarding less expensive ways to earn a college degree from an accredited institution. I earned my master's degree when I lived in Boston, MA. without going into debt. I was working at a university's nutrition department publications office helping to prepare manuscripts for the professors and graduate students and research staff to send for publication. That university where I worked was on a four semesters a year program and would pay for me to take one free course at an accredited college each of the four semesters if it was somehow related to my job. My course work was in nutrition and health from a holistic perspective. In a few years I had earned my master's degree in Human Development from an accredited college and my employer had paid for most of it. I had no debt and it was not a struggle at all. They were pleasant years. Something similar could be done for an undergraduate degree.

U.S. News Magazine has a lot of information online about various ways to keep college costs down. For example, a whole 4-year college degree can be earned online for \$18,000.00 at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts (which is accredited). Similar opportunities are available at many other accredited universities such as Columbus State University, University of West Georgia, University of North Florida, and many more. I am not necessarily encouraging online college, but it is just one option. It can save room and board, of course. U.S. News has all kinds of other info about on campus plans for very low cost. California and some other states offer free tuition for two-year community colleges for low-income students (with other possible reasonable requirements). Some cities around the United States offer college tuition support for students studying for seriously needed professions (such as nursing or teaching) if the student agrees to work in that city in that job for several years. There are opportunities to get a college degree without getting deeply in debt, it is worth checking into!

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