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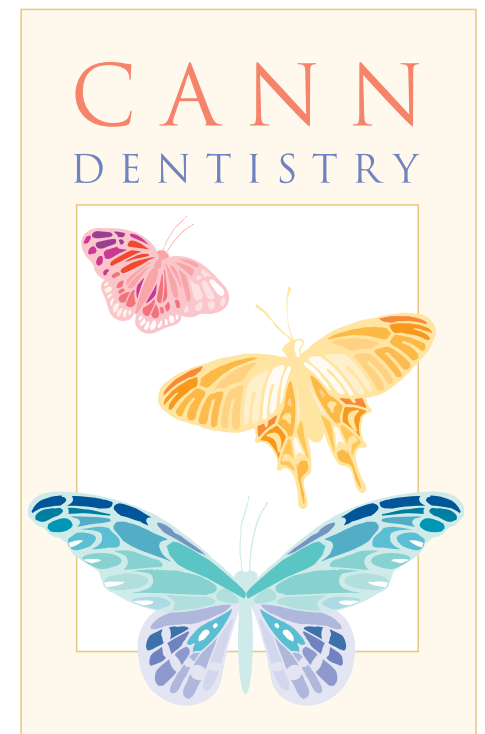
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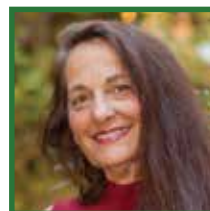
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YOUNG AGAIN

How X39® Turns Back the Clock

LifeWave's revolutionary X39® patch is the first product ever designed to activate your body's stem cells. Here's why this is a **REALLY BIG DEAL.**

Stem Cells

“Stem cells are the body's raw materials — cells from which all other cells with specialized functions are generated,” says the Mayo Clinic.

In other words, stem cells generate healthy cells that replace diseased cells, and they can be guided into generating the specific cells your body needs to repair and regenerate diseased or damaged tissue.

However, stem cell activity declines with age. By 60, our bodies' stem cells show very little activity. That's why older people heal more slowly.

Stem cell therapy is the potential solution to this situation which has, perhaps, received the most attention. But as of now, it is not a viable alternative for a number of reasons: It's too risky—there's a 30% chance that injected cells will damage your body instead of helping it; the chance of success is only 30%; and it's very expensive.

GHK-Cu

Peptides are communications devices that the body uses to initiate chemical processes.

And GHK-Cu, discovered by biochemist Loren Pickart in the 1970s, can increase stem cells, activate over 4,000 genes, reduce pain, reduce anxiety, promote organ regeneration, tighten loose skin, and reduce inflammation and free radical damage.

But like stem cells, GHK-Cu levels decline with age. By age 60, our GHK-Cu levels have dropped by 60%.

By increasing GHK-Cu levels and activating stem cells, we can seemingly grow younger as stem cells differentiate themselves to promote organ repair and regeneration.



Enter LifeWave

Founded in 2004 by David Schmidt, LifeWave has harnessed the power of peptides. And with its newest product, X39®, it has harnessed the power of GHK-Cu.

LifeWave is a leader in the field of light therapy, which involves the exposure of daylight, or specific light wavelengths for a prescribed amount of time. LifeWave's patch products respond to the heat from one's body and in turn transmit specific wavelengths of light back into the body.

What X39® does is reflect back specific wavelengths of light that trigger an increase of GHK-Cu, which in turn provides a host of benefits including stimulating stem cell activity.

Says Schmidt: “I can truly say that at this point in my life, X39® is my greatest achievement.”

Testimony

While our graphic highlights the benefits of X39, nothing tells the story like personal stories.

“I have noticed after I have been using X39 for 2-3 weeks my skin looks much younger, healthier and shines 24/7 with or without makeup.”

~Betty Aslanis

“My wife has had severe hip pain for years. After the second patch, these were her words: ‘It's a miracle!’ She had not been able to move her leg in certain directions, but now she can!!!”

~Dr. Michinori Tao

“I have been surprised by my husband's results: He suffered from depression, with anger issues, joint stiffness and muscle twitches. While sleeping, he often screamed... After just 20 days my husband got back to being a quiet gentleman with a sweet smile, no grudge nor anger, and he walks normally!”

~Rossella Savo

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If turning back the hands of time is not the most exciting news you've ever heard, here's the best part: Try a month's supply at no risk whatsoever.

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— Paramahansa Yogananda



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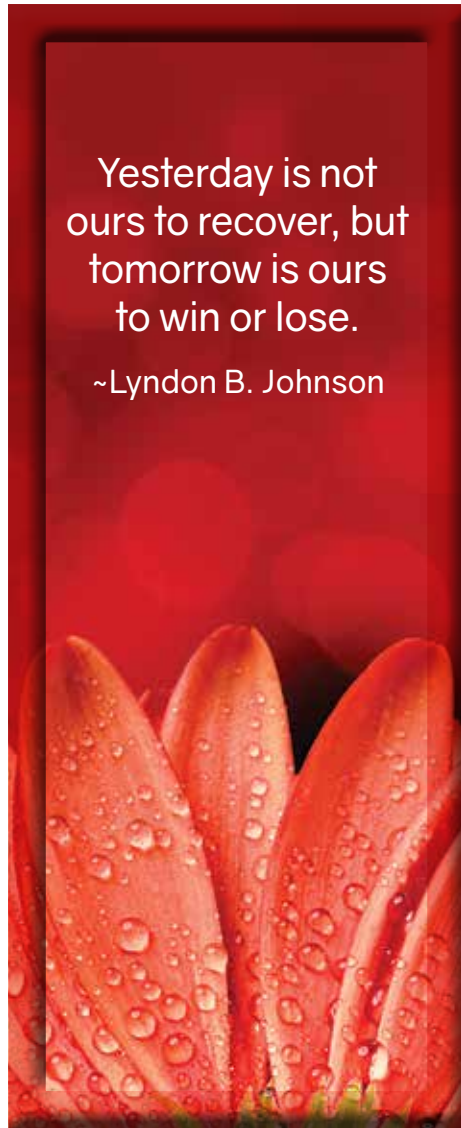


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Yesterday is not
ours to recover, but
tomorrow is ours
to win or lose.
~Lyndon B. Johnson

OMISSION: In April's issue, we failed to give photo credit to Ian Curcio for his picture of Simrit Kaur.

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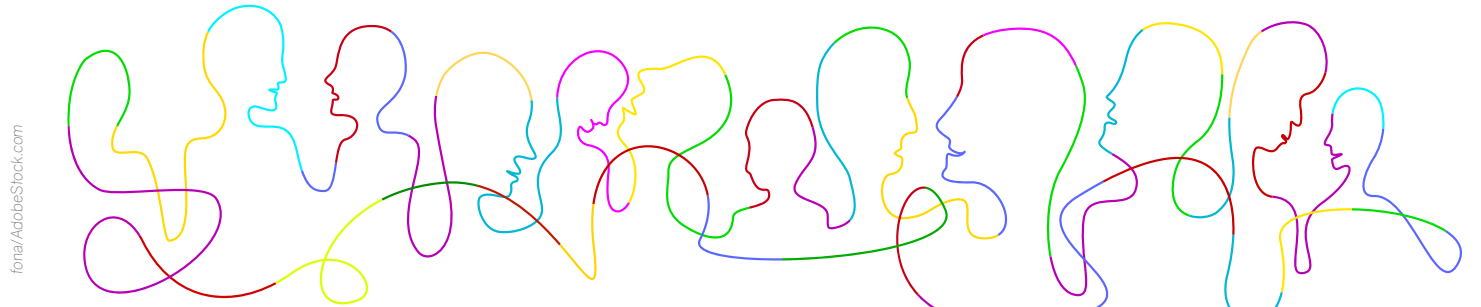
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 Ph: 239-434-9392
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NOW is All that Matters

I'm struggling.

When I wrote last month's letter, it was three days after Donald Trump had declared a national emergency. Now as I sit to write, we're two days removed from Brian Kemp reopening Georgia.

So I'm struggling with my hair-trigger anger that I've written about before. It got noticeably better last year in part because I held myself back from being the news junkie that I've always been. But we need to be well-informed right now, and it's impossible for me not to notice the overwhelming volume of malevolence, lies and ineptitude emanating from our nation's and state's capitols.

And, like everyone else, I struggle with not spending time with those I love. When I do see someone, it has been particularly difficult to refrain from hugging. Worse, my mother lives in an Atlanta assisted-living facility, and I am not allowed to visit her.

Worse again is the fact that she just suffered a stroke last week, and I was not able to see her. Doctors judged it a moderate stroke, but in the early hours of the incident, when her left side was paralyzed, I could only think of the horror of my mother dying alone, a scenario that I would share with literally millions across the globe.

And like many, many others, my livelihood is threatened. I count myself fortunate that you are able to hold this issue in your hands, but scary is the new normal for working stiffs the world over.

Last month, I spoke about my bias towards optimism. I remarked upon continuing to do our inner work, and I talked about the possibility of a new and far more equitable world that could emerge.

But the truth is, I allowed myself to be dragged down. I have railed too often and cursed too much. I have allowed my eating habits to degenerate. And my sacred and nourishing morning routine has fallen off. Meditation matters, and that is evident now, more than ever.

Still, the truth is that every moment presents the opportunity to change. Meditation has improved my mindfulness, so there have been instances that I've raged one minute and then offered prayers for those I raged against the next. When touched by despair, I have reminded myself that what is happening isn't being done to me, but it is my karma to have these experiences. And, after a month of largely moving in the wrong direction, I did an about-face this morning. I didn't spend an inordinate amount of time reading the day's news first thing. Instead, I found videos on spiritual teachings, which led me to the website of the Vedanta Society of Iowa.

There, I was reminded that things that we perceive do not exist in the way they appear. We can see this clearly in America, where it seems that those "other people" live on a completely different planet. From the Vedanta Society's website: "The Vedanta philosophy asserts the essential non-duality of God, soul and universe, the apparent distinctions being created by

names and forms which, from the standpoint of ultimate reality, do not exist."

This wisdom takes time to absorb, but after contemplating upon it on and off for 20 years, it's beginning to get less fuzzy and more helpful to me.

Last month, I wrote: "The fundamental disconnect is disconnection. Most humans incorrectly perceive themselves as separate from others." The Society expounds upon this: "It's no hardship to feel oneness with great and noble beings or those we already love... But most of us balk at experiencing oneness with the cockroach or the rat—let alone the obnoxious co-worker whom we barely tolerate. Yet this is precisely where we need to apply Vedanta's teachings and realize that all these manifold aspects of creation are united in and through divinity."

No matter how long this moment in human history lasts, reality isn't any different than it was at any time before or at any time in the future. We only live in the eternal now. We can despair, become paralyzed, and stop growing, or we can accept, choose to be positive regardless, and evolve ourselves and all of humanity.

It's our choice. 🌱



Paul Chen has been owner/publisher of *Natural Awakenings Atlanta* franchise since January 2017. He is a practicing Buddhist and a founding member of *East Lake Commons*, a cohousing community.



Roberts Releases Guide to Self-care E-book

Writer, coach, yogi and founder of Black Vegan Life™, Trish Ahjel Roberts launched her new e-book, *Black Vegan Life™ Guide to Self-Care*, in March and has made it available as a free download at HoneyButterflyz.com/e-books.

"This e-book can be very helpful for readers managing stress and anxiety with the current state of emergency in Georgia because of the coronavirus pandemic," says Roberts.

"The book was born of one of the affirmations that I write for my social media accounts every week, which said: 'Wake up with gratitude. Nurture your mind, body and spirit. Work with passion. Rest completely. Repeat Daily.' Affirmations are such a powerful way to increase joy in our lives. I'm so excited to share it with the world!"

Roberts is a writer, certified yoga instructor and life coach and has certifications in reiki, yoga nidra and meditation. A contributing writer for *Natural Awakenings Magazine of Atlanta*, Roberts will release her self-help memoir, *Thinking Outside the Chrysalis: A Black Woman's Guide to Spreading Her Wings*, in 2020. She can be reached at trish.roberts@honeybutterflyz.com or (917) 887-3689.



Eat Less Sulfur Amino Acids to Reduce Heart Disease Risk

A plant-based diet low in such sulfur amino acid foods as meat, dairy, nuts and soy may be key to lowering the risk of heart disease, concludes a study from the Penn State University College of Medicine. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins; a subcategory called sulfur amino acids plays integral roles in metabolism. Researchers correlated diets and blood biomarkers of more than 11,000 participants from a national study and found people that ate foods containing fewer sulfur amino acids tended to have a decreased risk for cardiometabolic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. They also found that the average American consumes almost two-and-a-half times more sulfur amino acids than the estimated average requirement. "People who eat lots of plant-based products like fruits and vegetables will consume lower amounts of sulfur amino acids," says lead author Zhen Dong, a doctor of public health.

Confirming this, a Northwestern Medicine and Cornell University study in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found that every two servings of red meat, processed meat or poultry per week increased cardiovascular disease risk by 3 to 7 percent. For every two servings of red meat or processed meat per week, the risk of death from any cause was increased by 3 percent. The findings, based on an analysis of six studies involving 29,682 people, contradict a controversial study published last year that recommended people not reduce the amount of red meat and processed meat they eat. "Everyone interpreted that it was okay to eat red meat, but I don't think that is what the science supports," says senior study author Norrina Allen, a professor of preventive medicine at Northwestern.

Watch Out: Rapid Weather Changes Boost Flu Risk

Rapid weather swings as a result of climate change raise the risk of flu virus infections and epidemics, reports a study from Florida State University and international researchers. Tracing weather patterns and infection rates during a 20-year period in the U.S., China, Italy and France, scientists found that extreme fluctuations in weather during the autumn months of 2017 essentially kick-started that winter's severe flu epidemic, implying, "The lapsed human immune system in winter caused by rapidly changing weather makes a person more susceptible to flu virus," says lead author Zhaohua Wu, a professor of meteorology. The study warned that as weather variability increases, Europe could see a 50 percent increase in deaths tied to flu by the end of the century, but added that factoring in weather variability could help public health planning.



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Exercise to Boost Sperm Quality

A new Harvard study of 746 young sperm donors reports that men that exercise more have better sperm quality. The men, with an average age of 26, at least a high school education and no radiation exposure or sexually transmitted diseases, were qualified to donate to a sperm bank in their area. Compared to men that seldom exercised, those that reported the most total exercise and logged the most time doing intense workouts had better sperm motility, which increases the chances for sperm to move through the female reproductive tract to reach an egg.

Take Quercetin to Reduce Blood Pressure



Supplementation with quercetin, a plant pigment found in capers, cilantro, fennel, onions, red leaf lettuce, watercress, elderberries, asparagus, kale, cocoa, apples and chia seeds, can significantly reduce both diastolic and systolic blood pressure, lowering each by about three milliliters/Hg, reports a new review of research published in the *Oxford Academic Journal*,

of 17 clinical studies that tested 896 participants. Quercetin also improved HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels when consumed for eight weeks or more.

Consume Date Vinegar to Boost Heart Health and Reduce Inflammation

In a study of 76 people with mildly high total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, research published in the *Journal of Herbal Medicine* found that consuming 30 milliliters of vinegar made from date pulp and pits daily for four weeks significantly improved total cholesterol, LDL, triglyceride and HDL levels, as well as several biomarkers of inflammation.

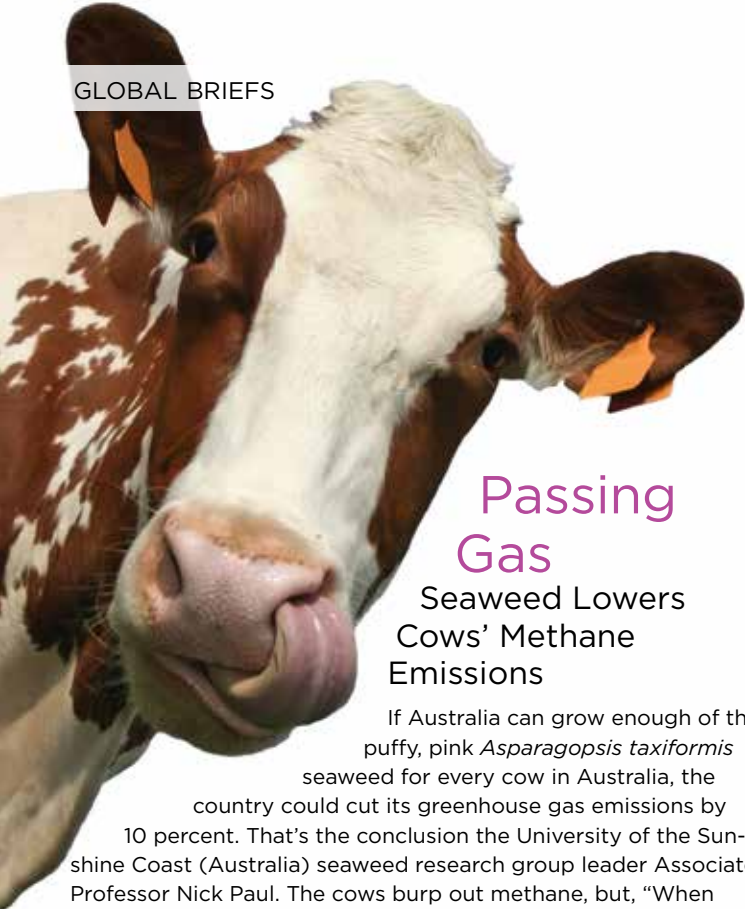
Tuck Kids In Early to Reduce Depression and Cognitive Issues

Fewer than seven hours of sleep for a child is not only linked to anxiety, depression, impulsiveness and cognitive difficulties, but also impacts a child's brain structure, suggests new research from the UK's Warwick University published in *Molecular Psychiatry*. Researchers used data that included MRI scans of more than 11,000 children ages 9 to 11 from 21 centers in the U.S. Parents also provided information about their child's sleep duration and mental health conditions, and children performed a battery of cognitive tests. Researchers found that compared to children that slept between the recommended nine and 11 hours, those receiving less than seven hours had 53 percent more behavioral problems and scored 7.8 percent lower on cognitive tests. In children that slept less, volumes were smaller in five brain regions. Children that slept longer showed less depression and higher cognitive scores, and felt safer and more secure in their homes and neighborhoods.



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Passing Gas Seaweed Lowers Cows' Methane Emissions

If Australia can grow enough of the puffy, pink *Asparagopsis taxiformis* seaweed for every cow in Australia, the country could cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent. That's the conclusion the University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia) seaweed research group leader Associate Professor Nick Paul. The cows burp out methane, but, "When added to cow feed at less than two percent of the dry matter, this particular seaweed completely knocks out methane production. It contains chemicals that reduce the microbes in the cows' stomachs that cause them to burp when they eat grass," he says. Cows are known to eat seaweed. "This seaweed has caused a lot of global interest, and people around the world are working to make sure the cows are healthy, the beef and the milk are good quality," Paul notes. "But the one missing step, the big thing that is going to make sure this works at a global scale, is to make sure we can produce the seaweed sustainably."

Buzz Off Bee Swarms Form Giant Brains

New research from the University of Sheffield in the UK published in Scientific Reports suggests that individual members of a bee swarm behave like neurons in a human brain. The scientists applied a theoretical model commonly used to study human psychology to the behavior of bee colonies, and they believe that studying "bee speak" could inform us about how our own minds make decisions. In the field of psychophysics, Weber's law describes a relationship between the size of a stimulus and noticeable increases in its magnitude. This general rule about stimulus and perception has been observed in birds, fish and even the collective behavior of simpler organisms, but not in whole clusters of tiny brains such as an insect hive. To investigate its role in the decision-making processes of the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), the researchers watched hives split apart and hunt for new homes. Among bees, the process of choosing a hive comes down to the interactions of scout bees communicating their discoveries through a visual display of body wiggles. "The study also supports the view of bee colonies as being similar to complete organisms," says computer scientist and lead author Andreagioanni Reina.

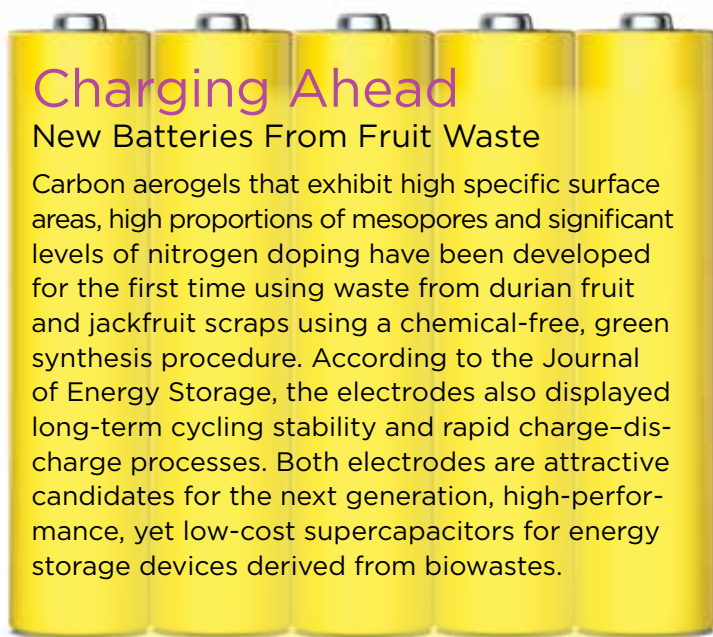


Life Perseveres New Bird Species Found on Remote Island

Although thousands of species have been identified and finding new taxa like birds, is rare, a study published in the journal Science describes five new songbird species and five new subspecies found on a single small island near Sulawesi, Indonesia, during a six-week expedition. Scientists targeted the area because of its geological history and complexity, and the historical notes of other explorers. Two factors that contributed to the description of the large number of species in a small geographic area included knowledge of geographical land connections that helped pinpoint isolated islands likely to harbor substantial endemism and accounts of historic collectors such as British naturalist Alfred Wallace. The findings suggest that human understanding of biogeographically complex regions remains incomplete.

Charging Ahead New Batteries From Fruit Waste

Carbon aerogels that exhibit high specific surface areas, high proportions of mesopores and significant levels of nitrogen doping have been developed for the first time using waste from durian fruit and jackfruit scraps using a chemical-free, green synthesis procedure. According to the Journal of Energy Storage, the electrodes also displayed long-term cycling stability and rapid charge-discharge processes. Both electrodes are attractive candidates for the next generation, high-performance, yet low-cost supercapacitors for energy storage devices derived from biowastes.



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Healing the Immune System

Autoimmune Breakthroughs Offer New Hope

by April Thompson

Some 23 million Americans suffer from one or more autoimmune diseases—a category comprised of more than 80 conditions, including fibromyalgia, Hashimoto’s disease, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and Type 1 diabetes. These pernicious disorders are notoriously difficult to diagnose, even harder to treat and can be debilitating, diminishing the quality of life for sufferers.

Another commonality is the increased prevalence of autoimmune disease in women versus men; in the case of lupus, for example, a nine-fold difference. Some early indicators are that this may be related to a “gene dosage effect”, as men with XXY chromosomes have the same risk of developing lupus as other women, and women with XXX chromosomes (known in medical parlance as “super-

women”) have an even higher risk of autoimmune disease, according to Judith James, chair of the Arthritis & Clinical Immunology Program at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, in Oklahoma City.

Yet there is hope on the horizon, as scientific discoveries unlock important insights about the manifestation and progression of autoimmune diseases leading to new treatments and prevention tips. Evidence is also mounting around the role of diet and lifestyle in autoimmune conditions, giving patients new avenues for taking charge of their health instead of simply waiting for a cure.

Autoimmune diseases are chronic and can affect almost any part of the body, including the heart, brain, muscles, skin, eyes, joints, lungs, kidneys, glands, digestive

tract and blood vessels. Each disease carries its own set of symptoms, but inflammation is nearly always present, and are all connected by how the immune system attacks the body’s healthy tissues. “Those shared characteristics hold the potential for shared treatments, and ultimately potentially common cures,” says Jane Buckner, president of the Benaroya Research Institute (BRI), at Virginia Mason, in Seattle, which works to advance the prediction, prevention, reversal and cure of immune system diseases.

“I’m excited about our progress toward prevention. We are working to understand those tipping points in transitioning into disease that help us understand who is at highest risk, and helps give very directed therapies,” says James.

Self-Healing from Autoimmunity

By her early 20s, Mickey Trescott, of Willamette Valley, Oregon, was bedridden and had lost her job to autoimmune disease. At one point, doctors thought it was multiple sclerosis (MS); she was dizzy, numb, falling over and slurring her speech. Eventually, she was diagnosed with both Hashimoto’s and celiac diseases, affecting the thyroid and small intestine, respectively. Trescott, a nutritionist, chef and author of *The Autoimmune Paleo Cookbook*, had been vegan for 10 years, but had a feeling that her body needed something different.

She found an early version of what would become known as the autoimmune protocol (AIP), and in following its guidelines, began to find relief. Trescott connected with other women and started a private Facebook group to share information on what was improving their condition from which the AIP community sprung. AIP, an elimination diet that seeks to reset the immune system by cutting out inflammation-causing foods and treating leaky gut, has much in common with the paleo diet and promotes vitamin- and nutrient-rich foods. However, every individual comes out of the AIP process with a customized diet.

For Trescott, “Gluten is a forever-no, and I am also allergic to dairy and sensitive to a lot of nightshade vegetables, like tomatoes and peppers.” It took three years to recover most of her functioning, and although she had been a personal chef, it was still challenging to determine a new approach to eating that didn’t include the grains and legumes that had been staples of her diet.

Trescott is still on medications, including the same thyroid support she’s relied on from the start. “There is a misconception that the AIP is an alternative to conventional medicine. We really pride ourselves on using all the tools in our toolbox, including surgery, medication and lifestyle changes,” she says.

Anecdotal successes like Trescott’s have led researchers to pursue funding to



test the AIP’s efficacy. In a pilot study of 18 individuals with an average sick time of 19 years that didn’t respond to traditional medication, 73 percent were in clinical remission at the end of the trial, having followed the AIP. “It was a small sample size, but the results are promising,” says Trescott.

Physician, Healed Thyself

Like many physicians, Terry Wahls focused on treating her patients with drugs or surgical procedures—until the Iowa City doctor was diagnosed with MS in 2000. Within three years, despite conventional medical treatments, her back and stomach muscles had weakened to the point where she needed a tilt-recline wheelchair, and by the summer of 2007, she could no longer sit up.

Though Wahls had been a vegetarian on a low-fat diet for 20 years, she went back to eating meat and gave up all dairy, wheat and grains, but still wasn’t improving. Delving back into the science of her condition, Wahls realized that mitochondrial support was key, and the speed of her decline slowed while taking a cocktail of vitamins to support its functioning.

It wasn’t until she took a comprehensive approach to optimize everything she could take in through her food rather than relying on supplements that she saw radical results: Her brain fog, fatigue and pain went away and she biked around the

block for the first time in six years. “Taking in nutrients in the form of food rather than supplements, you get related compounds and thousands of others in biologically anticipated ratios,” explains Wahls. “I still do take some supplements, but the magic is the food.”

Those key ingredients, says Wahls, include magnesium, zinc, selenium, sulfur, amino acids, cholesterol, omega-6 and omega-3s, fats, carnitine and creatine. Her rule of thumb for daily intake is three cups of leafy green vegetables; three cups of sulfuric vegetables like cabbage, mushrooms and onions; and three cups of deeply pigmented vegetables, plus sources of protein for meat eaters and vegetarians.

While her work was initially not accepted, today she has funding from the National MS Society and her research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals. “Basic science is now showing that the microbiome has a huge impact on the immune system activity and the brain; the food we eat can turn gene expression on and off,” says Wahls, who hasn’t taken any drugs for her autoimmune condition since 2008.

Buckner cautions against patients trying to manage disease with lifestyle changes alone, without giving available allopathic treatments a fair try. “People do better if they are treated early and aggressively. They

are reliant on fewer medications down the road and don't have permanent damage if they seek treatment early."

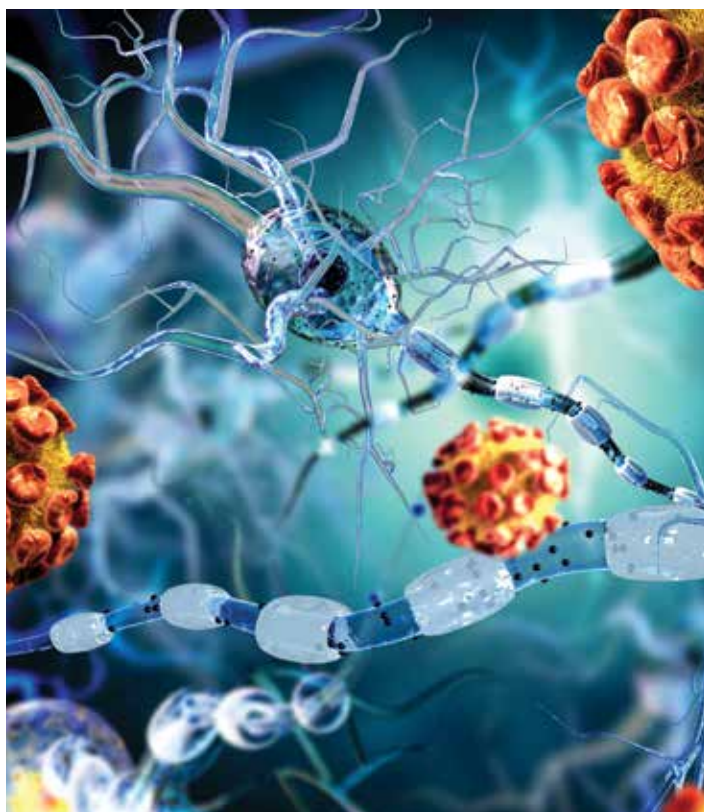
However, even researchers focused on pharmaceutical approaches acknowledge the importance of diet and lifestyle. Meggan Mackay, professor of Molecular Medicine at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research, at Northwell Health, in Manhasset, New York, believes this can play a critical role in disease management. She cites numerous studies showing exercise as a stress-buster positively influencing disease outcomes, as well as a more specific study looking at the benefits of adding fish oil and vitamin D to the diets of lupus patients. "The rise in obesity, which is linked to increased inflammation in the U.S., may be one of reasons we are seeing more autoimmune disease than ever," says Mackay.

At-risk individuals should be aware of factors under their control, adds James. "If someone is worried about autoimmune disease running in their family, monitoring and maintaining adequate vitamin D levels and avoiding smoking and other high-risk behaviors can help improve their chances." Even sleep patterns can play a role in disease manifestation, says the researcher. In one study, individuals at high risk for autoimmune disease that slept less than seven hours per day were more likely to develop an autoimmune condition, according to James.

Common Links Serve as Research Clues

There are some clear links between autoimmune diseases, such as the genetic predisposition that runs in families. "Someone with rheumatoid arthritis may have a sister with celiac disease, for example, and one individual may suffer from multiple autoimmune conditions. We can learn from these common genetic links," says Buckner. These common links can serve as important clues. For example, Buckner says they are able to demonstrate changes in T cells in diabetes and MS that are the same, which might lead to common treatments for the two conditions.

While the process from basic scientific discovery to development of effective treatment can be slow, there are some concrete breakthroughs autoimmune researchers are excited about, having demonstrated ability to both prevent and delay disease. Citing a recent clinical trial published in the *New*



England Journal of Medicine, "They have demonstrated in kids at high risk for developing Type 1 diabetes the ability to delay onset for at least two years. It's an incredibly exciting finding," says Buckner.

Mackay is hopeful about advances in basic science addressing specific immune system abnormalities linked to inflammatory problems. "Lupus is very challenging to diagnose and treat because it can affect every system in the body," says Mackay, whose research team has focused on lupus for decades. "The only forms of treatment have been very immune-suppressive medications that shut down the immune response. None of these medications are specific, so in shutting down the immune response to treat lupus, they in turn interfere with the body's ability to fight off infection and cancer." Researchers are now honing in on single cells from biopsies that indicate which proteins are abnormal, thereby helping develop more selective therapies, she says.

Seeing progress in the lab is one thing; seeing it in the waiting room is another, and that's where autoimmune scientists and clinicians are really beginning to note a difference. "I've seen patients for 25 years, and when we started, we had very few options in my clinic, which was full of wheelchairs," says Buckner. "In the last 20 years, we have seen an explosion in research and available treatments. I don't have wheelchairs in my office anymore."

Connect with Washington, D.C. freelance writer April Thompson at AprilWrites.com.

Virus Fighters

Essential Oils for Challenging Times

In these coronavirus days, an essential oil mixture with legendary origins in the Bubonic Plague offers soothing scents for the homebound and might add some viral protection.

The mixture of five oils: eucalyptus, clove, cinnamon, lemon and rosemary, is known as Thieves. As the story goes, in the 1500s, as the Black Death decimated Europe, when four unemployed spice merchants that turned to robbing the bodies and homes of the dead were captured and threatened with being burned alive, they confessed to the judge their secret to avoiding infection—the spice blend that they rubbed on their hands, ears, feet and temples.

They were all hanged, but their formula survives as Thieves, and is today one of the most popular essential oil blends in the market, sold under that name and also as Five Guards, Health Shield and Fighting Five. Although shown to sharply reduce three kinds of airborne bacteria in 10 minutes, its antiviral properties have not been extensively studied. Its components, however, have proven antimicrobial, antiseptic and antiviral properties:

■ **Eucalyptus**, long used for respiratory infections, has been proven effective against a number of viruses, particularly the swine flu and herpes type 1 viruses.

■ **Clove** has exhibited strong antiviral activity against such viruses as the adenovirus type 3 respiratory virus, poliovirus and coxsackievirus.

■ **Cinnamon** leaf shows antiviral activity and can prevent pneumonia due to influenza.

■ **Lemon** oil has antibacterial and antifungal properties, and is often used in cleaning products.

■ **Rosemary** eases stress and has antiviral, antimicrobial and antidepressant qualities.



Thieves can be purchased in natural health stores or online. For a homemade blend, Jennifer Lane, an aromatherapist, registered nurse and founder of LovingEssentialOils.com, recommends combining these essential oils:

- ✓ 35 drops lemon
- ✓ 20 drops cinnamon leaf
- ✓ 15 drops clove bud
- ✓ 15 drops eucalyptus
- ✓ 10 drops rosemary

Adding five drops of the blend, along with water in a diffuser, can waft the scent throughout a room and diminish airborne odors and germs. For respiratory support, put a few drops into a cup of steaming, but not boiling, water, drape a towel around the cup and face, and breathe in the fumes. Add it to a carrier oil like jojoba oil or coconut oil at a 1:30 ratio (such as one-half ounce Thieves to 15 ounces jojoba) and rub it on pulse points in the wrist and neck. But do not ingest the blend. If a child under 10 is in the house, don't diffuse it or use it topically on them, because rosemary and eucalyptus can be unsafe for a child, advises Christina Anthis, author of *The Beginner's Guide to Essential Oils: Everything You Need to Know to Get Started*.



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5 Things Your Esthetician Wants You to Stop Doing

by Susan Gonzalez, BSN, LE

It's a familiar story. After getting set up with a perfect skincare plan and with great intentions, bad habits somehow sneak back in. Here are some simple reminders to get back on track and turn skincare goals into realities.

1 Stop over-exfoliating. Exfoliation is the process of removing dead skin cells to encourage fresh skin cell growth; it can curb acne flare-ups and diminish fine lines, wrinkles and dark spots. But scrubbing too much or too often can lead to the disruption of the protective layers of your skin and lead to more acne, rough, irritated skin and extreme dryness and flaking. Harsh mechanical scrubbing using crushed shells, whole seeds, brushes or even a washcloth can do this. Exfoliation

should not be done more than two to three times a week. Women of color don't lose dead skin cells as often and can benefit from exfoliating just once a week.

2 Stop skipping your nighttime cleanse. Being too tired is not an excuse to skip your nighttime skincare routine. While skipping the morning routine is usually ok—a swipe of toner will do—not cleansing at night can lead to clogged pores, dull appearance and acne flare-ups. During the day, skin is quietly dealing with oil production, dead skin cells, pollen and sticky, dirty pollution. Those particles work their way into your pores and if they are permitted to stay there, they can cause inflammation and irritation. The free radicals in pollution also go to work on your DNA causing premature aging, fine lines and wrinkles. Skin repairs during sleep, so after a good cleanse, make sure to apply your serums and moisturizers so they can do their best work.

3 Stop jumping from one product to another. It takes a lot more than three days to see an effect from a wrinkle-reducing cream. In fact, most eye creams and serums that brag about anti-aging effects can take up to 90 days to produce a visible difference. Give cleansers and toners at least two weeks—unless there is an obvious allergic reaction, of course. A good acne system might take up to four months to get clear. Take a “before” picture when you start a product so the results can easily be seen.

4 Stop skipping your SPF. It's not just about skin cancer. Sunscreen is the best and most effective way to prevent damage that leads to premature aging, wrinkles, fine lines, dark spots and a loss of collagen that causes sagging skin. A properly formulated sunscreen containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide and formulated with a minimum of SPF 30 to 50 will block harmful UVA and UVB rays that cause unwanted effects. Makeup that has SPF in it is fine, but it must be applied throughout the day. Sunscreen should be applied last, over all other moisturizers and serums. Find one that agrees with your skin type and tone. Darker skin tones might find this a challenge and might require products that use Avobenzone, which doesn't leave a white-ish sheen.

5 Stop picking. Picking at dry spots, acne or scabs leads to irritation, which leads to inflammation, which calls up melanin deep in the skin, which causes discoloration that can be very hard to manage. The longer a lesion remains, the more likely it will cause discoloration. This is especially true for darker skin tones that have more melanin to begin with.

The best solution is to find the proper skin regimen for your skin type to prevent the cause and deal with the effects. If there is ever a time to keep your hands off your face, it's now!

If professional help is required, consult a licensed esthetician to help you successfully address your skincare concerns. Many are available remotely, offering virtual facials and consults so you don't even have to leave home. 🐾



Susan Gonzalez is a nurse and founder of MOON Organics, a holistic skincare company. A licensed esthetician, Susan uses a mind-body-spirit model and incorporates plant-based nutrition and aromatherapy in her work. Contact: MoonOrganics.com, Instagram @MoonOrganics, 678-463-6648.

It is unlikely a pet will become infected and serve as a source of infection for people.

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painting by Josie Martin



Coronavirus Pet Safety Facts and Tips for Dog and Cat Owners

by Shawn Messonnier

There are many types of coronavirus. COVID-19 is new—a novel coronavirus—and there are currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in dogs or cats. Dogs can become infected with a canine coronavirus. It is fairly species-specific and will not infect people, but can infect cats (without causing clinical disease in naturally infected cats). Most infected dogs do not show symptoms and recover without showing signs of infection; young puppies may exhibit mild diarrhea.

Cats have their own coronavirus that, like dogs, usually causes an asymptomatic infection, or may cause mild diarrhea or mild respiratory infection (especially in kittens). However, this coronavirus, for unknown reasons, can mutate in the GI tract and transform into the (usually) lethal feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) virus (this occurs in about 10 percent of infected cats).

Again, this feline coronavirus will not infect dogs or people, and only infects felids. (A curious note is that cats can become infected with the human SARS coronavirus experimentally and naturally, but do not become ill, and the original SARS virus was suspected to have originated from a mongoose.) As with human coronaviruses, canine and feline coronaviruses can survive out-

side of the pet's body for a period of time, especially in a colder environment, but are easily killed with most soap or disinfectants.

Dogs and cats that develop their own coronaviral diseases will not infect people. However, by serving as fomites (objects that can carry an infectious organism on the surface), dogs and cats could potentially carry a virus on their coat or skin if an infected family member gets infected material (saliva, respiratory droplets, etc.) onto the animal. Like any other surface in the home, the virus could transfer from the surface of the pet to other uninfected family members. (This is usually by hand to face transfer.)

To be safe, it may be wise to keep the family pet away from the infected family member, or at least have the infected family member bathe and/or wipe the pet's coat with a wet washcloth before the pet is exposed to uninfected family members.

Keep in mind that maintaining proper blood levels of vitamin D in people and in pets is important in minimizing infectious diseases. 🐾

Shawn Messonnier, DVM, is the owner of Paws & Claws Holistic Animal Hospital, in Plano, Texas, and an award-winning author and host on Martha Stewart Radio.

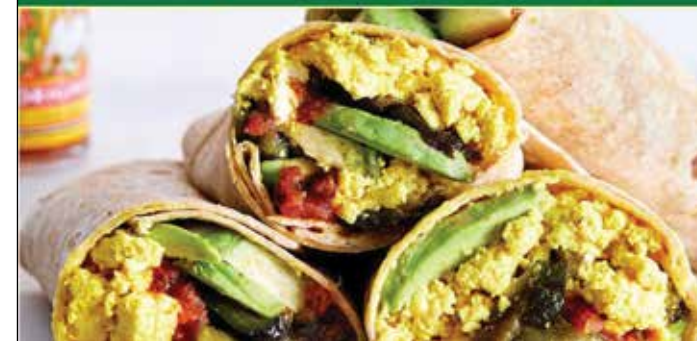


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FIT BODY

DANCING TO YOUR OWN DRUMMER

The Healing Power of Movement

by Marlaina Donato

Movement comes in many colors, from modern dance to country line dancing, and there's something for everyone, including those that claim to have two left feet. Dancing is healthy for the heart and improves cognitive function by forging new neural pathways in the brain. It builds stronger bones, helps balance and improves flexibility and endurance. Putting on dancing shoes also has a positive effect on depressive disorders, flooding the brain with endorphins that uplift mood and jumpstart motivation. Dance has found its way into the clinical setting as a psychotherapeutic tool for healing trauma, eating disorders and addictions.

Dancing, in essence, is for everyone. "Dance is a human right, a feature of almost every culture in the world, and our natural inclination to dance is one of the things that makes us human," says David Leventhal, program director of Dance for PD, a nonprofit Parkinson's Disease program of the Mark Morris Dance Group, in Brooklyn.

Valerie Durham, a modern dancer in Baltimore specializing in the Isadora Duncan technique, concurs, "Birds don't consider if they have talent for singing, they just sing. They sing because they have a voice. Similarly, dance is a right offered to anyone with a body."

A Deterrent for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease and Cancer

Going dancing on a Friday night also proves to nourish the brain. A 2017 study published in *Frontiers of Aging Neuroscience* shows evidence that dance increases white matter that diminishes with cognitive decline. An older study sponsored by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* spotlights data gathered during a 21-year period and reveals that regular social dancing can reduce the risk for dementia in seniors by 76 percent.

"A number of peer-reviewed research studies point to dance's ability to improve motor skills and function of people living with Parkinson's disease—balance, gait and tremor. Dance is expressive, giving people a creative voice when it feels that their capacity for physical, vocal and facial expression is being taken away," says Leventhal.

Durham, who worked with patients at the University of Florida Shands Hospital Arts in Medicine Program in the 1990s, witnessed memorable responses from cancer patients. "We danced with patients who were attached to IVs and those even in the ICU, some who were



Luis Molinero/Shutterstock.com

partially or even completely paralyzed, people who maybe could dance only with their eyes. And yet they danced," marvels Durham. "Getting the lymphatic system, endorphins and breath flowing all elevate the body out of pain mode."

Dancing from the Soul

All forms of dancing have the capability to free the spirit and heal deep emotional wounds buried in the memory-holding fascia of the body's soft tissues. Ecstatic dance, which has roots in ancient spiritual practices, is an unstructured option that dilutes limiting, self-conscious habits. These days, ecstatic dance gatherings have been organized in cities around the world.

"There's a vast movement in the dance world that has nothing to do with performance, but rather, is done for the joy of inhabiting a body in motion. Ecstatic dance is a free-form conscious dance and is a vibrant global community for people who love music and movement," says Donna Carroll, founder of Ecstatic Dance International, in San Francisco. "When we can be courageous enough to turn away from our cultural norms that say you need 'talent' to dance, we get a chance to experience music through our bodies, and it can be quite pleasurable and life-affirming. Ecstatic dance is one of the most effective methods to return to what matters, to our bodies, to our 'home', and is accessible for people of all abilities."

In her artistic sphere of performance art, Durham has seen her students blossom from the inside-out. "They are able to connect with the deep wisdom in their bodies, thereby releasing old energetic wounds. Depression and anxiety are relieved during dance because you are so consciously consumed with the present moment of the steps and the music. Dancers will find that they feel more joyful and at peace at the end of a dance session."

For Leventhal, moving the body is a blessing for all: "Dance should be accessible and enjoyable to everyone, regardless of physical or cognitive challenges." 🎶

Marlaina Donato is an author, composer and painter. Connect at AutumnEmbersMusic.com.

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Cultivating Community and Connection with Yoga

by Sheila Ewers

Since early March when the coronavirus epidemic began to sweep across the country, people everywhere have been forced to adapt to being confined in their homes. We face a unique and unprecedented challenge as we navigate the uncertainty of the future, the instability of finances and the fears of contagion. For yogis, who often rely on *sangha*, or community, for spiritual support and comfort, disconnection from the physical space of a studio can prove particularly difficult.

Nevertheless, the practice of yoga is made for times such as these. The teachings of yoga remind us that even amid great suffering and the fluctuations of external circumstances, we can access tremendous peace and equanimity by direct-

ing our attention inward and connecting to the inner light of awareness.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras identify suffering as an unavoidable aspect of human existence. Here's a passage translated from Sanskrit:

Change, longing, habits, and the activity of the gunas can all cause us suffering. In fact, even the wise suffer, for suffering is everywhere.

~ Yoga Sutra 2.15

The Sanskrit word *dukkham*, used in this passage for "suffering," also translates to "tightness" or "constriction in the chest." The way to navigate and

soothe this constriction, the text suggests, is through commitment to the practices that purify perceptions and connect us to the inner Self—practices such as *asana*, *pranayama* and meditation. We can't change the reality of difficulty, loss, isolation or uncertainty, and we can't change that those things may cause mental, physical and emotional pain. But over time, we can change our responses to the difficulties that emerge. According to the Sutras, when the fluctuations of the mind settle as a result of practice:

Then, the inner conscious is revealed, we come to know the true Self, and our obstacles are reduced.

~ Yoga Sutra 1.29

Whether you have been practicing yoga for many years or are interested in exploring it for the first time, our current circumstances present a powerful opportunity to lean deeply into the tools that yoga offers to establish equanimity. Studio owners throughout Atlanta understand this and have called upon their own flexibility, adaptability and inner resolve to support their communities even while they cannot share physical space. We connected with some of them to discuss what they are doing to support their teachers and students.

Octavia Raheem co-owns Sacred Chill West, located in the Upper Westside, with Meryl Arnett; Lauren Reese co-owns breatheYoga Atlanta, located in Cumming, with her mother Peggy Smith; and Mandy Roberts is the owner of FORM{yoga}, located in Decatur.

Each of you had to close your studio in order to keep your community safe in these challenging times. How are you maintaining contact with your teachers and students? Are you offering online classes?

Octavia Raheem: Throughout our decision-making process we kept coming back to who we are, Sacred Chill. This moment asked us to dig deep and honor what is truly sacred, our interconnectedness and collective well-being. So, we closed on March 13. We communicate with our teachers at least twice a week. We messaged every member immediately. We had been working on a pre-recorded Sacred Chill {At home} studio, so we continued to work on that. We thought it was important to offer our community something that was steady, anchored, unrushed and something we didn't scramble to produce. We moved intentionally, steadily and with many deep breaths as we pivoted. Anyone who wants to join us can access our online studio at SacredChillWest.com/Sacred-Chill-at-Home/.

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Lauren Reese: To stay connected to my teachers we have a couple of different *sanghas*. We use GroupMe and a private Facebook group. We have had some team meetings over Zoom to maintain a sense of community, and we've also created a private breatheYOGA member Facebook group to maintain a sense of community for our students. We post positive quotes, recipes and encourage community via this group. We are offering live and recorded classes for members only, and we created an "online-only membership" package for our class package people. We have at least two live streams a day and over 35 classes in our on-demand class library, all of which can be found by visiting www.breatheyogaatlanta.com and following the link on our home page.

Mandy Roberts: I made a very difficult decision to close FORM{yoga} on March 15, ahead of any government orders in our area. Community has always been incredibly important to me, and the health and safety of our community is paramount. As a very active and visible studio owner,

my community looks to me to make these tough decisions. That is not always easy to do, especially when you know that economic challenges are ahead. My main priority at this time was to make sure that our studio teachers received clear and concise guidance and communication from me. Yoga teachers are the backbones of our studios, and I wanted to do everything I could to continue to support them, pay them a wage to teach and also to honor those that choose to not teach and stay at home with their families. To help combat the economic downfall and to give our teachers the opportunity to earn money, I created an online platform of pre-recorded classes for our students to access. In addition, we have played with a few live classes that encourage community participation. These offerings have been incredibly well-received and very much appreciated by the community. Currently we have recorded upwards of 80 offerings and plan to keep adding to the library of classes after we reopen as a perk to our members. You can find a link to our online studio at FormYoga.com.



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**What yoga “tools” are helping you to navigate this new frontier?
What practices are helping you to continue your work?**

Raheem: My practice has been anchored in yoga nidra, meditation, restorative, and yin for years. I am deeply feeling the benefits of having practiced “chill” yoga for years: yoga that demands stillness, presence, willingness to sit in discomfort, feel to heal, ultimately move through versus around inner obstacles, while also toning the nervous system. My physical practice is free movement, dancing, shaking, and some structured movement that looks like what many call “yoga.” The practice that is holding me steady in this moment is yoga nidra, prayer, and journaling.

Reese: My personal meditation practice has been crucial to keeping me grounded and focused.

Roberts: I have not had much time for a physical practice since all of this began, however the best tool to keep me grounded has simply been my breath. When I start to feel ungrounded or reactive, I close my eyes, take a few deep breaths and become connected to sensations in my body. This allows me to honor all the emotions that I am experiencing yet stay centered and focused on moving through.

How do you think this chapter in time will affect the broader yoga community when “normal” life resumes?

Raheem: The infinite and inherent value in our yoga practice is being revealed in a way that it never has been. People are accessing yoga from their homes. People are beginning to practice and are finding their way. People will no longer be so concerned about what shape they can make with their bodies. They will know that yoga is so much more than what the body can perform or do. Some studios will make it. Some studios will not. Yet, when we emerge, there will be more of us on the path and on our individual paths toward liberation, truth and freedom via yoga. Our community is stronger than this moment. We will rise.

Reese: I think this experience will make us all stronger. I am excited to finally have an online library option for my students who travel for work and want to take their regular yoga practice on the road. I feel so proud of the human connections we are making even through difficult circumstances. Henry Kissinger said, “a diamond is a chunk of coal that did well under pressure.” I believe that right now we are all feeling that pressure, but through our connected community, we will shine bright like a diamond on the other end of this.

Roberts: I think it’s tough to say what the yoga community will tangibly look like on the other side of the pandemic. I do believe that we have a great opportunity to connect more deeply with each other moving forward. Sometimes it takes a poignant experience to awaken us to what is truly important. 🙏



Founder of Johns Creek Yoga and Duluth Yoga Center, Sheila Ewers leads daily yoga classes and yoga teacher training classes and hosts retreats locally and internationally. She has been published in several online magazines, including Elephant Journal and Writers Resist. Reach Sheila at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.

I find hope in the darkest of days and focus in the brightest. I do not judge the universe.
~Dalai Lama

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Urban Shamanism

Connecting to Your Inner Power Amid Everyday Challenges

by Erin Newman

As a rule, people think of shamanism as an esoteric topic, one that doesn't pertain to the everyday world of jobs, chores, child-raising and commutes. Yet while exploring shamanic realms can be quite mystical and magical, the shamanic path is a practical one: it is intended to get results and offer answers and healing for real-world concerns.

Early shamans were expected to be able to find game, locate fresh water or heal injuries—very real matters of life and death. Yet even though the concerns of modern American life are quite different—how to stay healthy, pay the bills, expand a business, find a calling or lose an extra 10 pounds—shamanism can be a powerful tool to discover solutions and receive healing.

Research supports the effectiveness of shamanic practice for healing body and mind. A 2012 study in *The Permanente Journal* showed that pain could be reduced with the help of shamanic work, and a report by the *American Journal of Public Health* demonstrated that shamanic methods can be beneficial to improve psychological outcomes.

Direct Revelation

In order to facilitate healing, shamans undertake a shamanic journey, a process of entering into an altered trance state in order to connect with guides, helping spirits and beings from other realms in order for healing to occur.

Marcia Eliade, one of the first Western anthropologists to respect the practices of indigenous shamanic peoples and to introduce them to the Western world, described shamanism as a process of direct revelation but pointed out that one doesn't have to be a shaman to receive valuable insights and guidance for one's life. Such benefits are possible for those who feel called to experience the magic of a journey for themselves and to participate fully in their healing.

The shamanic journeyer begins by drumming or listening to drumming in a frequency range of 4-7Hz in order to enter into a slightly altered trance state. Drumming can be beneficial in lowering stress markers and in fighting addiction, according to a study in the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine, among others. Within the

altered trance state of a shamanic journey, one can access power animals, guides and allies in non-ordinary reality. An open mind and an ability to let go of the need to know whether the journey is "real" or not are necessary to experience a beneficial shamanic journey.

A shamanic practitioner can also undertake a journey on a client's behalf in order to help heal the parts of the soul that most need healing. The healing process might include a soul retrieval, a power animal retrieval, the unraveling of a curse, or other healing methods to facilitate the healing.

Some of the most common concerns that can be answered with shamanic healing and journeying include:

- How can I have a better relationship with my partner/child/coworker?
- How can I lose weight?
- How can I make more money in my business?
- How can I be less angry?
- How can I be less sad?
- What am I supposed to do in this situation?
- What am I not seeing here?

Beginning the Journey

To experiment with shamanic practices at home, start by finding a shamanic drumming track. Look for a steady, monotonous drumbeat at 4 to 4.5 seconds per minute. After becoming sufficiently relaxed, ask to connect with your Higher Self, using whatever wording suits you. Listen to what it has to say. Ask it how to be more connected and in partnership. Once a partnership has been established, simply ask for help and guidance around your question. Ask open-ended questions, questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." And then allow your Higher Self to share the next steps for your unique shamanic path. ✨



Erin Newman is a money mindset and authentic courage coach for entrepreneurs. Using EFT tapping and ancient healing modalities, she helps business owners move through blocks and create the income they desire. For more information: ErinNewman.com and social media.

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Energy Healing

Now More Than Ever

by Paul Chen

In our April 2019 issue, we published a 12-page special section on energy healing—an enduring and effective practice that continues to grow in its appeal and reach to help improve both emotional and physical health. As today's coronavirus pandemic is adding to the stress load of many Americans—indeed, stress levels are reportedly higher now than during the Great Recession—we decided to revisit the topic.

On March 27, *Newsweek* reported an *ABC News/Washington Post* survey finding that 70 percent of people are experiencing stress as a result of the coronavirus outbreak as compared to the peak of 61 percent during the Great Recession in 2009.

Then, on April 15, the magazine reported that Express Scripts, an American pharmacy benefit management company, "suggested that the use of mental health medications in the U.S. had shot up significantly since the pandemic began, with an over-34 percent increase in people filling prescriptions for anti-anxiety drugs."

There are many ways to reduce stress in life, and energy healing is a very effective, non-pharmaceutical one.

Why does energy healing work? A wide range of energy healing modalities work because, as quantum physics proves, everything is energy. Lynne McTaggart, an award-winning journalist and author of *The Field*, explains it this way: "Ev-

erything is connected by the Zero Point Field (ZPF), a sea of energy that reconciles mind with matter, classic science with quantum physics, and science with religion."

Emotions, positive and negative, are nothing but energy, which makes them amenable to energy healing. Moreover, not only are all of our physical bodily components—flesh, organs, bones, ligaments, etc.—also energetic in nature, they are all tied to specific chakras and meridian points.

Today's conventional wisdom states that stress can contribute to the development of physical ailments. In fact, negative emotions can be mapped to particular physical conditions. "For example," says Shannon O'Flaherty, a shamanic practitioner and spiritual counselor based in England, "someone with constant bladder infections or kidney problems may be very angry." Thus, energy healers who work on a client to improve their emotional health

can also positively impact the health of their physical body.

From our reporting last year, *Natural Awakenings* discovered that the number one reason people seek out energy healing is for longstanding and/or overwhelming emotional issues such as resentment, grief and anger. Similarly, anxiety and depression—earning a category all their own—constitute another top reason people pursue energy healing treatment. The seventh most common motivator for people to seek out energy healing is for spiritual development. While not strictly emotional in nature, one's religious and spiritual beliefs serve to help them make sense of the world around them, and in this time of coronavirus, it is certain that many people's spiritual beliefs are being challenged.

Remote Healing

While energy healing has proven itself effective, can healing occur even without being physically present with the healer? Since most energy healers are forced to work remotely these days, this is a relevant concern.

In fact, there is plenty of evidence of efficacy. In her 2007 book, *The Intention Experiment*, McTaggart states that "a large body of evidence exists about the positive effects of distant healing—perhaps 150 studies in all."

Further, in a February 2014 blog post, McTaggart described a University of Arizona double-blind study on distance healing of cardiac patients. In the study conducted by psychologist Gary Schwartz, subjects were not told whether they were receiving remote healing or not. After three days of healing, "in both the treatment and control groups, certain patients strongly believed that they had received the treatment and others had a strong feeling they'd been excluded. When Schwartz tabulated the results, he discovered the best outcomes were among

Continued, Page 28

Energy Healing, continued

those who had received Johrei (an energy healing technique) and believed they had received it. The worse outcomes were those who had not received Johrei and were convinced they had not had it.”

Moreover, many energy healers believe that remote energy healing can be more powerful than in-person sessions. “Distance healing can often be more effective because people’s egos are out of the way,” explains O’Flaherty. Similarly, Atlanta-based energy healer Tammy Bil-lups senses that more clients fall asleep during remote sessions than they do in person, possibly because they “feel more comfortable being in their beds.” She finds that when clients fall asleep, sessions are more productive because the subject’s mind is less resistant.

Why does remote energy healing work? It’s the nature of quantum reality; it transcends space and time. Since everything is connected to the Zero Point Field, as McTaggart claims, healers can instantaneously connect to someone’s energy field. Energy healing is quantum in nature, not chemical, and that explains why healing can occur much, much faster. Chemical changes take time; quantum changes do not. Spontaneous remission has its label precisely because it is spontaneous. ❧



For more about energy healing, see our 12-page Special Section on the topic from our issue of April 2019 at: naatlanta.vision/energy-healing-0419

We look forward to hearing about your experiences with energy healing and to your feedback about this special section! Share with us at editor@naatlanta.com.



FLOWER WOW-ER Beautiful Floral Designing

by April Thompson

Fresh-cut flowers can elevate a space with color, scents and textures that draw the eye and nose, but professional floral designs can be pricey. DIY arranging, however, is an

easy, fun and inexpensive creative outlet that can also help cultivate mindfulness. Flower arranging is more than just a decorative art; it’s a spiritual activity that helps create a kinship with nature and merge the indoors and outdoors.

Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging, dates back to the seventh century, when floral offerings were made at Buddhist altars, according to Jeanne Ha, owner of the Washington Flower School, in Takoma Park, Maryland. In the 16th century, Japanese samurais practiced flower arranging prior to combat to help calm them and stay centered, a stress-reducing activity most of us can benefit from today. “Seasonal flowers are an important element of Ikebana,” says Ha, part of a longstanding Japanese tradition of appreciating plants and flowers throughout the four seasons.

The good news is you can’t mess up flowers.
—Kathy Jentz

Finding a Floral Style

As with any artistic medium, creative choices are important in floral arranging. We can opt for a fussy, formal

style, a rustic farmhouse look or a modern, asymmetrical design. “The good news is you can’t mess up flowers. Whether multi-dimensional or one-sided, monochromatic or multicolored, you really can’t go wrong,” says Kathy Jentz, publisher of *Washington Gardener Magazine* and a flower arranging instructor in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Like a good meal, the ingredients of a bouquet are as important as how they are assembled. Start with organic, pesticide-free buds. “Look for local, seasonal flowers, which will be fresher and last longer than those flown in,” says Betty Ann Galway, a certified floral designer and instructor at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, in Virginia. Farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture CSAs and pick-your-own farms are all great places to find locally, sustainably grown flowers, according to Jentz. To

select for long shelf life, look for fresh-looking stamens and foliage, and firm heads on flowers. Mums, carnations and asters will last up to three weeks, says Galway.

When selecting flowers, Ami Wilber, floral and event décor designer at the Washington, D.C., Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, recommends starting with a color scheme, whether limiting the palette to one or two colors, using analogous colors like pinks and purples or selecting complementary colors like blues and oranges. “It’s also good to find a focal flower or a show-stopper that will immediately draw attention to a bouquet,” says Wilber.

Prepping the flowers before arranging will also prolong an arrangement’s longevity, including cutting stems diagonally to provide more surface area for water, suggests Jentz. She also recommends plunging flowers into cool water immediately after trimming their stems. Leaves pump water up the stem, so leave a few on while clearing those from the bottom that would otherwise be submerged in water, adds Galway.

There are many ways to create structure for an arrangement, most of which is often hidden. Wilber stuffs chicken wire into an opaque container and then tapes down the top with a grid of floral tape to provide more control over the direction of the stems. Ha uses floral foam, soaked to provide hydra-

tion, into which stems can be inserted at any angle to create a gravity-defying design.

Different styles of arranging draw from different principles, but many common rules of thumb apply; for example, using odd numbers of each type of flower and adding in the largest flowers first to create an anchor for the composition. For a rustic, farm-to-table bouquet, look beyond just blooms to incorporate seed pods, grasses and other foliage from the backyard or woods, says Wilber. These will not only fill in gaps left by thin-stemmed flowers, but also help create contrast in texture, she adds, recommending that 70 percent of the container be green.

Once the design is complete, fine-tune the arrangement by stepping back to see the big-picture look and making any adjustments, removing discolored leaves and adding greenery to any bald spots, says Wilber. Many designers wrap large, flat leaves around the inside of a container for a clean, polished look that hides the stems.

Most importantly, don’t forget to stop and smell the lilacs. Let the flowers lead the design and let go of any unattainable vision of perfection. “Appreciating the flowers and being thankful is an important part of the process, too,” says Ha. ❧

Connect with Washington, D.C. freelance writer April Thompson at AprilWrites.com.

Flower Arranging Tips From a Pro



A healthy, professional-looking bouquet doesn’t take years of flower designing to achieve; these tricks of the trade will help neophyte designers get started.

To loosen up tightly wound buds, breathe on them. Hot breath will open buds up faster, says publisher and arranger Kathy Jentz.

An arranging technique Jentz recommends is clustering blossoms between the index finger and thumb of the less-dominant hand, resulting in a tight arrangement that can be held in place by a rubber band pulled up to the tops of the stems.

If working with hydrangeas or other flowers with woody stems, smash open the stems along the length to get more water circulation.

Consider upcycling common containers to make flower vases, Jentz says. “You can create recycled vases out of old jars and bottles, or use chalk paint to colorfully cover over a tin can.”

The secret sauce in flower food is simply sugar and citric acid, says Jentz, so a little lemonade mix added to the water of an arrangement will work fine in a pinch.

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FRIDAY, MAY 1

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SATURDAY, MAY 2

Meditation 101: Learn to Meditate – 10am-12pm. Learn a variety of meditation skills to develop and maintain inner strength and happiness. With Gen Kelsang Norden. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

SUNDAY, MAY 3

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Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, dharma discussion. Via Zoom. To watch: RedClaySangha.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 10am. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

One World Spiritual Center Sunday Service – 11am. To watch: OneWorldSpiritualCenter.net.

Shamanic Journey – 11am. 1st Sun. A virtual healing experience brought to you by Heron House via Zoom. Free; donations accepted. To register: Tinyurl.com/yctrp49j.

Sunday Morning Talks and Discussion – 11am-12pm. With Vedanta Center of Atlanta via Zoom. To watch: VedantaAtlanta.org.

Unity North Online Sunday Service – 11:15am. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

mondays

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7:30-8:45pm. Learn how to integrate Buddhist teachings and meditation into daily life so that you can apply a peaceful mind, wisdom and a good heart in every situation. With Gen Kelsang Norden. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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Heart Jewel Chanted Prayers and Meditation – Mon-Fri, 8-9am. Chanted Buddhist prayers and meditation. Free. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience – 7pm. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

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thursdays

Twin Hearts Meditation – 7pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. With Atlanta Pranic Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranicHealing.com.

fridays

Prayers for World Peace – 6:30-7:15pm. An opportunity both to simply pray for world peace and to be a part of the solution. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching and chanted prayers for world peace. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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~Confucius

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Jonathan Safran Foer on Conscious Eating to Save the Planet

by Julie Peterson



Jonathan Safran Foer, the prize-winning author of bestselling novels that include *Everything is Illuminated* and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, turned to nonfiction in his 2009 book, *Eating Animals*, about the morality of food choices in a factory-farm age. His most recent book, *We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast*, argues that only collective action will save our home and way of life, and it starts with what is on our plate.

He points out that there's often a painful disconnect between the way we think of ourselves and the actions that we take that inadvertently and negatively affect the planet, and that science can help us make more informed choices.

How did you make the connection between diet and climate change?

For anybody who has even the tiniest amount of curiosity about human interaction with the climate, it's something you can't possibly avoid learning about. The science is readily available now, and it's extremely comprehensive. It's important to continuously come back to that scientific consensus to make clear that this is no

body's theory or perspective. Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists agree.

Did anything in researching climate science surprise you?

There's a lot that startled me. A lot that scared me. I was surprised by how wrong we have been and how wrong we often are about what matters... putting the emphasis in the wrong places or not knowing where to put it at all.

There are four activities that matter more than all others in terms of an individual's relationship with the environment: having fewer children, eating less meat or animal products, flying less and driving less. As somebody who has spent a lot of time recycling and not using plastic straws, I was surprised to learn that those activities are very low impact compared to the four I mentioned. I was surprised by how broad that misunderstanding is. Think about our response to coronavirus compared to our response to climate change. The way governments are acting together to do what needs to be done for a virus makes it all the more puzzling how ineffectual the response to climate change is.

If people can't do everything that needs to be done, what small steps can they take that will have a collective impact?

We all need to question what our own limits are, what we can do and then do that with rigor. We don't need to stop flying, we just need to do it a lot less. I wouldn't encourage anyone to suddenly become vegan. I think a better idea is to eat as few animal products as possible, and if that amount is zero, great. If it's once a week or once a day, then that's a hell of a lot better than doing nothing. Rather than measuring the distance from some ethical perfection, we want to measure the distance from doing nothing at all.

Why is it such a struggle for people to follow through on climate change goals?

I think that if we approach change as if it isn't difficult, then we diminish our chances of being able to sustain change. A lot of the things we need to give up are fun. It's a shame we can't solve climate change by not eating broccoli; we would have done it already.

Climate change requires a different sort of moral imagination because, realistically, you and I aren't going to die because of it. Human nature makes it more difficult to have an energetic response for something less immediate.

What call to action would you like to convey?

We have a feeling of helplessness, a feeling that there's nothing we can do, but there is a lot that we can do and must do. The easiest and most powerful way to begin is with what we eat. That doesn't mean you become vegan tomorrow, but tomorrow is a wonderful time to start eating fewer animal products. It's a journey, not an event. 🌱

Julie Peterson writes about health and the environment. Connect at JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com.

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