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Conquering
CHRONIC PAIN

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with Wild
Mushrooms**

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WELLNESS**

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– *In The Light of Truth*



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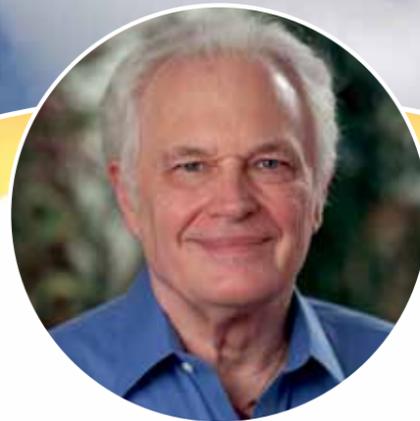


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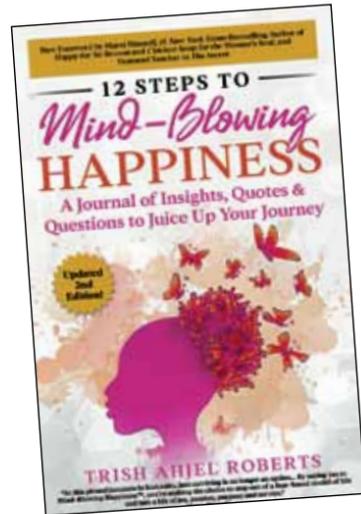
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Trish Ahjel Roberts is a sought-after happiness expert, self-actualization coach and inspirational speaker. She is the founder of Mind-Blowing Happiness LLC and Black Vegan Life™. She is committed to teaching the 12 Steps to Mind-Blowing Happiness™ to 12 million people over the course of 12 years. Take the pledge for a juicier life's journey and join the movement at TrishAhjelRoberts.com.

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DID YOU MISS THESE?

Our publisher picks some of the best reads from the first half of 2021.



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Email Calendar Events to: calendar@naAtlanta.com. Deadline for calendar: the 10th of the month.

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Advertise in multiple markets! *Natural Awakenings* is a growing family of locally owned magazines serving communities since 1994. To place an ad in other markets call 239-434-9392.

COVER PHOTO CREDIT



The cover photograph of Highland Yoga's Elsie Brotherton and Peachtree Yoga's Graham Fowler was taken by Thu Tran of 2TPhoto. She also took their headshots that are included in the respective articles about them.

Photography fuels Tran, an Atlanta-based yoga, family and destination wedding photographer. She loves to feel the energy of what she sees and make it radiate through her lens. She feels the most alive when she is behind the camera, outdoors, traveling and with her family.

Tran previously shot our July 2021 cover of Elohee Center and has contributed photos for our yoga section on numerous occasions. Thank you, Thu!

For more information: 2tPhoto.com.

CORRECTIONS: In the sidebar of the August article on Bill Fleming, the musician Randall Bramblett's name was misspelled.

In our "Yoga for the Youngest Generation" article in the August issue, some sentences were inadvertently rearranged. Please see full, corrected article online at bit.ly/3xy7AWr

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

CORONAVIRUS WAVE #752

Just a few months ago, our near future looked bright. The light at the end of the tunnel was strong, restaurants were opening, and I attended my first indoor show since February 2020.

Turns out the light was just the headlamp of the monstrous freight train called the Delta variant. And we felt the impact almost immediately.

Now, our magazine cover photo shoots are usually fun events. Subjects relish the opportunity and attention offered them; managing editor Diane Eaton and I always enjoy meeting our cover subjects and placing them in the very best light; our photographers are always gracious and professional.

But this issue's shoot was pummeled repeatedly by the Delta variant.

We were planning to have three people on the cover this month. One candidate fell through just as we were finalizing the schedule. The person we'd tapped to replace her was not vaccinated and sent regrets. Finally, we arranged for a third person to fill that spot, so we rescheduled the shoot—itsself, some undertaking—to accommodate her.

And then, two days before the shoot, she told us she tested positive for COVID. Holding out hope, she tested again. Positive again.

So, we proceeded with only two of our three intended cover subjects.

But more than the shoot was negatively impacted. One of our cover subjects, Elsie Brotherton, owner of several studios under the Highland Yoga brand, had been the object of a wave of anti-vax sentiment.

After surveying practitioners at each studio, and in accordance with the wishes of

each studio's audience, she issued a policy requiring proof of vaccination at two studios, required it at some classes at the third studio, and made no proclamation about it pertaining to the fourth.

When some students that attended that studio heard about the proof of vaccination requirement at two of the other locations, they decided to quit "on principle." After 19 months of navigating the pandemic and after coming close to quitting, the accumulated anxiety and trauma of dealing with the virus every single day began to manifest upon Elsie's countenance.

But the Delta variant still wasn't done messing with us.

Last night, I received word from an event that we are sponsoring, the Get Off the Grid Fest in Chattanooga, Tennessee. "We're moving forward with the festival," said the email, "but it will primarily be a non-public event. We'll honor current ticket purchases. But ticket sales will be cut off tonight."

With one decision, festival management cut their anticipated attendance in half, which translates into tens of thousands of dollars of lost revenue. I can only imagine how difficult the decision was to make. Not only will they lose revenue, many sponsors and vendors will have sunk resources into the event.

There's more. This morning, I received a voice message from a customer to whom I had given a booth at the festival. She had received a similar email from festival management. It sealed her decision to pull out. She had been wavering because a friend's funeral was scheduled during the festival; COVID-19 had taken his life.

A few minutes later, another customer

called to tell me he was with his brother, who was lying on his deathbed, yet another victim of the deadly pandemic.

I have many emotions when it comes to the coronavirus—most of them negative, of course—and that is the issue. The spiritual challenge in any situation is to find acceptance, to have a peaceful and happy mind regardless of circumstance. While some of us believe our minds create our realities, the parallel perspective seems more difficult to believe: that our collective minds create our collective realities.

I was reminded about this in a very stark and direct way while listening to the audiobook of *Christ Returns, Speaks His Truth: The Christ Letters*. "Realize your own strong conscious impulses, our life impulses; they are highly creative electromagnetic impulses. When they are of a violent, aggressive, murderous nature, they emit electrical particles of virulent, violent, aggressive, murderous consciousness, which take form as virulent viruses in the air... What is born and nurtured in the diseased mind eventually takes on form in the physical world."

The Law of Attraction is that: A law. We create what we think about and feel. It's up to us, individually and collectively, to think and feel in ways that benefit ourselves... And others.

It's time to get aboard a different train 🚂



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.

NATURAL MYSTIC FAIR SEPTEMBER 10-12

The seventh annual Natural Mystic Fair, produced by I Am Ascension Temple in Atlanta's West End, will be held September 10 through 12. This year's theme is "Divine Madness: Exploring Spirituality, Mental Health, and Wellbeing in our Community."

The event features speakers and entertainment and a variety of vendors, including healers, metaphysical practitioners and vegan food vendors. Admission is free.

"When we are finally at a place where we are constantly healthy on all levels, mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically, then we are whole integral beings," says Tassili Ma'at, founder of I Am Ascension Temple. "We have the potential to be masters of our destiny, meaning we've not only figured it out, we are consciously choosing to align with the natural purity at all times."

The event's speakers include Toni Jones, LPC, who will speak about self-love and transforming negative energy into positive energy; Steffanie Haggins, who will discuss working with mentally challenged adults; and Ma'at, who will discuss the journey within and how to tap into the inner self.

Friday's activities take place at Cascade Nature Preserve at 2852 Cascade Road SW in Atlanta from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday's and Sunday's events will take place in the backyard of Tassili's Raw Reality Café at 1059 Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard SW in Atlanta. Saturday hours are 1 to 8 p.m., and Sunday hours are 2 to 8 p.m.

For more information: TassilsRawReality.com. Disclosure: Natural Awakenings is a sponsor of the Natural Mystic Fair.



Tassili Maat and Herb Alkymest (Photo: Sacred Secret)

HYBRID COLLARD GREENS FESTIVAL September 25-26

The 12th annual Collard Greens Festival will take place virtually and in-person in Stonecrest on September 25 and 26.

"The primary mission of the festival is to promote family/community unity, healthy food and lifestyles and celebrate the rich cultural heritage and traditions of African Americans," says Dr. Nobantu Ankoanda, founder and producer of the festival.

The virtual portion of the festival will be available on Saturday from 12 noon to 11 p.m. The Sustainability Pavilion will host talks and demonstrations on organic gardening, solar cooking and how to deal with GMO foods. Raina Turner, co-founder of the Black Sustainability Summit, will be a featured speaker.



There will also be youth activities and music. Virtual programming will occur sequentially so interested attendees need not miss anything.

The in-person portion of the festival will take place on Sunday from 3 to 8 p.m. at First African Church, 5197 Salem Road in Stonecrest. It will include the King and Queen Collard Greens

Cook-Off and food order pick-up. Attendees will be able to sample cooking from competing chefs and vote for their favorites. The first prize winner takes home \$500.

Among food items offered for purchase and pick-up is the festival's signature offering, collard greens ice cream, which Ankoanda describes as "the healthiest frozen dessert on the planet!"

Live music will be featured, and more vendors are being added.

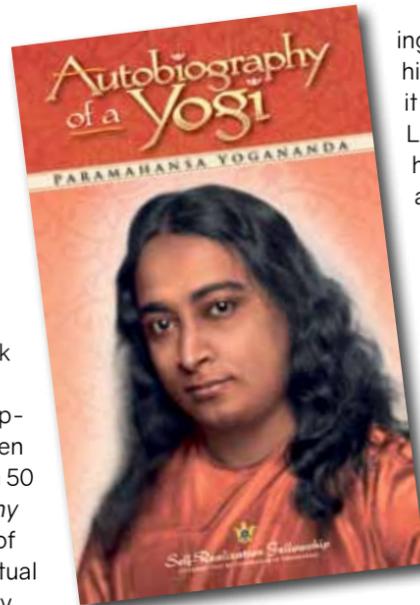
For more information, visit CollardGreenCulturalFestival.com

Deluxe Edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi* Coming in October

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. To celebrate, the Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF), the spiritual organization founded by Yogananda, will issue a deluxe edition of the book in October.

With several million copies in print and having been translated into more than 50 languages, *Autobiography* made HarperCollins' list of 100 Most Important Spiritual Books of the 20th Century.

In the book, Yogananda, who is widely recognized as playing a major, if not the primary role in introducing the science of yoga to the West, writes of his search for a guru, his 10 years of train-



ing with his master, and his 30 years in America; it was on a stretch of a Los Angeles beach that he founded SRF. He also shares many stories of his encounters with spiritual masters, including Mahatma Gandhi and the Catholic stigmatic Therese Neumann.

Says Lauren Landress, SRF's director of public affairs, "The book also provides clear, scientific explanation of the subtle but definite laws by which yogis perform miracles and attain self-mastery."

According to Walter Isaacson's biography of Apple's co-founder Steve Jobs, Jobs first read *Autobiography* as a teenag-

er and later would re-read the book every year. *Autobiography* was given to everyone who attended Jobs' memorial service.

Also, famously, the four gurus of kriya yoga, including Yogananda, are featured on the cover of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

For more information: www.yogananda.org.



Paramahansa Yogananda, 1938

Drs. Joe Esposito and L. Ray Matthews to Speak at ALIVE! EXPO

Atlanta's Dr. Joe Esposito will speak at Alive! Expo about "Learning the 7 Deadly Sins of Nutrition" on September 18 at 1 p.m.

Esposito, a chiropractor holding certifications in clinical nutrition, pain management and traumatic brain injuries, runs Health Plus Wellness Center, which has four offices in the Atlanta area. He hosts the Dr. Joe Show radio show and podcast and is the author of two books: *Eating Right for the Health of It* and *Prescription for Extreme Health*.

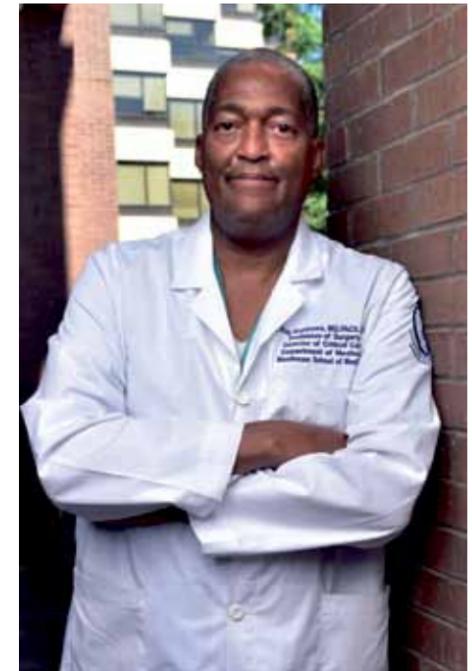
Dr. Leslie Ray Matthews, a full-time faculty member at the Morehouse School of Medicine, will also speak at Alive! Expo on September 19 at 2 p.m. A recognized vitamin D expert, Matthews will talk about the positive effects of vitamin D therapy on critically ill patients. Prior to his appointment to Morehouse, Matthews served as a faculty member at the Mayo Clinic.

The Alive! Expo, Atlanta's largest consumer show focused on natural products and green living, will be held September 18 and 19 in Hall A at the Cobb Galleria Centre, Two Galleria Parkway, Atlanta. Doors will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on September 18 and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. September 19.

Readers of this magazine, which is an event sponsor, can receive a free ticket by subscribing to our email list. To request a ticket, go to bit.ly/alive-expo-tix.



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and descriptive language for 10 to 30 minutes, and then promptly tearing it up. Neurological research shows that this simple practice rewires the brain. "Some people experience remarkable pain relief right away," he says.

■ Practicing "active meditation" throughout the day by mindfully focusing each time on a sight, sound or sensation for five to 10 seconds.

For deep, sustained healing, he stresses the importance of forgiveness, gratitude, self-discovery, exploring a spiritual path, relearning playfulness and connecting with others. Medication may be necessary initially, he says, and as pain levels recede, most people become ready to improve their diet and exercise more.

Understanding the mind/body connection is key in pain management, concurs gastroenterologist David D. Clarke, M.D., author of *They Can't Find Anything Wrong!* and president of the Portland, Oregon-based Psychophysiological Disorders Association. "When medical evaluation shows no problems with organs or structures, then the pain is being generated by the brain, similar to what happens in phantom limb pain, where people feel pain in the location of an amputated arm or leg," he says.

"Chronic pain generated by the brain generally occurs due to stress, an emotional/psychological trauma or strong negative emotions (often toward people the patient cares about) that are not fully recognized. Often, these issues began due to adverse childhood experiences, which can be anything you would not want a child of your own to endure. I recommend people explore these possibilities on their own, with a loved one or with a therapist."

That process might sound daunting, but so is suffering crippling pain. "The most important thing for people to know is that pain can be successfully treated, relieved and often cured with the right techniques," says Clarke. 🌱

Health writer Ronica O'Hara can be reached at OHaraRonica@gmail.com.

PROMISING PAIN RELIEF THERAPIES

In the offices of holistic practitioners and in some medical centers, a wide range of integrative modalities to treat chronic pain are healing the afflicted. Some commonly used options, which can be part of a multipronged approach or effective individually, include:

■ **CBD.** Studies show this cannabis-derived substance, the non-mind-altering form of marijuana, acts on multiple pain targets in the central and peripheral nervous systems. It has demonstrated pain-relieving effects for neuropathy, some cancers, arthritis and irritable bowel disease, among other conditions. A University of Michigan study of 878 people with fibromyalgia that had used cannabidiol (CBD) products found that more than 70 percent had substituted it for opioids or other pain medications, with many stopping them altogether as a result. With research mounting, almost every state now allows CBD use in some form.

■ **TURMERIC/CURCUMIN.** The Indian spice that makes curry yellow has potent anti-inflammatory properties, especially in formulations that combine it with piperine (black pepper) to enhance bioavailability. A meta-analysis in Oxford Pain Medicine of eight randomized controlled trials of curcumin involving 800 patients with muscle pain, osteoarthritis or postoperative pain found that it effectively lowered pain levels without adverse reactions, outperforming nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and paracetamol (ibuprofen) for knee osteoarthritis pain.

■ **HYPNOSIS.** By lowering the fear and anxiety that aggravate pain sensations, hypnosis reduces pain as effectively as many other approaches at a relatively low cost. A meta-analysis of 18 studies found that 75 percent of people, including those with both acute and chronic pain, received substantial relief from hypnotic techniques without side effects. In a University of Washington study, patients kept practicing self-hypnosis after completing the study even if it had not relieved their pain, saying it gave them better sleep, lower stress and a greater sense of calm and well-being. Hypnotherapy treatment usually involves four to 10 sessions and is often covered in full or in part by insurance companies or Medicare.

■ **LOW-DOSE NALTREXONE.** When taken at levels of 50 to 100 milligrams (mg) daily, this medication weans people off opioids and alcohol, but when used at low doses of less than 2 mg, research suggests it can ease the pain of autoimmune and inflammatory conditions like Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis and fibromyalgia. Stanford School of Medicine researchers reported it significantly reduced pain for 32 percent of fibromyalgia patients and also improved mood and life satisfaction, noting, "The medication is widely available, inexpensive, safe and well-tolerated."

Learn More

Direct Your Own Care Journey is a free, online course for healing chronic pain. Designed by David Hanscom, M.D., it includes an experiential app, group sessions, video tutorials and webinars at TheDocJourney.com.

Stress-Disease Information, including videos, a webinar-based course, recent research and a list of practitioners, can be found at ppdassociation.org, the website of the Psychophysiological Disorders Association, founded by stress-disease expert David Clarke, M.D.

American Chronic Pain Association, at theacpa.org, lists treatments, clinical trials, support groups and other resources.

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by Zahra Punjani, DMD

For more than 3000 years, a good night's sleep has been recognized as playing a vital role in human health. Ayurvedic medicine, a scientific approach to health originating in ancient India, counts sleep as one of the three core pillars of life; the other two are energy and food. It cites sleep as essential to physical growth, tissue nourishment and repair, immune system health, fertility, logic, memory and longevity.

During sleep, the body recovers by clearing toxins and reducing stress on a cellular level. When one's sleep is insufficient, the problem is compounded with the physical stress caused by toxin build-up. Lack of sleep can result in increased inflammation and can cause conditions such as neurodegenerative diseases, digestive issues, impaired mental function and emotional imbalances. People who don't get enough sleep also have been found to have increased levels of cortisol and lowered insulin levels, resulting in high blood sugar. Eating behaviors also might change due to increased levels of the hormone responsible for the instinct to eat and lowered levels of the hormone that tells us when it's time to stop eating.

Ayurveda's perspective is that the body is intrinsically related to and regulated by the cycles of nature, and the closer we align our internal clocks with nature's rhythm, the more we can experience a life of balance and health. So, Ayurvedic medicine treats insomnia with structured daily routines and practices. This ultimately

helps the body create a balance that optimizes its energy and hormones.

Every day, according to Ayurveda, our bodies go through a series of energy states, or *doshas*, associated with certain times of the day:

2 a.m. to sunrise: During this time, associated with the airy *vata* dosha, waste is eliminated from the body, allowing you to feel light, refreshed and creative.

Sunrise to 10 a.m.: This period is associated with the earthy *kapha* dosha, and many experience increased inner strength, concentration and stamina. This is the best time to perform physical activity.

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.: This fiery *pitta* period is an ideal time to eat the largest meal for optimal digestion.

2 p.m. to 6 p.m.: During the second *vata* period of the day, the body prepares for rejuvenation. Food and exercise should be mild.

6 p.m. to 10 p.m.: During this *kapha* phase, the body prepares for sleep. It is recommended you don't eat or consume a large meal during this phase, so the body won't use the next period—which is ideal for sleep—to digest instead of to recover.

10 p.m. to 2 a.m.: The energy of the day once again returns to

pitta as the body digests the experiences and emotions of the day. Staying awake into this phase results in catching a “second wind” of energy, making sleep more difficult.

Practices and Restorative Rituals

Ayurveda addresses sleep hygiene with practices and restorative rituals that help to ease the mind and allow the body to recover from the physical, mental and emotional stress of daily life.

If you are experiencing challenges with sleep, try the following practices to help gear your body and mind for rest and recovery.

Evening breathwork: By engaging the diaphragm in slow and deep breaths, the vagus nerve and the parasympathetic nervous system are activated, creating a sense of calm and relaxation in the body. When beginning this practice, try to close your eyes and take in deep, intentional breaths, followed by slow breaths out at a pace that feels comfortable to you.

Abhyanga massage: This Ayurvedic ritual uses warm oils to massage the body. A lot of focus is given to the scalp and feet, where our nerves begin and end. This soothing ritual can help you slow down and practice grounding and self-love.

Yoga: *Restorative* yoga is the practice of gently holding poses for longer periods of time to instill a sense of grounding and provide time for self-reflection and calm. *Yoga nidra*, a guided meditation practice that helps people achieve the state of consciousness between waking and sleep, is an excellent way to build awareness and improve overall well-being.

Nasya: This is the practice of administering herbs and oils into the nasal passage. The oils help hydrate the nasal passages to improve cerebral circulation, increase awareness and clarity and balance prana. The oils also counterbalance dryness, which, in Ayurveda, is an ominous sign of inflammatory bodily conditions. The modern version of this practice is to use a neti pot to improve the hydration of the mucous membranes.

Releasing your troubles: Pouring worries and thoughts into a journal before sleep can help you process emotions and events of the day that might be subconsciously eating away at you. Ending with a positive note of gratitude and love can help bring a sense of peace and closure to the day.

Sleep-Disordered Breathing

Breathing through the nose is the ideal way to keep the airways open during sleep since it allows an optimal amount of oxygen to enter the body. When we breathe from our mouths while we sleep, the tongue and other structures in the back part of the throat are pushed even further back and tend to collapse the windpipe, resulting in *sleep-disordered breathing*. While snoring is a typical indication of it, it's common for it to go unnoticed for years. If your airway collapses even slightly during sleep, your body will not get the oxygenated air it needs from time to time, and you will wake up for a few moments—often without even knowing it—to take a large gasp. The interruptions keep you from getting a rejuvenating sleep.



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To combat this pattern, establishing a habit of breathing through the nose during sleep is recommended. Doing so helps keep the airways open and helps reduce infection. It strengthens the nasal passages' mucous membranes, which in turn helps them ward off pathogens. Nasal breathing also activates the production of nitric oxide in the paranasal sinuses, playing a vital role in the body's innate immune system. More than 60% of the nitric oxide produced by the body is in the paranasal sinuses, and it is only activated when breathing from the nose.

Oral health professionals are trained to examine many things related to a patient's bite, including the tooth and jaw structure, tongue position and neck position, all of which can indicate sleep-disordered breathing. We also examine structural anomalies and how they affect the airway to identify those who might be at risk. They use technology to identify common patterns of airway collapse, work with therapists to improve the muscles that hold the airway open and sometimes perform procedures to alleviate pressure on the airway from oral structures.

Getting a good night's sleep is critical to good health; eliminating issues that impede good breathing help make that possible. 🌿



Dr. Zahra Punjani is a family and holistic dentist and an Ayurveda follower. She has a passion for whole-body dentistry and wellness. Reach her at O'Shea Dentistry at 404-373-7818.

AYURVEDIC NIGHTCAP

This classic Ayurvedic tonic is filled with ingredients that can infuse your body with calm energy. It is an ideal addition to a bedtime routine.

1 cup oat milk, almond milk or coconut milk
¼ tsp turmeric
¼ tsp black pepper
¼ tsp cardamom powder
¼ tsp nutmeg powder
½ tsp lavender
1 tsp Ashwagandha
1 date (Optional)

Bring all ingredients to a slow boil. Allow to cool before consuming prior to bedtime.

Copper Stops Germs Before They Spread

Scientists have discovered a natural way to kill germs fast. Now thousands of people are using it against unwanted viruses and bacteria in the nose and on skin.

Germs, such as viruses and bacteria, can multiply fast. When disease germs get in your nose they can spread and cause misery unless you stop them early.

Hundreds of studies in the last 20 years by government and university scientists show that copper, a natural element, kills germs just by touch.

The EPA officially declared copper to be "antimicrobial", meaning it kills microbes, including viruses, bacteria, and fungus.

The National Institutes of Health says, "The antimicrobial activity of copper is now well established."

Copper's power to kill germs has been used for thousands of years. Ancient Greeks and Egyptians used copper to purify water and heal wounds. They didn't know about microbes, but now we do.

Scientists say the high conductance of copper disrupts the electrical balance in a microbe cell by touch and destroys it in seconds.

Some hospitals tried copper for touch surfaces like faucets and doorknobs. They say this cut the spread of MRSA, which is antibiotic resistant, and other

illnesses by over half and saved lives.

The strong scientific evidence gave inventor Doug Cornell an idea. He made a smooth copper probe with a tip to fit in the bottom of his nose.



New device puts copper right where you need it.

The next time he felt a tickle in his nose that felt like a cold about to start, he rubbed the copper gently in his nose for 60 seconds.

"I didn't get sick," he exclaimed.

"Due to regulation we don't make health claims, so I can't say if it is cause and effect."

"That was September 2012," he continued. "I have been using it every time and have not had a single cold since then."

He asked relatives and friends to try it. They reported the same thing, so he patented CopperZap® and put it on the market.

Soon hundreds of people had tried it. The feedback was 99% positive if they used the copper within 3 hours after the first sign of unwanted germs, like a tickle in the nose or a scratchy throat.

Early user Mary Pickrell said, "I can't believe how good my nose feels."

"What a wonderful thing!" exclaimed Physician's Assistant Julie. Another customer asked, "Is it supposed to work that fast?"

Pat McAllister, 70, received one for Christmas and called it "one of the best

presents ever. This little jewel really works."

Frequent flier Karen Gauci had been suffering after crowded flights. Though skeptical, she tried copper on travel days for 2 months. "Sixteen flights and not a sniffle!" she exclaimed.

Businesswoman Rosaleen says when people around her show signs of cold or flu, she uses copper morning and night. "It saved me last holidays," she said. "The kids had crud going round and round, but not me."

Attorney Donna Blight tried copper for her sinus. "I am shocked!" she said. "My head cleared, no more headache, no more congestion."

A man with trouble breathing though his nose at night tried copper just before bed. "Best sleep I've had in years!" he said.

In a lab test, technicians placed 25 million live flu viruses on a CopperZap. No viruses were found surviving soon after.



Dr. Bill Keevil: Copper kills viruses on contact.

Some people press copper on a lip right away if a warning tingle suggests unwanted germs gathering there.

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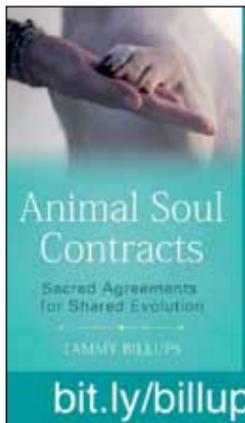
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CONSCIOUS EATING

FORAGED FUNGI FARE

Cooking with Wild Mushrooms

by April Thompson



Wild mushrooms can infuse exciting new flavors and textures into familiar dishes, along with a taste of the local *terroir*, the natural habitat, from woods to plate.

“I first encountered wild mushrooms through local foragers, then later from specialty food purveyors who would fly mushrooms from around the world into our kitchen. They were the most unique ingredients I could find, offering colors, flavors and textures I had never experienced ... pure catnip for a chef,” says Alan Bergo, a Minnesota chef and author of *The Forager Chef’s Book of Flora*. Recipes at *ForagerChef.com* feature more than 60 species of wild edible fungi, from common deer mushrooms to prized porcinis.

The intriguing flavors of wild mushrooms in part come from their diets, akin to the difference between grain- and grass-fed meats. “For fungi, their food is their habitat. Cultivated mushrooms have less variety of the micronutrients and secondary metabolites that can add flavor to a wild mushroom,” says Eugenia Bone, a New York City food journalist and editor of *Fantastic Fungi: The Community Cookbook*.

Foraged fungi also offer a host of nutritional benefits surpassing commercially grown mushrooms. Wild mushrooms like chanterelles and morels can contain up to 1,200 international units (IU) of vitamin D per serving, whereas commercial mushrooms, typically grown in dark conditions, contain less than 40 IU, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

While foraging is the most satisfying way to procure wild mushrooms, they are becoming increasingly available through farmers’ markets, online purveyors and gourmet stores. Some species that grow wild throughout North America such as oysters, maitake (hen of the woods) and lion’s mane are also grown commercially; these can be suitable for transitioning from buying to hunting.

Sam Fitz, owner of ANXO Cidery & Tasting Room, a neighborhood taproom in Washington, D.C., picked up mushrooming when COVID-19 hit, in part mentored by

the restaurant’s wild food purveyor. Fitz started ANXO making hyperlocal ciders from crabapples foraged on bike rides through the nation’s capital, salvaging fruit that otherwise would go to waste. Today, the seasonally focused menu often features wild fungi and other foraged ingredients from savory tartelettes made with beech and hedgehog mushrooms to cocktails made from bitter boletes.

One of ANXO’s signature dishes is a vegan “chicken of the woods” sandwich, served hot, Nashville-style. This orange-colored tree mushroom, also known as sulphur shelf, has a taste, texture and color that so closely resembles chicken that many recipes use it as a meat substitute. “People are so blown away by its meaty texture they can’t believe they are being served mushrooms,” says Fitz.

When preparing mushrooms, “Forget

what you know about cooking vegetables,” says Bone. “Also forget the notion that mushrooms are too delicate to take washing or high heat. Mushrooms are extremely hardy because of the chitin in their cell walls, a compound that is more like fingernails than the cellulose of plants. You can cook mushrooms twice and they will still retain their integrity.”

Because the amino acids in mushrooms respond to heat more like meat than vegetables, Bone suggests searing mushrooms on the grill or under the broiler. “A slice of maitake will cook beautifully on the grill,” she says.

When cooking a particular species for the first time, Bone recommends oven-roasting the mushrooms wrapped in parchment paper. “When you open up the parchment, you can really smell the mushroom. It’s a wonderful way to pick up

subtle flavor differences and see how the mushroom handles,” she says.

Since fungi take on all sorts of shapes and sizes, Bergo suggests letting a mushroom’s morphology inform how to cook it. Lion’s mane, for example, has a texture that mimics crabmeat, so faux crab cakes make a fun dish that honors its form.

“Chefs tend to chop things up, but I prefer to cook many mushrooms whole, especially when they have interesting shapes,” says Bergo. One of the chef’s go-to preparations of oyster mushrooms is to toss large pieces in seasoned flour or brush them with mustard, then bake until crispy. “They turn into cool-looking, crispy croutons you can put on a salad or eat as a snack,” he says. 🍄

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

MUSHROOM DELIGHTS

Wild mushrooms are a culinary delight, but beginning foragers should harvest with caution. The forager’s rule of thumb is to be 100 percent sure of an identification 100 percent of the time given that toxic lookalikes can exist. It’s also important to try a small amount of a mushroom the first time around, as some individuals can respond adversely to a particular species despite its general edibility.

Warm Endive and Oyster Mushroom Salad



- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup minced shallots
- 1 tsp sliced garlic
- 1 to 2 tsp grated ginger
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 oz oyster mushrooms
- 1 Tbsp white or black sesame seeds
- 2 marinated white anchovy fillets, chopped
- 2 Belgian endives, leaves separated and cut into 2-inch sections
- ½ Meyer or regular lemon
- Pinch of kosher salt
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro or flat-leafed parsley for garnish
- 2 whole scallions, chopped diagonally for garnish
- Drizzle of high-quality white truffle oil for garnish (optional)
- Grated Parmigiano cheese for garnish (optional)



In a wide skillet, heat the olive oil over medium high heat. Add the shallots and garlic, and sauté until golden, a few minutes. Stir in the ginger and pepper to taste. Tear the oyster mushrooms into bite-sized pieces and add. Cook for about 5 minutes, flipping the mushrooms over, until they release their liquid. Add the sesame seeds and toast them in a bald spot in the pan for a minute or so.

Turn the heat down to medium, add the anchovies and endives, and cook until the endives wilt, a few more minutes. Take off the heat, add the lemon juice and season with salt.

Garnish with the cilantro and scallions, and optionally, white truffle oil and a sprinkle of the cheese.

Recipe by Annaliese Bischoff from *Fantastic Fungi: The Community Cookbook*, edited by Eugenia Bone.

Hen of the Woods Steaks

YIELD: 1 SERVING PER 4 OUNCES MUSHROOMS

4-oz pieces of hen of the woods (*Grifola frondosa*) mushrooms, broken into large clusters
Kosher salt
Cooking oil as needed, about ¼ cup

Clean the hens by swishing them in cool water, gently peering inside the caps to make sure they are cleaned, trimming with a paring knife as needed, then allowing to drain on paper towels.

Heat the oil in a pan or on a griddle until hot, but not smoking. Add the mushroom clump and season with salt, placing a weight—like a rock, log, crumbly wood or cinder block wrapped in foil or a pan—on top, then cook until the underside is deeply caramelized, then flip and repeat.

If the pan gets dry, add a little more oil. When both sides of the mushrooms are deeply caramelized and browned, serve immediately, with extra finishing salt on the side.

Recipes on this page from Alan Bergo, ForagerChef.com.



akepong/AdobeStock.com

Alan Bergo, ForagerChef.com

Sicilian Chicken of the Woods

Here is a traditional Italian preparation for chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus* or *Laetiporus cincinnatus*), flavored with wild monarda leaves and served with charred bread rubbed with garlic.

YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

1 lb young tender chicken of the woods, sliced ¼- to ½-inch thick

1 large clove garlic

¼ cup mild or extra-virgin olive oil mixed with flavorless oil, like grapeseed (plus 1 or 2 Tbsp extra if the pan threatens to dry out), along with a drizzle at the end

1 large shallot or small yellow onion

1 Tbsp sliced *Monarda fistulosa* (also known as *bee balm* or *wild bergamot*) or fresh mint or oregano

Crushed red pepper flakes or hot chili to taste

1 Tbsp capers or a small handful of *Castelvetro* olives (or other green olives)

2 dried bay leaves

¼ cup dry white wine

¼ cup water or stock

1½ cups seedless tomato puree or tomato sauce

Grilled high-quality bread, preferably slightly charred, for serving

2 whole fresh garlic cloves as needed for rubbing into the bread

Heat the oil in a wide pan with high sides. A cast iron skillet will work, but isn't ideal as the sauce is acidic.

Add the mushrooms and cook until they've given up their moisture, then push them to the side of the pan, add a little extra oil if the pan looks dry, or if the mushrooms were very juicy. Add the garlic to the clean spot of the pan, then arrange the pan off-center on the burner so that the heat is focused on the garlic.

Sweat the garlic in the oil slowly until it's light golden and aromatic, then add the shallots and cook for 1 minute.

Add the crushed red pepper directly to the garlic and shallot, cook for a moment more, then deglaze the pan with the wine, tossing in the bay leaf. Reduce the sauce by one half, then add the tomato puree, water, capers or olives, bergamot or other herbs and cook until the mixture is thickened lightly and the mushrooms are coated with a rich sauce, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, lightly oil the bread and char on a grill. It should have good black spots, but not be ashy. Rub a garlic clove gently into the toasted bread slices, pressing down so that it "melts" into the bread a bit—don't go crazy, a little goes a long way.

Double check the seasoning of the mushrooms for salt and chili, adjust as needed, then serve the stewed mushrooms with the grilled garlic bread on the side. Drizzle some oil over the top to give the dish an attractive sheen.

Spoon the mushrooms and their sauce on the bread and eat. Leftovers make killer mushroom hoagies a la cheesy meatball sub sandwiches.



photo by Alan Bergo, ForagerChef.com

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Back-to-School Wellness

Tips to Keep Kids Healthy

by Ronica O'Hara



After a year dealing with the ups and downs of pandemic-era schooling, many parents are anticipating their children's return to school with mixed emotions. "Families indeed have had a rough time in the pandemic, resulting in increased food insecurity, weakened social skills, splintered attention spans due to constant multi-tasking and arguments over screen time, yet many families also feel that they grew closer together as they coped with the adversity," says Jenifer Joy Madden, author of *How To Be a Durable Human*.

As we wave our children off to classes, we can draw on those hard-won, deeper ties by taking steps to ensure our children's health and well-being. Here are some suggested strategies:

Hold a family sit-down

Meet as a group to talk about schedules and logistics to make sure everyone's commitments will work together, recommends Erika Beckles Camez, Ph.D., a licensed family therapist

in Temecula, California. "Talk as a family about how everyone feels about going back to school and intentionally tell your student that throughout the year if they are needing support or are feeling overwhelmed or concerned, they can always talk to you to work through the issue together," she says.

Reset bedtime creep

"During the summer, bedtime tends to creep later and later. Two weeks before school starts, begin to reset bedtime by reversing the creep by 15 minutes every few nights," suggests Amber Trueblood, a licensed marriage and family therapist in Culver City, California, and author of *Stretch Marks*. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 6 to 12 years of age sleep nine to 12 hours a night and teenagers 13 to 18 sleep eight to 10 hours. Getting enough sleep, it advises, leads to "improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, emotional regulation, quality of life, and mental and physical health." Sleep experts recommend not allowing kids to be on device screens beginning an hour before bedtime, and perhaps storing devices in another room.

Buoy them with breakfast

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, children that eat a complete breakfast have been shown to work faster, make fewer math mistakes and show improved concentration, alertness, comprehension and memory. "Get in the habit of a healthy breakfast that contains a mix of lean proteins, healthy fats and unrefined carbohydrates and fiber," advises Amy

Spindel, a functional holistic nutritionist in Plano, Texas. "That might be something like eggs scrambled with spinach in olive oil; a smoothie with greens, coconut milk, nut butter, cherries and steamed cauliflower; or a small bowl of steel-cut oatmeal with berries and almond butter alongside some turkey sausage. These types of combinations help promote stable blood sugar until lunchtime, which means your child will be able to focus on learning and social interactions instead of their tummies."

Satisfy them with healthy snacks

There's a metabolic reason students head straight for the fridge when they get home—but it's best if they can't grab sweets. "Children need healthy, whole-food, nutritious snacks after school to fuel both their bodies and their brain," says Uma Naidoo, M.D., a Harvard-based nutritional psychiatrist, professional chef and author of *This Is Your Brain on Food*. To support optimal brain development and help lower kids' anxiety and

Children need healthy, whole-food, nutritious snacks after school to fuel both their bodies and their brain.

hyperactivity levels, she suggests snacks rich in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A, B₁₂ and D, and iron and folate, such as:

- "Fries" cooked in an air fryer to crisp up zucchini, carrots or green beans
- Veggie dips or hummus made with chickpeas, carrots, beets or spinach
- Almond butter on celery sticks, or seed butter for dipping sweet peppers or apple slices
- Homemade fish sticks made by heating salmon pieces in an air fryer
- Granola that includes walnuts, chia seeds and flax seeds

Take allergy precautions

About one in 14 U.S. children has a food allergy. Anisha Angella, an early childhood specialist and author of *Easing Allergy Anxiety in Children*, recommends taking special precautions with an allergy-prone child, including frequent handwashing; carrying an EpiPen for sudden, severe reactions that require an epinephrine injection; and not sharing foods. "Connect with their teachers," she advises. "They want to help in any way, too. When a child sees an adult that supports their allergy safety in all environments, they feel comfortable, and that lessens anxiety."

"Readjusting from the pandemic will take patience and perseverance on the part of parents," says Madden. "Having the family start simple wellness habits can help." 📌

Health writer Ronica O'Hara can be contacted at OHaraRonica@gmail.com.

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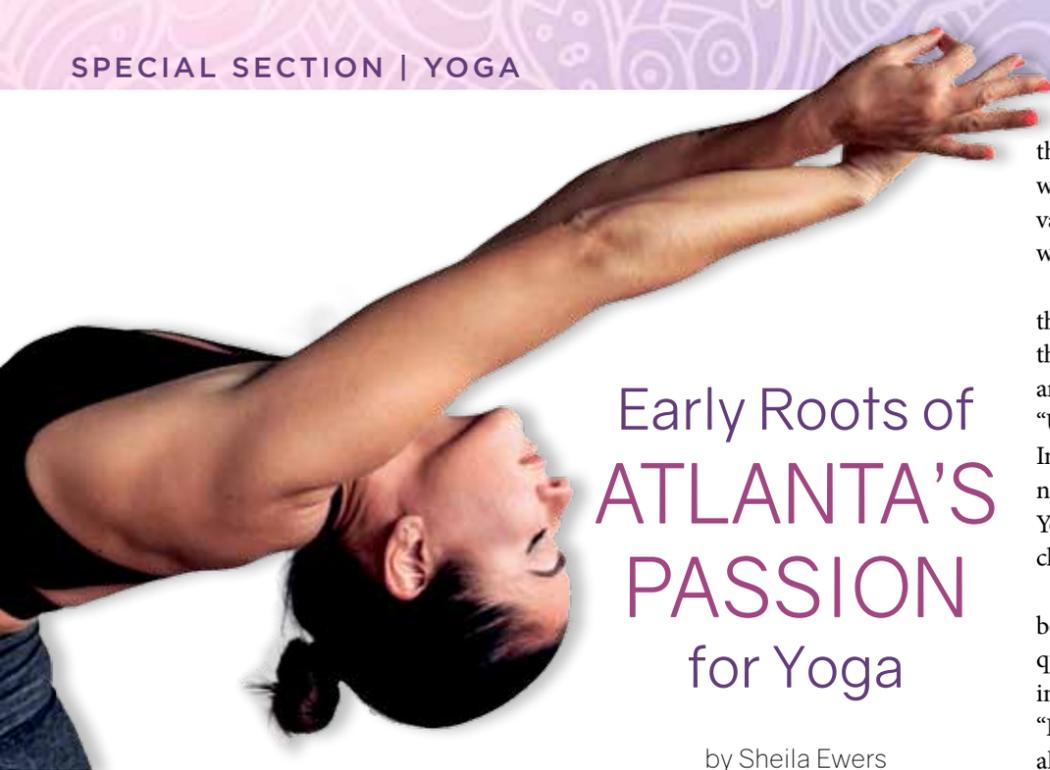
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Early Roots of ATLANTA'S PASSION for Yoga

by Sheila Ewers

Yoga practitioners throughout the Atlanta metro area have a virtually unlimited number of places and opportunities to get instruction and guidance nowadays. A quick online search lists more than 50 dedicated studios in Atlanta alone, not including the gyms, community centers, parks, neighborhoods and schools that offer practices of all sorts. But 25 years ago, the Atlanta yoga community was in its infancy. It was just a handful of dedicated, curious and passionate seekers who traveled around the country and brought the knowledge they gained back to Atlanta. They taught classes wherever they could and have since shared their expertise with thousands of Atlantans over the years. They've also built robust yoga communities that continue to birth new teachers and change lives even today.

We spoke to three teachers who have contributed to the evolution of yoga in Atlanta since its early years.

GRAHAM FOWLER Founder, Peachtree Yoga



Photo: ZITHOTO

Graham Fowler's yoga practice started when he first read *Yoga: 28 Day Exercise Plan* by Richard Hittleman. Fowler was a musician with an established meditation practice, and he decided to add yoga to his daily routine. He practiced at home and, if he happened to be on the road, in hotel rooms.

There were only a few yoga teachers in Atlanta at the time, so Fowler found guides throughout the country and enrolled in trainings with experts such as Rodney Yee. Later, he completed an immersive teacher training at the White Lotus Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, and received certification with Phoenix Rising School of Yoga Therapy. Through the years, he has trained in Ashtanga, Integrative, and other forms of yoga. At the core of his relationship with yoga remains an unwavering dedication to meditation—now at 47 years of unbroken daily practice.

As he taught yoga at the Buckhead YMCA, Fowler cultivated a community of students who met for potluck dinners and practiced in his home. By 1998, he had graduated his first group of trainees and began to feel that the next step was to open his own center. There were only two yoga studios operating in Atlanta at the time, so it was a risk. Even

the prospective landlord questioned the wisdom of the decision. But Fowler prevailed, and Peachtree Yoga Center (PYC) was born.

Since then, Fowler has graduated more than 800 yoga teachers who, in turn, spread the teaching of yoga throughout the metro area. Many of them, including Elizabeth "Ursala" Nix, opened studios of their own. In 2019, Fowler passed the PYC torch to Ilo-na Moore. While she now owns Peachtree Yoga, Fowler continues to teach a weekly class and lead yoga teacher trainings.

When asked for his advice to those just beginning a practice, he simply offers a quote from Rumi: "What you seek is seeking you." To anyone from his past, he says, "I just have so much love and gratitude for all of you who chose to walk this path with me for however long you did. May the light within you continue to grow and spread to all those you meet."

SWAMI JAYA DEVI Founder, Kashi Yoga Atlanta



Like Fowler, Swami Jaya Devi's interest in yoga began with books. She began practicing at the age of 14 and discovered Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* in high school, a book she

feels was pivotal to the launch of her spiritual journey. She sought out *The Bhagavad Gita* and immersed herself in a yoga practice that became a tool for healing in ways she didn't even imagine.

When she moved to Georgia in the 1980s to attend the Atlanta College of Art, she began practicing yoga in a studio for the first time. Under the guidance of Donna DeLuca at New Moves Yoga in Little Five Points, she completed her first 200-hour teacher certification. Since then, she has studied yoga, meditation and healing in-depth, focusing on hatha, kundalini and kali natha forms of yoga. She was a close student of Ma Jaya at Kashi Ashram in Sebastian, Florida.

Then she began teaching. Devi held classes in diverse locations, including the First Existentialist Congregation in Candler Park, the Callenwolde Fine Arts Center and the AIDS and HIV units at Grady Hospital. In 1998, she opened Jaya Devi Yoga Studio, which eventually emerged as Kashi Ashram Atlanta. Devi has trained more than 500 teachers at Kashi. She also brings yoga and mindfulness practices to marginalized communities in the Metro area through outreach programs such as the Prisons Yoga Project, Street Meals and Children's Art Camp. She will publish her first book this year on the *yamas* and *niyamas*—the first two limbs of the yogi's eight-limbed path.

Her advice to those beginning a yoga practice: "Explore until it resonates. Yoga can meet you where you are, no matter where you are."

WILLIAM HUFSCHMIDT Founder, Jai Shanti Candler Park (2003-2012) Lead Teacher, Pranakriya School of Yoga



Photo: Jason Denard

William Hufschmidt's spiritual journey began with a car accident when he was 14 years old. It took two years of his life in traction, in a wheelchair, on crutches and in physical therapy to fully regain mobility. During that time, he discovered that paying attention to his breath and quieting his mind were powerful allies on the road to healing.

In 1989, while a college student in California, Hufschmidt took his first yoga class. Yoga was still something of a niche activity at the time, but Hufschmidt took to it immediately and began to teach under the supervision of his first teacher, Lorna Brown. By

1996, he had relocated to Atlanta to take a corporate job, which he left just four years later to dedicate himself to teaching. He began leading 18 classes a week at the YMCA amid an exciting local yoga environment, as new teachers were emerging and the first yoga studios were taking shape. Through word of mouth, information about Hufschmidt's classes and workshops spread, and a core group of devoted practitioners frequented a handful of locations in the city, sharing what they learned.

Hufschmidt completed his 200- and 500-hour yoga teacher training programs at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Massachusetts, where he met his primary teacher and influence, Yoganand Michael Carroll.

In 2003, while back in Atlanta, Hufschmidt opened his own studio, Jai Shanti, in the Candler Park neighborhood of Atlanta. After Yoganand moved to North Carolina, Hufschmidt frequently traveled there to continue training with his mentor and eventually began facilitating Pranakriya trainings at Jai Shanti. In 2012, Hufschmidt closed his studio so he could travel and teach in Atlanta and elsewhere. To date, he has trained almost 300 teachers in the Pranakriya tradition across eight states.

To those just beginning a yoga practice, Hufschmidt offers the following advice: "Pay more attention to your breathing and how your breathing and thoughts react/respond to your body's movements and the shapes you make. Over the course of your life, your body, its abilities and its needs will change, and your practice should grow and change with your body. *Harder* yoga practice does not mean you have a *better* yoga practice." 🙏

Learn more about Graham Fowler at SacredRiverHouse.com, Swami Jaya Devi at KashiAtlanta.org and William Hufschmidt at YogaWithWilliam.com.



Sheila Ewers, ERYT500, YACEP, owns *Blue Lotus Yoga* in Johns Creek. A former professor of writing and literature, she leads group and private lessons, yoga philosophy workshops, yoga teacher trainings and retreats. Contact her at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Autumn Soulstice Yoga – 6-7pm. Bring in the new season with yoga in the outdoors led by yoga instructor Kim Hobbs. \$12. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. Register: 770-394-3322 or DunwoodyNature.org.

MONDAYS

Evening Yoga with Talen – 6:30 pm, Sept. 13 - Oct. 25. The Home Depot Backyard at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Free vinyasa flow, suitable for all ages and abilities. Masks recommended. 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta, 30313. bit.ly/yoga-talen

WEDNESDAYS

Hip Hop Yoga with Jaimee Ratliff – 6-7pm, Sept. 1, 8, 22; Oct. 6, 13, The Home Depot Backyard at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Free. "If Deepak and Tupac created a yoga class together, this would be it." 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta, 30313. bit.ly/yoga-ratliff

Multi-Studio Owners Expand Yoga's Presence



Lori Denton (Photo: Barbie Margolies of Gaki Media)

by Sheila Ewers

Even in this era of unprecedented challenge and competition, three tenacious Atlanta studio owners have been able to sustain multiple studios and broaden their reach. Elspeth Brotherton, Ahoo Sarab and Lori Denton influence thousands of yoga practitioners throughout the metro area, employ dozens of teachers and juggle the demands of entrepreneurship with the kind of equanimity that comes from years of personal yoga practice. We caught up with each of them to learn more about their journeys and the communities they steward.

truly inspiring teacher. In the early days of my career as a lawyer in Texas, I started relying more and more on yoga to help with anxiety and stress and to counter the physical effects of sitting at a desk for 10 to 12 hours a day doing legal work. During that time, my former husband—now my business partner!—and I were taking care of a close friend who ultimately lost his battle with colon cancer. Realizing that life is too short to do work that makes you chronically anxious and stressed out, we decided to move back to Atlanta from Texas to open a yoga studio in Virginia Highlands in February 2015.

ELSIE BROTHERTON

Highland Yoga
Elsie Brotherton opened the first Highland Yoga location in February 2015. She has since added four more locations in Buckhead, Decatur, Memorial Drive and the Westside and plans to open a sixth location in Brookhaven in March 2022. All Highland Yoga studios focus on creative and dynamic hot vinyasa yoga.



Elsie Brotherton (Photo: 2PHOTO)

Can you describe your own yoga roots and inspiration?

My yoga journey began in law school. On a whim, I signed up for a class at the East Lake Y where I connected with a

How did you choose to expand?

While opening our first location, I caught the entrepreneurial bug! I love the creativity and problem-solving required for business-building. I also love seeing our community of students and teachers grow.

What makes your community unique?

Our style of yoga combines strength, flexibility, breathing practices, mindfulness and meditation to create the ultimate one-hour practice. It is consistent and disciplined and has enough creativity to keep things interesting. Importantly, our yoga is challenging without being unsafe or inaccessible. We believe that students should take what they

need and leave what they don't in each practice. Although I believe all forms and styles of yoga and movement are wonderful, our style checks a lot of important boxes in a way that is very efficient and predictable, and I think this keeps students coming back. We also have an amazing community that is built on our belief that every single student matters.

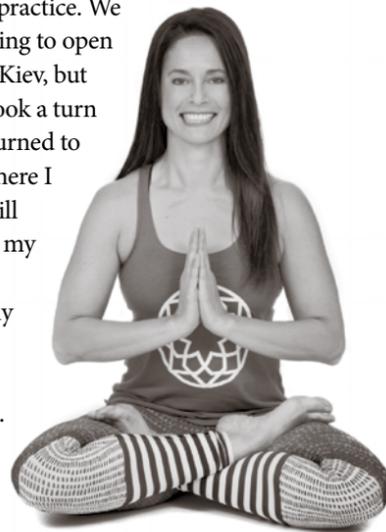
AHOO SARAB

Korsi Hot Yoga and Still Hot Yoga
Aho Sarab opened Korsi Hot Yoga in Roswell in 2015 and took ownership of Still Hot Yoga in Decatur in 2017. The Korsi studio offers a variety of heated styles, including hot flow, yin and Bikram, while Still Hot focuses primarily on Bikram.

Can you describe your own yoga roots and inspiration?

I began a home yoga practice with VHS tapes at the age of 17, and it began to shape me physically, emotionally and mentally. In my late 20s, I volunteered at a yoga center in Virginia. Soon after, I left the [U.S.] and didn't return for a decade, moving to Kazakhstan, Russia, England and Ukraine. With time on my hands and a need for a yoga community, I began my first 200-hour certification. It was a self-study program, and I filmed myself teaching to empty rooms. I went on to complete a kids yoga certification and a reiki certification soon after using the same mail-away method. In Ukraine, I became friends with a Bikram-certified instructor, who reinvigorated my love of the practice. We were planning to open a studio in Kiev, but when life took a turn again, I returned to Roswell, where I grew up. Still clear about my intention, I immediately set about opening a space there.

Aho Sarab



How did you choose to expand?

My second studio happened to be one of the first hot studios that I had ever practiced in. It was too serendipitous to pass up. The owner was retiring and approached me about buying.

What makes your community unique?

I've always felt you need to practice many styles of yoga to have a well-rounded practice. At different times in my life, I've had different needs. Sometimes I need power; other times, I simply need to breathe. I've tried keeping our studio flexible in this way. I believe in honoring the traditions and values of yoga, and the extensive amount of time I've spent living and traveling overseas has allowed me to blend Eastern and Western culture and ideology where I can be respectful to both.

LORI DENTON

Lift Yoga Alpharetta and Dunwoody
Lori Denton took ownership of Lift Yoga Alpharetta in June 2019 and expanded into the former YogaWorks space in Dunwoody when that studio closed as a result of the pandemic. Lift offers a variety of classes, including warm and hot vinyasa, yin yoga and meditation.

Can you describe your own yoga roots and inspiration?

I have had the benefit of living in some wonderful places in North America, including the D.C. area, Las Vegas, Rhode Island and Vancouver, B.C. Every time I moved to a new city, I searched for a yoga studio that resonated with me. Yoga became a way to find my community, my home. Finding a space that made me feel safe and welcome was always the first priority. Shortly after moving to the Atlanta area, I began to compile a list of the highlights of all the yoga studios I had visited in my travels and envisioned how I would create my own studio based on those experiences. While going through this process, I stumbled upon Lift Yoga + Body, which was owned by the founder, Kim Saunders, at that time. I immediately fell in love with the community there. As fortune would have it, Kim was looking to step away from owning a studio to spend more time with family, just as I was ready to take on that challenge.

How did you choose to expand?

When studios closed during the pandemic, I felt for the communities being torn apart. At a time when people needed connection more than ever before, there were fewer options with every passing month. When YogaWorks announced they were closing their Dunwoody location, several teachers approached me and suggested that I consider taking it on. The more I learned about it, the more I realized how similar the Alpharetta and Dunwoody communities were; both were loyal and diverse groups of yogis who see the studio as their second home. I knew it would be a natural fit to roll them into the Lift family.

What makes your community unique?

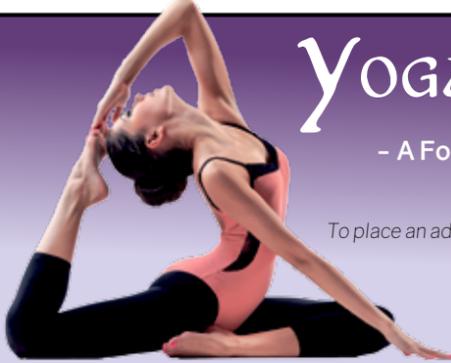
We have something to offer everyone, no matter where they are on their yoga journey. While I do not teach, I take pride in having cultivated an amazing team comprised of unique individuals who all have one thing in common: a love for the practice and a love for sharing that joy with every person who walks through the doors. 🙏

Learn more about Elsie Brotherton at HighlandYoga.com. Connect with Ahoo Sarab at KorsiYoga.com or StillHotYoga.com. Learn more about Lori Denton at LiftYogaStudio.com.

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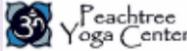
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YOGA'S FUTURE

Embracing Restore and Recover

by Tracy Jennings-Hill

Embracing one of the foundational tenets of yoga—that change is inevitable—many yoga teachers and studio owners have been forced to adapt and change in response to the pandemic and other cultural imperatives of our time. Many yoga students, teachers and long-time practitioners are now seeking a practice that is slower and more grounding, cleansing and healing. As a result, yin-based practices are emerging—the yoga of healing, slowing down, rest, restoration, recovery and going deeper into the “fascia” of the mind, as well as the body.

I spoke with Lauren Reese and Dr. Tiffany D. Johnson, two Atlanta yogis who, while coming from different perspectives, both emphasize the restoration and recovery side of yoga. As life in our culture gets more intense, and as physical, emotional and energetic balance become more important to people, a focus on “yin” might be a growing trend in yoga’s future.

LAUREN REESE, E-RYT 200, FMS

Co-founder, Breathe Yoga Atlanta



Photo: ZTPHOTO

Lauren Reese, along with her mother, Peggy Smith, opened Breathe Yoga Atlanta in January 2013, and Reese took sole ownership in 2019. A mobility coach and performance-recovery specialist, Reese works with individual athletes as well as teams to help them increase mobility and deepen recovery.

Reese, a certified Yoga Tune Up® teacher and Functional Movement System practitioner, likes to help shift people’s ideas about yoga from being a highly intense physical movement to a modality of rest and restoration. She teaches players to slow down, be aware and look for the nourishment they need, both physically and mentally.

“I never felt like I fit in with the traditional yogi mold,” says Reese. “I consider myself an athlete and feel most comfortable shar-

ing mindfulness practices with athletes. I truly believe my purpose is to share the benefits and gifts of yoga practice with them in a very practical manner.”

Teaching yoga, breathing techniques, body awareness, visualizations and self-myofascial release, she helps athletes develop focus and stress reduction. The idea is to help establish more of a balance in the athlete’s workout and practice schedule and to allow them opportunity for recovery. “The result is a win for the athlete and a win for the team,” she says.

Reese’s mantra is: “I am a student of my body. I show up on my mat, and I practice being present, exploring and always open to learn each time. I always unroll my mat as a student.”

TIFFANY D. JOHNSON, PH.D., RYT 200

Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior, Georgia Institute of Technology



Photo: LeeAnn Morrisette

Tiffany Johnson is a work, equity and wellness researcher and a teacher at Georgia Tech. Her embodied approach to teaching, working and consulting with organizations stems from having “reclaimed [her] sense of wholeness” through her yoga practice. She says it has brought her an awakened sense of adaptability and a more humanistic approach to her teaching.

Johnson’s own yoga journey started with hot yoga, but she soon felt that it was not creating the space, balance or sense of wholeness she was seeking. Then she discovered Sacred Chill West yoga studio, founded by Octavia Raheem and Meryl Arnett, which fed her love for a practice that creates space, stillness and room to heal. Sacred Chill West’s yin-based yoga program prompts people to move into stillness and hold poses for longer periods to promote healing of body and mind. [Editor’s note: Sacred Chill West closed in 2020 due to the pandemic.]

At Georgia Tech, Johnson developed the first-ever Work, Equity and Wellness course to support the MBA program, a course that was inspired by her yoga practice and the teachings of Sacred Chill West.

“I discovered a humanistic approach to guiding students through their coursework,” says Johnson. “But, more importantly, [I found what] the future of organizational wellness should look like. That is, we expect our lives and work environments to change, but it first starts with our own change.”

Johnson gets inspiration from words from *Sisters of the Yam*, a book by bell hooks: “The way is one, and the paths are many, we all need to go somewhere to restore our souls. We need to be on that path to recovery to wholeness.”



The owner of LiveURYoga in Roswell, Tracy Jennings-Hill, C-IAYT, YACEP, is a holistic yoga therapist using Ayurveda and Jyotish as the basis for healing. She leads private sessions, workshops, Ayurveda and yoga teacher trainings and retreats.

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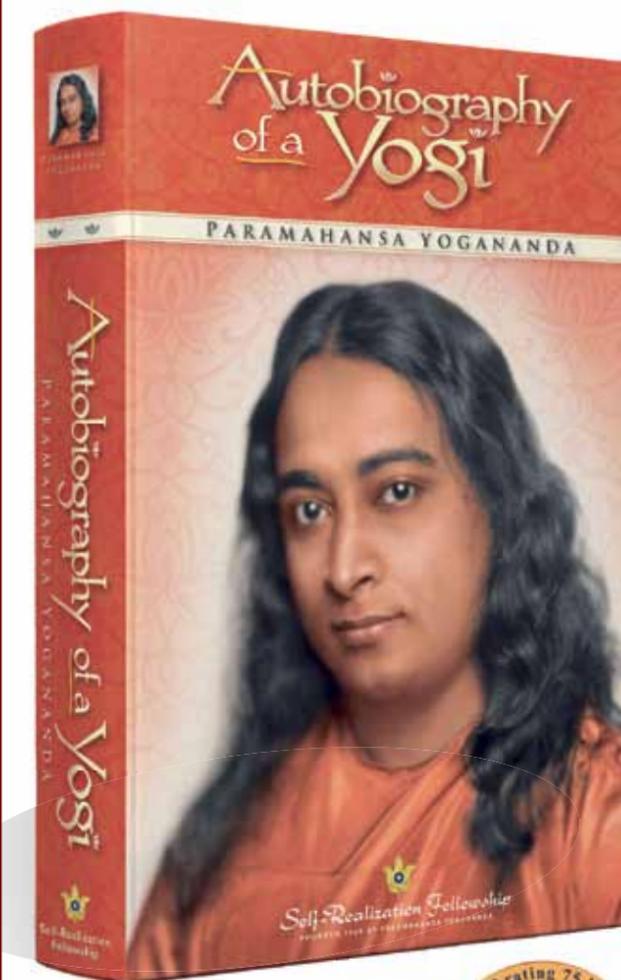
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Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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A RETURN TO NATURE

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

Have you ever been out for a hike or camping weekend and noticed a lack of diversity? If so, it wasn't your imagination. While African Americans make up 32% of the Georgia population and 13% of the population in the U.S., Black visitors accounted for only 7% of the 307 million visitors to national parks, according to a 2015 study by the National Park Service (NPS). Thankfully, there is a movement underway to change that. But first, let's take a look at factors that have contributed to the disparity in the first place.

The History

According to the NPS, most U.S. states enforced the segregation of outdoor recreation areas until the 1960s. During The Great Migration (1916-70), more than six million African Americans migrated from the rural South to cities, seeking refuge from Jim Crow laws, race-based terrorism and poor economic opportunities. According to the NAACP, nearly 5,000 lynchings occurred in the U.S. from 1882 to 1968. During that time, the second-highest number of lynchings occurred in Georgia, where more than 500 people were unlawfully tortured and hung without due process. Black people were not the only victims—the rest included immigrants and white civil rights activists—but they made up about 72% of those that were victimized.

Other factors have reduced Black Americans' participation in outdoor recreation activities. Many relocated to urban areas with limited access to green spaces, many were denied entry to parks and the country's long history of violence on people of color is ever-present. Black baby boomers might not have been legally allowed to visit national parks as children until desegregation in the 1960s, and even after that, it was often at the risk of being terrorized. New stories of harassment and violence reached center stage in 2020, further highlighting ongoing concerns for Black people seeking to enjoy the outdoors: first with the murder of Georgia jogger, Ahmaud Arbery, and again with the harassment of birdwatcher, Christian Cooper, in New York City's Central Park.

Leaders in the Movement

Carolyn Hartfield

Despite these barriers, there is a movement underfoot to bring nature back into the lives



Carolyn Hartfield (Photo: John Pryor)

of African Americans. Certified health coach, adventure leader and tai chi instructor Carolyn Hartfield went on her first hike on Blood Mountain in Georgia for her 56th birthday in 2004. As she describes it, "I'm a city girl from Detroit. I was so excited just being outdoors! I had never experienced anything so exhilarating!" The former health food store owner was forever changed.

"Being in nature gives me clarity of mind. It just made me feel so happy and good...I felt a new freedom." She received outdoor leadership and wilderness First-Aid training from the Sierra Club and an REI-sponsored program, respectively, and since 2009, she has hosted monthly hikes on the first Saturday of every month, encouraging African Americans to venture out into the woods.

She began with the Hartfield Hikers in 2009 and has had an active presence on Meetup.com as the Atlanta African American Adventurers Group since 2011. The group promotes hiking, zip lining, white-water rafting, camping, cycling and sailing. Hartfield works with AARP to encourage older Americans to be more active and hosts Walk With a Doc, its weekly virtual walking program.

Hartfield leads by example. While many people were binge-watching Netflix during the pandemic, she walked the entire 61.4-mile Silver Comet Trail over the course of three days to celebrate her 72nd birthday. As her website declares: "I'm not retired. I'm rejuvenated."

Outdoor Afro

While Carolyn Hartfield was taking Atlantans on hikes, Outdoor Afro began as a blog. In 2010, its founder and CEO, Rue Mapp, was invited to the Obama White House to participate in the America's Great Outdoors Conference. She later contributed to a think tank for launching Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative. Outdoor Afro now leads a team of nearly 90 volunteers who represent 42 cities across the U.S. The Atlanta chapter boasts more than 2,300 members and can be found on Meetup.com as Outdoor Afro Atlanta. The group describes itself as "a community that



Janina Edwards (Photo: Janina Edwards)

reconnects African Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities such as camping, hiking, biking, birding, fishing, gardening, skiing and more!"

Outdoor Afro's Atlanta group leader, Janina Edwards, is also

an instructor at Kashi Atlanta Urban Yoga Ashram, where she offers a walking meditation class in addition to traditional yoga. Originally from Chicago, Edwards was born in the early 60s, just as national parks were getting desegregated.

"I was very blessed to have a dad who took my family camping and did things in the outdoors at a time when that was unusual," says Edwards. "He took us skiing, ice skating, swimming. That was what we did. I didn't think about it being strange at the time. I was also a Girl Scout."

Her upbringing speaks to the diversity of the Black experience and the impact of desegregation and equal access. Her biggest tip for new hikers: "Hiking and walking are the same; just make sure you have support for ankles and feet." She likes walking with a stick for balance and recommends long pants and clothes that wick. "In yoga, we talk about the first chakra, getting grounded. Hiking has really helped. It brings my stress levels down and makes me feel in union with all of my senses."

Black People Who Hike

Debbie Njai has made big footprints in the hiking community. She is the founder and creative director of Black People Who Hike (BPWH), leading a team of 18 skilled volunteers that includes marketing strategists and hike leaders. The 34-year-old experienced her first hike in August 2019 and launched BPWH the next month. She grew up in a small Illinois town near Missouri "where [her] backyard was the woods" and credits hiking with helping her seasonal depression during gloomy winters and providing a natural high that can last all week.

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Njai invites photographers and videographers to document every hike she hosts and is working on a documentary series. "We have an obligation to document," says Njai. "That's what really drew more people out—being able to see themselves on our pages." Most of her hikes are catered with vegan meals from Black-owned restaurants and ticketed by the Black-owned company, Ticket Falcon.

Njai believes the Black Lives Matter movement has awakened the outdoor industry to its lack of diversity. After the Christian Cooper incident in New York City, she co-founded Black Hikers Week and collaborated with 30 other Black outdoor organizations under the hashtag #blackhikersweek.

Njai notes that the lack of information about hiking and its health benefits and safety concerns create barriers for Black hikers. The parks that her group visits are often in rural areas of Missouri that were considered "sundown" towns and unsafe for Black travelers. As recently as 2017, the NAACP issued a travel warning for the entire state of Missouri, confirming these fears. She alleviates member apprehensions by hiking in large groups.

While based in the Midwest, BPWH is working with Black Too Earth, an Atlanta environmental organization, to host their two-day Black Businesses Matter hike in October.

"I believe that bringing Black people out in nature is an opportunity for us to heal,"



Debbie Njai (Photo: Judd Demaline)

says Njai. With a mission to "empower, educate and reengage" and 30,000 Instagram followers, her feet are clearly on the right path. 📌

Learn more at CarolynHartfield.com, OutdoorAfro.com and BlackPeopleWhoHike.com.



Trish Ahjel Roberts is an author, coach, speaker and founder of Mind-Blowing Happiness, LLC and Black Vegan Life.™ Access her blog and free self-care e-book at

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Martha Beck on Living with Integrity

by Sandra Yeyati



A monthly contributor to *O, The Oprah Magazine*, for the last 17 years, Martha Beck, Ph.D., is a Harvard-trained sociologist and *New York Times* bestselling author of nine nonfiction books, one novel and more than 200 magazine articles. Her most recent book is *The Way of Integrity: Finding the Path to Your True Self*.

Why did you write this new book?

They say the truth will set you free, so 30 years ago, I decided I wouldn't lie once for an entire calendar year, and it completely changed my life. Ever since, I've done integrity cleanses: If anything doesn't feel like my real self, if it isn't what I really want to do or what I truly believe, I just won't do. I started my last integrity cleanse seven years ago, and I'm still in the middle of it because it's so liberating, dramatically improving my health, business and relationships. After 30 years, I have a method, so I decided to share it with people.

How do you define integrity?

The word comes from the Latin *integer*, meaning whole or undivided. In engineering, if an airplane is in perfect structural integrity, it can do amazing things. But if its parts aren't all working in harmony with each other, it may not take off, it may be impossible to steer, it may crash. Being in harmony with your true self enables you to do all the things that will most fulfill you and to realize your destiny if you believe you have one—and I believe we do.

Why, when and how do we lose sight of our true selves?

From the moment we're born, we start

of meaning in your life. Without a sense of purpose, our lives start to feel dull, and then we start to experience anger, sadness, grief, irritability, anxiety and depression. If we don't pay attention, our bodies start to give out because we're deeply biologically programmed to tell the truth. Our career and relationships start to fall apart, and often we end up being addicted to cope with the pain.

How do we regain our integrity?

You feel what you're feeling and notice any place you're uncomfortable, which is information that's always available to you. Many of us are frightened to do that and maybe haven't done it for many years, but once you find out you're not comfortable, I advise making a series of one-degree turns away from the things that aren't right for you, nudging yourself gently toward things that make you happy every day. As you edge your life in that direction with small changes, enormous things can happen.

What are the benefits of living with integrity?

Any time we yearn for something in a very deep, intense way, it's always immediately given to us, but it's sent to the place that is our real home, which is peace. It waits for you there. When you get into your integrity, you find incredible peace. And at that point, everything you've wanted in your whole life seems to be waiting for you. Peace is your home. Integrity is the way to it, and everything you have ever longed for will meet you there. 📌

Sandra Yeyati, J.D., is a professional writer and editor. Reach her at SandraYeyati@gmail.com.

getting messages from people about how they'd like us to behave. We try to do it to fit in, to belong. When someone tries to get us to do something that isn't true for us, we abandon ourselves and decide to do what pleases them. Every person I've worked with, including psychopaths and murderers, has at some point said, "I need to please people. I need to be admired. I need to be liked. I need to be accepted." It's such a deep part of the psyche that we will abandon our own comfort to satisfy it, and we won't even know that we're out of integrity.

How does this inner conflict manifest itself?

When you stray from your integrity, it's an abandonment of self. You'll feel a deep but sometimes subtle unease. Most of us are trained not to notice, but if you're not paying attention to your own truth and what you really want, you eventually develop symptoms. The most painful is loss

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Publicize your event! This section hosts free and paid listings. Each month, we select a limited number of events — they must have broad appeal and cost no more than \$20 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$35 and enhanced listings are \$75.

Submit free listings to calendar@naAtlanta.com and paid listings to ads@naAtlanta.com.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Free First Saturday: Birds of Prey – 11am-12pm. Nature's Echo will bring several birds of prey for a fun and informative bird show. Learn about some common species of feathery predators in our area. Free. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. Register: 770-394-3322 or DunwoodyNature.org.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Series on Walking: Feldenkrais Method – Sundays, Sept 5–Oct 10. 10–11am. Online and in studio. Explore what we do when we walk and how to find ways of walking that are easier, more efficient and more graceful. Decatur Healing Arts, 619B E College Ave, Decatur. DecaturHealingArts.com.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

New Moon Ceremony – 6:30-7:30pm. Join us as we tap into the powerful New Moon energy and open ourselves to abundance, growth, and positive changes. \$20. The Open Mind Center, 1425 Market Blvd, Ste 500, Roswell. TheOpenMindCenter.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Online: Atlanta Mayoral Forum on Greenspace – 6-8pm. Learn how each candidate's administration will value and approach Atlanta's natural spaces, trees, waterways, and parks and recreation system in the years to come. Free. Register: GeorgiaConservancy.org.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Launch Party: 2nd Edition of 12 Steps to Mind-Blowing Happiness: A Journal of Insights, Quotes & Questions to Juice Up Your Journey – 6-8pm. Trish Ahjel Roberts will read from her new book as well as a raffle to win a free copy. Free. The Gathering Spot, 384 Northyards Blvd NW, Atlanta. TrishAhjelRoberts.com/events.



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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Poetry Open Mic Night – 7-9pm. With Michael Burke. An evening of splendor with enchanting and thought-provoking spoken word performances from some of Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore's flourishing community of poets. Poets of all ages. Free. On Zoom & in person.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys – 7-8:30pm. With Vicki Evans. An opportunity to connect with Spirit and your guides for healing and direction. You can use the journeys to ask about all areas of your life, not just the spiritual side. \$20 via PayPal. To register: PayPal.me/vickieevanshealing.

TUESDAYS

Midday I AM Meditation – 12-12:45pm. With Lorenzo Sanford. In this casual environment to de-stress from the week, join us for the opportunity to embrace simplicity during this spiritually nutritious lunch hour. Give yourself the gift of relaxation to enhance the quality of your daily life. \$10.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Root, Heart and Crown Chakra Booster Remote Healing – 12:30pm. With Jamie Butler. This remote healing is focused on the root, heart and crown, giving greater ability to get grounded, become more emotionally centered and connect you to higher vibrational frequencies. \$10. More info & register: JamieButlerMedium.com.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Online: Monday Night Meditation – 7-8pm. A live, instructor-led meditation and discussion as we come together to develop our meditation practice. All levels. With The Open Mind Center. \$10. Register: TheOpenMindCenter.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Online: How to Talk to Your Body – 7-8pm. Join Licensed Unity Teacher, Larry Bergmann, for this powerful healing service. Learn techniques for connecting your mind and body together for healing, empowerment and more. Love offering requested. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

The Atlanta International Night Market – Sept 17-18. 5-10pm, Fri; 2-10pm, Sat. 2-day celebration of diversity, community, culture and creativity. Includes live performances plus food and retail vendors representing communities from around the world. Free admission. Lawrenceville Lawn, 210 Luckie St, Lawrenceville. AtlNightMarket.org.

Family Night Hike – 8-10pm. Explore the sounds and sights of the forest. Includes an animal encounter and a relaxing campfire where you can roast a marshmallow. Limited space is available. All ages. \$12/general public, \$10/members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration by Aug 16: ChattNatureCenter.org.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

ALIVE! EXPO

Sept 18-19. 10am-6pm, Sat; 11am-6pm, Sun. The only Green Living Event in Atlanta and the Southeast. Interactive demos, live health lectures and kids' activities. Learn how to integrate natural products and green living into daily life. \$5. Cobb Galleria Centre, Two Galleria Pkwy, Atlanta. AliveExpo.com.

The Center for Love & Light Lounge – 11am. An online gathering place where students and educators from all over the globe can connect and share. Free. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

The Veggie Taste – 12-6pm. Vegan, raw, plant-based and vegetarian tasting event where chefs will be sampling some of their delicious mouthwatering cuisine. Includes nutritional speakers, artisan marketplace, music, product samples and much more. 432 Beckwith Ct SW, Atlanta. TheVeggieTaste.com.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Back to your Roots Farm Fair – 12-4pm. Family fun celebrating the fall harvest. Meet live farm animals, get down in the dirt and dance along with Bach 2 Rock. Included with General Admission, free/Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Register: ChattNatureCenter.org.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Online: Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Zoom. Info: 404-680-7423, Info-SE@Share-International.us. Share-International.us/se. Register: Tinyurl.com/aj9kf93u.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Fall Equinox Sound Healing Service – 7-8pm. With Gabriel Nelson Sears. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Norcross. UnityAtl.org.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Online: The Nature Club Dine and Discover – 7-9pm. With Kelly Ridenour. Learn about the wonderful world of fireflies with the Atlanta Firefly Project. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. Via Zoom. Registration required by Aug 25: 770-992-2055 or ChattNatureCenter.org.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

ONLINE: COLLARD GREENS CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Sept 25-26. 12-11pm, Sat; 3-6pm, Sun. Celebrate the rich culture, history and traditions of African & African-American food and music. On Sunday, will have our drive-by/pick-up your collard green dinners, ice cream and more. Via Zoom. More info: 800-253-3397 or CollardGreensCulturalFestival.com.

Georgia Audubon Society Quarterly Bird Walk – 8-10am. Meet Georgia Audubon leader at our historic fireplace. Free and open to the public. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Welcoming The Change – 11:30am. Experience life alignment in a guided process that will take us from finding what is blocking our path, to a new vibration that will allow us to make the difference we need in our life. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28

DRAGONFLY EXPERIENCE: A WOMEN'S RETREAT

Oct 28-31. More than just a yoga retreat! Gather with like-minded women for this transformational weekend and the perfect blend of relaxation, meditation, yoga, soul healing and fun in a safe supportive environment. Sauttee Nacoochee. Felicia@FeliciaGrant.com. FeliciaGrant.com/womensretreats.

ONGOING

sundays

Online & In-Person Sunday Experience – 9am, Adult Study; 9:30am, Meditation; 10am, Music; 10:30am, Service. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Ste A, Atlanta. More info: slc-atlanta.org.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, service & dharma discussion. Via Zoom or in person. 3420 W Hospital Ave, Ste 102, Chamblee. More info: RedClaySangha.org.

Meditation Open House – 10-11:30am. Discussion at 11:30am and tea at 12pm. Meditation instruction available from 10-11am for those new to the practice. Atlanta Shambhala Center, 1447 Church St, Decatur. More info: AtlantaShambhala.org.

Second Sunday Sober Bike Ride – 10:30am. 2nd Sun. Brings together people from all walks of sober living who are seeking fun and active ways to connect with likeminded people. BTA Bicycle Tours of Atlanta will provide a bike at no charge if needed. Bicycle Tours of Atlanta, 659 Auburn Ave NE, Atlanta. Register: Tinyurl.com/yjzjutjf4.

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

Unity Atlanta Sunday Services – 11am. Watch live stream or register to attend in person. 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

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

Unity North Online & In-Person Sunday Service – 11:15am. 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: UnityNorth.org.

Last Sunday Social – 12:12-3:33pm. Last Sun with KosmicBrew. Join us and our community of vendors as we share a healing space, engage in meaningful dialogues and create lasting memories. For location: Hi@KosmicBrew.com or Linktr.ee/KosmicBrew.

mondays

The {SAMA} Class: Virtual – 9am. Also held Thurs & Fri. Incorporates 25 mins of yoga, 10 mins of breathwork, finishing off with 10 mins of meditation. Each teacher will bring their own spin to the class based on their particular lineage of training. More info: SamaFoodForBalance.com.

tuesdays

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

Online Meditation Open House – 7pm. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Metro Atlanta Sierra Club Meeting – 7:30pm. 2nd Tues. More info: SierraClub.org/georgia/atlanta.

wednesdays

Zoom Check In: Wellness Wednesdays – 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. slc-atlanta.org.

Decatur Farmers' Market – Thru Nov 17. 4-7pm. Local farmers, artisanal food makers and crafts. Masks required. First Baptist Church Decatur, 308 Clairmont Ave, Decatur. cfmatl.org/decatur.

Hip Hop Yoga – 6-7pm. With Jaimee Ratliff. Inspiring flow for all levels, set to your favorite Hip Hop + R&B tunes. Free. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way NW, Atlanta. TheHomeDepotBackyard.com.

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

Weekly Wednesday Meditation Class – 7-8:30pm. Open to all levels. Experience true inner peace. With the Venerable Nicholas Thannissaro of the Georgia Meditation Center via Zoom. To register: MeditationCircle.org.

thursdays

Dunwoody Beekeeping Club – 6:30-7:30pm. 1st Thurs. Meeting features a program, followed by a question and answer session with the ability to meet and learn from other local beekeepers. Free. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

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: AtIPranicHealing.com.

fridays

Qigong Exercises & Meditations – 12-12:45pm. 1st & 3rd. Led by Master Cheng, who has been teaching in Atlanta since 1976. Free/member, \$8/nonmember. Tai Chi Association, 3079 Midway Rd, Decatur. More info & registration: Tai-Chi-Association.com.

Drumming Is the People's Medicine – 4-7pm. There is liberation, experimentation, meditation and laughter at this supportive, donation-based gathering for beginners led by Daniel Ellis or Kim Hobbs. Santosha Studio, 896 Davis Dr, Atlanta. More info & to register: Santosha-Studio.com.

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.

saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations – 8-8:30am. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Dunwoody Nature Center Saturday Volunteers – 9am-12pm. 2nd Sat. For anyone in the community who wishes to volunteer. A wonderful way to start off your weekend in nature and service. To promote social distancing, sign-up is mandatory; limited to 24 people. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

Oakhurst Farmers' Market – Thru Dec. 9am-1pm. Closed Dec 25. Fresh produce, meat, baked treats, and more. Additional offerings include live music and chef demonstrations featuring seasonal recipes. Masks required. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630 E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst.

Free Online Guided Meditation for All – 9:45-11am. Will go over basics and guided meditation. No prior experience is needed. Classes meant to come together and meditate and learn little by little. Via Zoom. Register: Tinyurl.com/y3x5yy2s.

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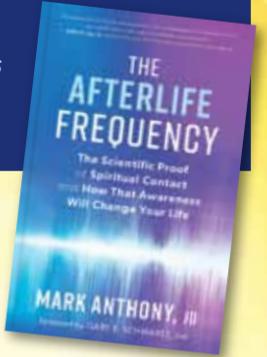
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A Contemplative Returns

by Rev. Jennifer L. Sacks

When I was a little girl, I loved my time at the beach on the New Jersey shore. On long, summer days, especially, I enjoyed twilight time—when the sunbathers and vacationers had gone home. I would breathe deeply, walk for the sheer joy of it and spend time collecting pieces of sea glass, bathing my feet in the ocean and feeling sand crabs tickle my toes.

I felt instinctively that God was in the midst of everything around me: the sand, the sea, the setting sun and the rising moon. As I watched seagulls feast on the day's remains, I knew that God was both with me and within me, too. I was a young contemplative; I drew from God as my source.

As I grew up, I had less time to wander along the shore. I moved to Washington, D.C., to attend American University, where I received a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in literature. Life became a day-to-day whirlwind of classes, papers, internships, degrees, networking and to-do lists. For a while, I tried to live the definition I had for success: build a resume, gain experience, find a job, work the system and establish power.

I rose to leadership positions quickly. I served as managing editor of a construction trade magazine and then as editor of a trade paper for professional counselors. When I was promoted to director of communications for the professional counseling association, I became responsible for

my own team and a \$1 million publishing budget. I wore Brooks Brothers suits, attended conferences around the country and ate power lunches.

At one of those lunches, my colleagues and I gathered with our boss to discuss strategic planning. Her jovial, calm demeanor invited us to be at ease, and she asked us questions about our organizational vision and how we thought we could best contribute.

"Give me one sentence," she said. "What do you know that will help us grow?"

We went around the table, each of us sharing our idea. When she turned to me, I said, "Everything I need to know is inside of me." I heard myself speak as if someone else were talking; it felt like an out-of-body experience.

"That's nice," she commented.

I don't remember anything else from that lunch except that I felt, deep within me, that I had spoken truth.

That truth led me to spiritual and world religion studies, a career change, a Mastermind group, a Unity church, and then seminary. I still longed for a richer experience of God; it felt like something was drawing me back to the seashore and the source of what I felt when I was a little girl.

Shortly before I was ordained, I met with Sister Carol at the end of my hospital chaplaincy rotation. She had reviewed my *verbatim*s, the reflections I had written about my encounters with the people I'd

served as well as my encounters with God.

Sister Carol commented on the depth of my writing, the little details I noticed, and my sense of God's presence. While I accepted her praise, I also wondered how they would support me in ministry. Although I didn't say it out loud, I doubted I was good enough. Still, she knew. She smiled, rose from her chair, went to a bookshelf and handed me Father Thomas Keating's *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*.

"Jennifer, you're a contemplative," she said. "You'll find your way. Remember, you already have your answers."

A contemplative is one who seeks and experiences inner transformation with God. That is who I am—who I always have been.

Now, when I sit in my den re-reading Father Keating's wisdom or meditating on my collection of sea glass, I draw on that source, that spirit, which is God in the midst of and at the heart of every aspect of my life—all our lives—all the time. ☮

Photo: Nicole Tyler Photography



Senior Minister of Unity Atlanta Church in Peachtree Corners, Rev. Jennifer L. Sacks is a preacher, writer and spiritual leader. She holds a Master of Divinity from Unity Institute & Seminary. Learn more and connect with her at RevJenn.com.

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Mercury Free and Mercury Safe Biocompatible (Holistic) Dentistry.



As a biological dentist, Dr. Aaron is certified in Safe Mercury Amalgam Removal Technique (S.M.A.R.T.).

With Dr. Ronald Dressler as her mentor, Dr. Aaron is able to draw on his decades of experience using natural therapies (at times in combination with conventional ones) to prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases of the oral cavity safely and healthfully.

Some of the services our office provides:

- Mercury SAFE practices
- Mercury and metal free restorations
- BPA and BisGMA free fillings
- Fluoride alternatives
- Ceramic restorations
- Dental ozone therapy
- Special air purification systems to reduce airborne pathogens and environmental toxins
- Special chair-side evacuation system (DentAirVac) captures mercury vapors to protect patients

Robust referral network for many alternative care practitioners is also available.

Call or text us today: 678.528.6747

We are conveniently located in the heart of Tucker, GA. We have free parking on the premises.
www.rosedentalatl.com - info@rosedentalatl.com - 4459 Lawrenceville Hwy. Tucker, GA, 30084.