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atldentalwellness.com
404-233-1102



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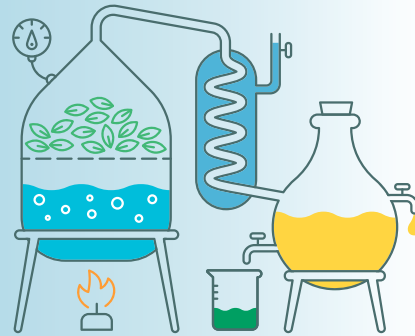
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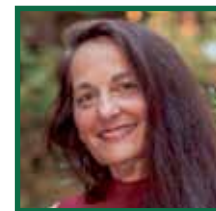
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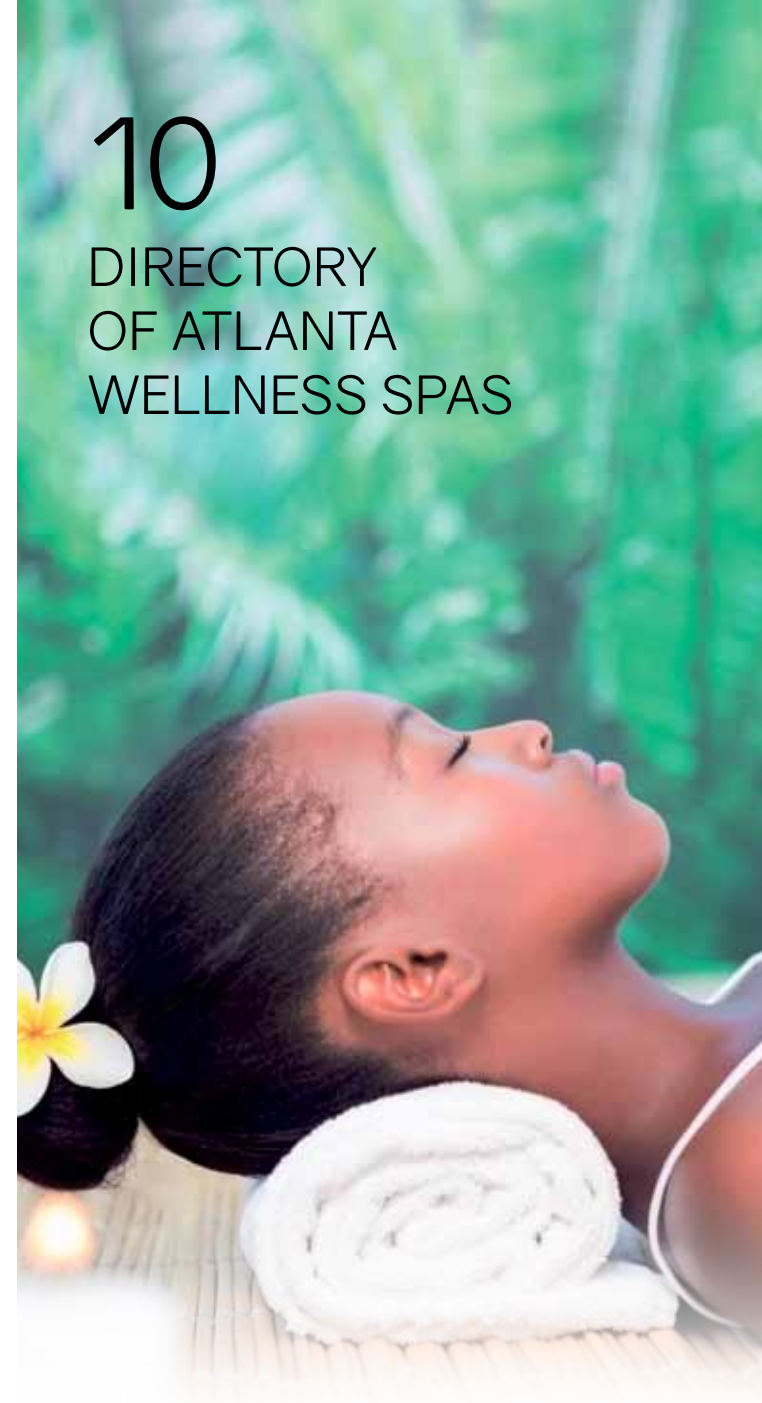


Janine Romaner
Naturopathic Doctor
770.640.6690
naturallyhealthy.ws



DECADES OF HEALING WISDOM
MOMENTS OF HEALING GRACE

10 DIRECTORY OF ATLANTA WELLNESS SPAS



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Founder, Vibrology Center
Atlanta, GA

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12 HAPPY HOLIDAY TIPS

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CORRECTIONS: The URL for Dr. Guy Gunter's practice, Healworks, is www.healworks.net. The November issue's "The Rise and Fall of Holistic Medicine in America," incorrectly stated it is www.healworks.com. In November's News Brief about Real Good Tea, Jason Santamaria's title was incorrect; it is Chief Information Officer. And Gregg Cohen's title was omitted; it's CEO.

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yoga editor	Mila Burgess
consulting editor	Trish Ahjel Roberts
calendar editor	Theresa Archer
copy editor	Sarah Donnell
writer	Sandra Bolan
design & layout	Steffi K. Kern
website	Adrita Ghosal
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CONTACT US
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ADVERTISING
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NATIONAL TEAM

ceo/founder	Sharon Bruckman
coo/franchise sales	Joe Dunne
layout	Gabrielle W-Perillo
financial manager	Yolanda Shebert
assistant director of ops	Heather Gibbs
digital content director	Rachael Oppy
national advertising	Lisa Doyle-Mitchell
administrative assistant	Anne-Marie Ryan

Natural Awakenings Publishing Corporation
4851 Tamiami Trail N., Ste. 200
Naples, FL 34103
Ph: 239-434-9392
NaturalAwakeningsMag.com

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Make the Chili



LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue happens to land between our national holiday for giving thanks and our season of giving. Of course, we should be doing both more than just once a year.

Prescriptions given by those advising others how to live happier inevitably include a gratitude practice. Recognizing that I could stand some improvement in this area, I started a gratitude journal this year; when I climb into bed, I write down three things about the day that I'm grateful for.

And you know what? It works! I write down three things, read them over and my heart just expands.

It's striking to me that so much of what I am grateful for are simple things. I often express gratitude for being able to move—for being healthy enough to walk, jog, lift weights, stretch. That may be in part a reaction to my mother's very poor health; it has been painful for me to see the person to whom I owe my life no longer able to walk.

I have continually given thanks for beautiful days—experiences of being outside feeling the sun upon my skin, being embraced by comfortable temperatures and being cooled by gentle breezes.

I also repeatedly feel appreciation for human connections. Whether I am having conversations with customers, prospects, interviewees or staff, this job continues to expose me to people who genuinely care about others and have dedicated their lives to being of service. I can't imagine many other jobs in which one constantly encounters everyday saints.

Then there was last Friday, a day in which I found myself in ecstasy all morning, brimming with gratitude for just one thing: being alive. I found myself calling

friends just to say how much I appreciate them, including our most wonderful managing editor, Diane Eaton. Just so y'all know, the high degree of editorial quality that greets you every month has everything to do with Diane.

Still, my most profound expressions of gratitude have been the thanks I give to difficult and undesirable situations. From the Buddhist perspective, the thing to do when bad things happen to you is to rejoice! They are the ripening of bad karma. They are the debts you no longer have to pay—assuming you take the opportunity to address the character flaws that created them in the first place.

According to a Google search, the electromagnetic frequency of gratitude is 540 megahertz (MHz) and that of love is 528 MHz. In other words, they are quite similar. But in practice, we think about gratitude in the context of receiving and love in the context of giving. In the "spirit of the season," I share with you a few of the more moving words about love I have recently encountered. Although I plucked these from Facebook posts—meaning, realistically, they might not be true—the sentiments are real. *[Posts have been lightly edited—Ed.]*

Love Lessons from Children

A group of children, aged four to eight, were asked: "What does love mean?" Here are some of their answers:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too."

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen."

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate."

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

To the original poster, "the winner was a four-year-old whose next-door neighbor was an elderly man who had recently lost his wife. When he saw the man crying, the boy went into the man's yard, climbed into his lap and sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, 'Nothing. I just helped him cry.'"

This is a second Facebook post. "A good friend of mine unexpectedly lost her husband. A couple of months later, we were running together, chatting about nothing. She asked what my dinner plans were, and I told her that hubby wanted chili, but I didn't feel like stopping at the store. We ran a few more minutes when she quietly said: 'Make the chili.'"



From all of us at Natural Awakenings to all of you:
May your holidays be full of love, joy, peace and calories that self-destruct upon touching your tongue.



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.

THE NATURAL AWAKENINGS DIRECTORY OF Atlanta Wellness Spas

Responding to reader input, we've compiled this directory of wellness spas. In a survey earlier this year, requests for more information on wellness spas ranked fourth out of 20 topics we listed. Plus, the last resource directory we published—on community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in April 2020—has become the sixth most-read article on our website since its publication. Clearly, directories are popular offerings!

Since there are tons of “spas” in the metro area, we were challenged to come up with a way to limit the number of spas eligible

for inclusion. By far, massage and facials are the most common health-oriented services offered in spas. Since *Natural Awakenings* is all about natural healing, we set a criteria that the facility must offer at least three wellness therapies other than massage and facials. We excluded services traditionally offered by doctors, such as chiropractic and acupuncture, as well as services we considered to be solely cosmetic in nature.

Therapies that fit the criteria include colon hydrotherapy, cryotherapy, detoxifying wraps, ear candling, energy healing, exfoliating scrubs, float tanks, ionic foot detox,

reflexology, salt caves, saunas (including infrared) and vaginal steam.

Note that the listings that follow contain a range of business settings. The directory is focused on wellness therapies offered; ambiance was not a criteria. Therefore, while some environments meet the mainstream perception of “spa,” others more closely resemble typical office settings. 🧘

Of course, it is likely we missed a few qualifying spas. To recommend additions to our digital version of this directory, please connect at publisher@naAtlanta.com.

3 A Mindful Movement
Therapies: Ayurvedic therapies including abhyanga and shirodhara; cryotherapy, float tank, hyperbaric chamber, infrared sauna, sound healing

12030 Etris Rd. #C200 | Roswell
AMindfulMovement.earth
Connect@AMindfulMovement.yoga
470-719-9558

7 Amruth Ayurveda
Therapies: Abhyanga, akshi tarpana, kafi basti, potli, shirodara, swedana, udwartana

5354 McGinnis Ferry Rd. STR 218 | Alpharetta
AmruthAyurveda.com
Info@AmruthAyurveda.com
470-395-4935

H Art of Touch Therapeutic Massage
Therapies: Lymphatic drainage, massage, neuromuscular therapy, reflexology

855 Peachtree St. NE | Atlanta
TheArtOfTouchMassage.com
404-602-4052

9 Clean Start Total Body Cleansing
Therapies: Body wraps, colon hydrotherapy, facials, infrared sauna, ionic foot detox, lymphatic drainage, massage, vaginal steam

10305 Medlock Bridge Rd. | Duluth
CleanStartCleansing.com
Info@CleanStartCleansing.com
770-837-9325

O Clear Path Wellness Center
Therapies: Biomagnetic therapy, colon hydrotherapy, ear candling, ionic foot detox, infrared sauna, reflexology, vaginal steam

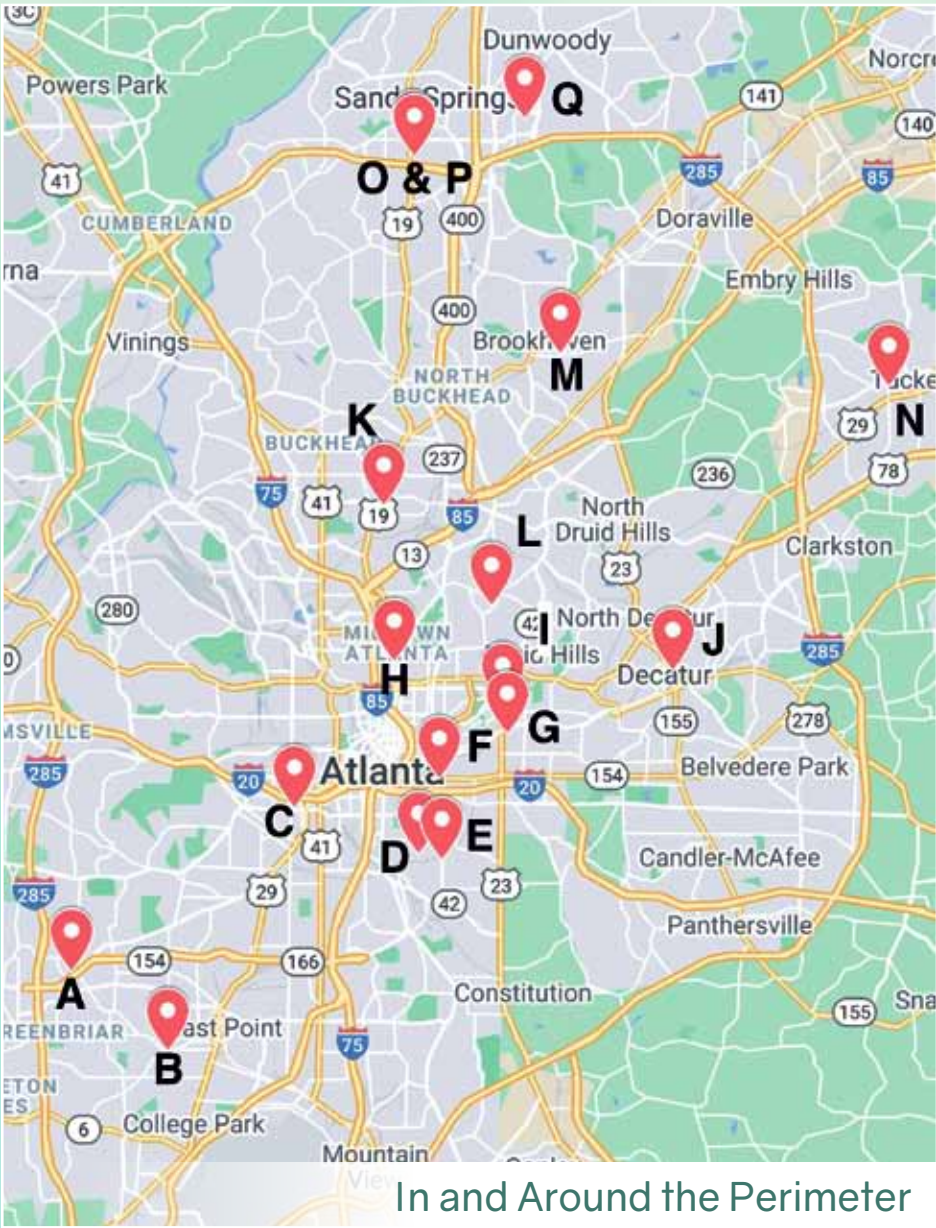
275 Carpenter Dr. #202 | Sandy Springs
ClearPathWellness.com
Info@ClearPathWellness.com
404-497-9268

E Danni Unwind Holistic Massage & Spa
Therapies: BioMat, ionic foot detox, massage, reflexology, vaginal steam

1099 Boulevard SE | Atlanta
DanniUnwindHolistic.com
678-235-4017

I FLO2S
Therapies: Float therapy, infrared sauna, ionic foot detox, massage

427 Moreland Ave. NE, #800 | Atlanta
FLO2S.com
Contact@FLO2s.com
678-856-8060



In and Around the Perimeter

Source: Google Maps

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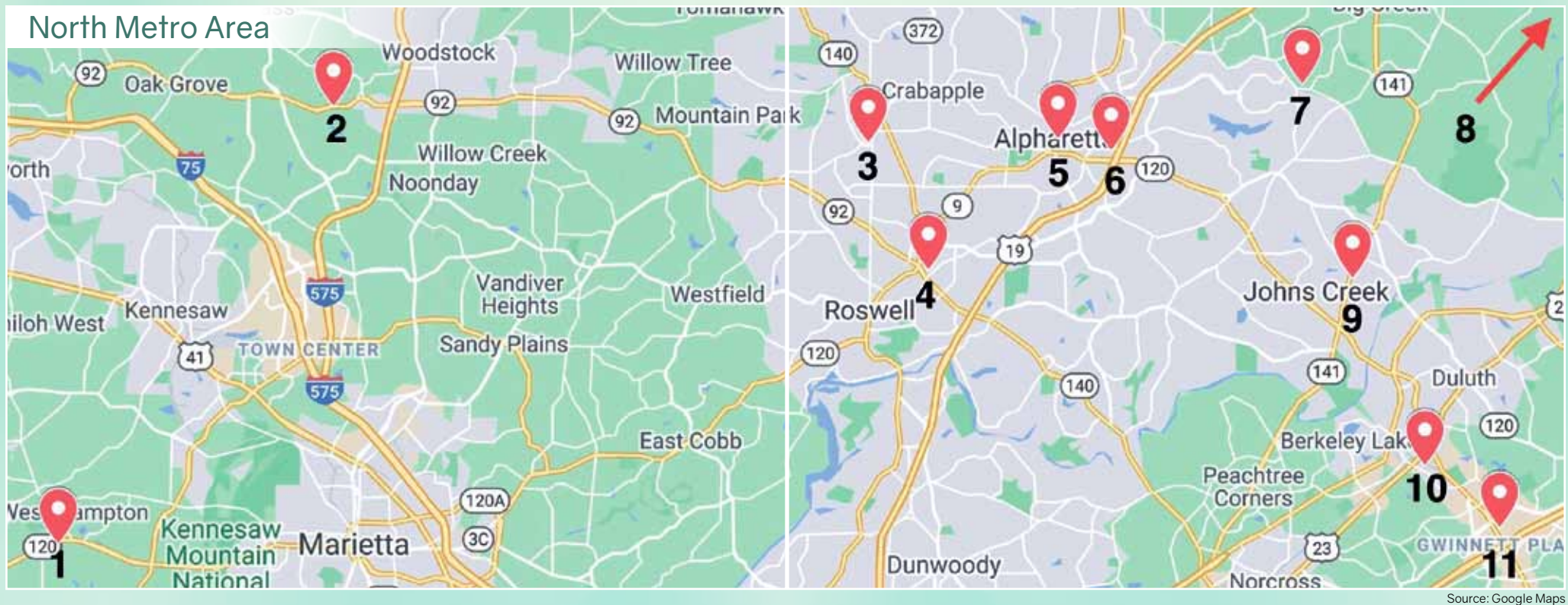


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warriorspa.com



WARRIOR
BODY SPA



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2 Forever And A Day

Therapies: BioMat, infrared sauna, negative ion therapy, reiki, salt cave

7830 Hwy. 92 | Woodstock
ForeverAndADay.biz
770-516-6969

P Heal Center

Therapies: Aromatherapy, craniosacral therapy, energy healing, massage, reflexology

270 Carpenter Dr. NE, Unit 500 | Sandy Springs
HealCenterAtlanta.com
Help@HealCenterAtlanta.com
404-303-0007

D Heal Thyself Atlanta

Therapies: Aromatherapy, colon hydrotherapy, energy healing, facials, ionic foot detox, hyperbaric chamber, hip baths, massage, reflexology

1040 Grant St. SE, #200 | Atlanta
HealThyselfATL.com
HealThyselfAtlanta@gmail.com
470-558-6339

8 Infinity Floating & Healing Center

Therapies: Cryotherapy, float therapy, ionic foot detox, oxygen therapy, massage

32 Johnson Rd. | Braselton
InfinityFloating.com
Info@InfinityFloating.com
706-654-7118

F Intown Salt Room

Therapies: Infrared sauna, meditation/sound healing therapy, salt cave

563 Memorial Dr. SE, Unit CU | Atlanta
IntownSaltRoom.com
Carrie@IntownSaltRoom.com
678-974-7867

11 Jeju Sauna

Therapies: Body exfoliation, hip bath, massage, reflexology, saunas

3555 Gwinnett Pl. Dr. NW | Duluth
JejuSauna.com
678-336-7414

G Majestic Medical Touch Spa

Therapies: Cupping, facials, massage, reflexology, reiki

1253, 109 Caroline St. NE, #E110 | Atlanta
MajesticTouchSpa.com
Info@MajesticTouchSpa.com
404-539-6713

Natural Body Spa & Shop

Therapies: Body exfoliation, facials, hand and foot treatments, massage

NaturalBody.com

J 225 E Ponce de Leon Ave. #150 | Decatur
404-370-1330

K 2385 Peachtree Rd. A3A | Atlanta
404-869-7722

L 1402 North Highland Ave. NE, #1 | Atlanta
404-872-1039

M 1432 Dresden Dr. #300 | Atlanta
404-816-8801

1 3625 Dallas Hwy. #605 | Marietta
770-874-7500

5 275 Commerce St. | Atlanta
678-869-1662

A Rejuvenate Wholistic Wellness

Therapies: Ear candling, ionic foot detox, massage, reiki, sauna, vaginal steam

3079 Campbellton Rd. SW, #106 | Atlanta
RejuvenateSelf.net
678-435-9251

10 Spa Land

Therapies: Body exfoliation, facials, massage, reflexology, saunas

2645 N Berkeley Lake Rd. NW, Bldg. C | Duluth
SpaLandGA.com
770-864-9934

B Space by Wholistic Grace

Therapies: BioMat, colon hydrotherapy, cryotherapy, ear candling, ionic foot detox, infrared sauna, vaginal steam

3045 Washington Rd. | East Point
SpaceByWholisticGrace.com
Info@SpaceByWholisticGrace.com
404-482-3447

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Natural Awakenings
Atlanta Spa map:
bit.ly/naa-spa-map

4 The Yoni House

Therapies: Chakra tune up, chi nei tsang, crystal therapy, facials, ionic foot detox, herbal bath, massage, reiki, sound healing, vaginal steam, womb smudging

770 Old Roswell Pl. | Roswell
TheYoniHouse.com
info@TheYoniHouse.com
678-901-9366

C Tikeyah Regenerative Health & Wellness Center

Therapies: Colon hydrotherapy, facials, ionic foot detox, massage, reiki, vaginal steam

879 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. SW | Atlanta
Tikeyah.com
404-916-5587

N Warrior Body Spa

Therapies: Body wraps, ear candling, facials, ionic foot detox, infrared sauna, massage

2298 Brackett Rd. | Tucker
WarriorSpa.com
Help@WarriorSpa.com
404-994-4498

Woodhouse Day Spa

Therapies: Body wraps, facials, massage, reflexology, shirodhara

6 7150 Avalon Blvd. | Alpharetta
bit.ly/WHS-Avalon
770-241-2733

Q 4400 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. NE #1805 | Atlanta
bit.ly/WHS-Dunwoody
770-377-3505

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Spice Up the Holidays with Healing Beverages from the Caribbean

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

Southeast of the United States, the Caribbean region is home to more than 700 islands, islets, reefs and cays. Caribbean restaurants proliferate in Atlanta and most major urban areas in the United States, but many of us do not realize that traditional Caribbean beverages offer healing properties along with their delicious flavors. They can be a great, refreshing and nutritious addition to spice up traditional holiday fare and an excellent alternative to sugary sodas and bottled juices. Here's to a new year full of new adventures, health and joy!

Jamaican Sorrel

Deep red in color and served cold and spicy or spiked with white rum, Jamaican sorrel is the traditional holiday beverage of the island. Sorrel is a plant in the hibiscus family, but this drink can also be made with traditional hibiscus. They are rich in flavonoids, which give it a bright color and act as a powerful antioxidant that can rid the body of free radicals that damage other cells in the body. According to the Jamaican Scientific Research Council (SRC), sorrel also contains a wide range of essential vitamins and minerals. It is known as a diuretic that improves kidney function and is believed to improve heart health by lowering bad cholesterol. Both premade concentrates and bottled beverages are available in the international sections of grocery stores, at specialty ethnic grocers and online. Here's a traditional recipe to enjoy at home:

2 cups loose sorrel or hibiscus flowers
¼ to 1 cup fresh ginger root



Ginger beer

10 pimento berries (allspice)
8 cups of water
Sweetener
Mint, lime or orange slices as garnish (optional)
Jamaican white rum (optional)

Wash the desired amount of ginger with water, chop it into pieces and mince in a high-powered blender. Transfer ginger to a pot or heat-safe pitcher and add sorrel or hibiscus flowers and pimento berries. Boil the water and pour it over the ginger/sorrel mixture. Allow it to brew for 6-8 hours or overnight. Strain well. Add sweetener to taste and add rum if desired. Cool in the refrigerator and serve over ice. Garnish with mint, lime or orange slices if desired.

Irish Sea Moss

Ever since Kim Kardashian posted a sea moss smoothie to her Instagram account in 2019, this plant has been getting a lot of attention in the U.S., but it's old news in the islands. It's a light blonde color and can be purchased whole and dried or as a supplement in gel or capsule form. And although it is named "Irish," it's a traditional beverage throughout the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Jamaica. Some studies suggest that

sea moss is a true wonder food; it is reported to help with weight loss and immune, thyroid and gut health. It might offer protection against neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and cancer, provide muscle and energy recovery after a workout, improve the health of skin and nails, and encourage fertility.

A traditional Caribbean drink, Irish Sea Moss is light-colored and thick like a milkshake and can serve as a healthy alternative to holiday eggnog. In fact, like eggnog, it takes nicely to a shot of rum or brandy and pumpkin pie spices. The main ingredient might seem a little unusual, but many find it worth the patience required to soak and boil the sea moss.

2 cups sea moss
4 cups sweetened almond milk
1 cup raisins
1 Tbsp peanut or almond butter
1 stick of cinnamon
1 tsp cardamom
1 tsp nutmeg
Sweetener (optional)

Rinse the sea moss more than once and then let it soak overnight in water. Boil with the cinnamon stick until it becomes soft like jelly, strain and let cool. Place in a high-powered blender with almond milk, raisins, peanut or almond butter, cardamom and nutmeg. Blend until smooth. Add additional sweetener, rum or brandy, if desired.

Jamaican Ginger Beer

Although the name suggests otherwise, ginger beer is alcohol-free. It is loaded with

the healing power of ginger, a prized root that is used around the world to treat a wide variety of ailments. Ginger has a long history in both traditional and alternative medicine, containing a compound called *gingerol*, which has powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Ginger root can be purchased fresh, dried, powdered, pickled or as an essential oil or supplement; it has been used to aid digestion and prevent nausea that often accompanies chemotherapy, surgery and pregnancy. Ginger is known to help fight the flu and common cold and may even help protect against cancer, bacteria and viruses. Some studies report that it might also help people maintain their ideal weight, reduce arthritis symptoms, lower blood sugar, improve heart health, reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels, improve brain health and decrease menstrual pain.

Ginger beer has gained more attention than most Caribbean beverages and might be found in the main or ethnic section of one's local grocer. But it's also easy to make a homemade version of it—just be prepared for a flat beverage without carbonation. On the other hand, light carbonation can be added by adding bottled seltzer to the recipe below.

2 cups ginger root
6-10 cups water (Use only 6 cups if planning to add seltzer)
Sweetener
4 limes
Carbonated water (optional)
Dark rum (optional)

Wash the ginger, chop into pieces and mince in a high-powered blender. Transfer to a pot or heat-safe pitcher. Boil the water, pour it over the minced ginger and let it brew for 6-8 hours or overnight. Strain well. Add sweetener to taste and seltzer, if desired. To make a Dark & Stormy cocktail, add dark rum and garnish with lime. 🍹



TrishAhjelRoberts.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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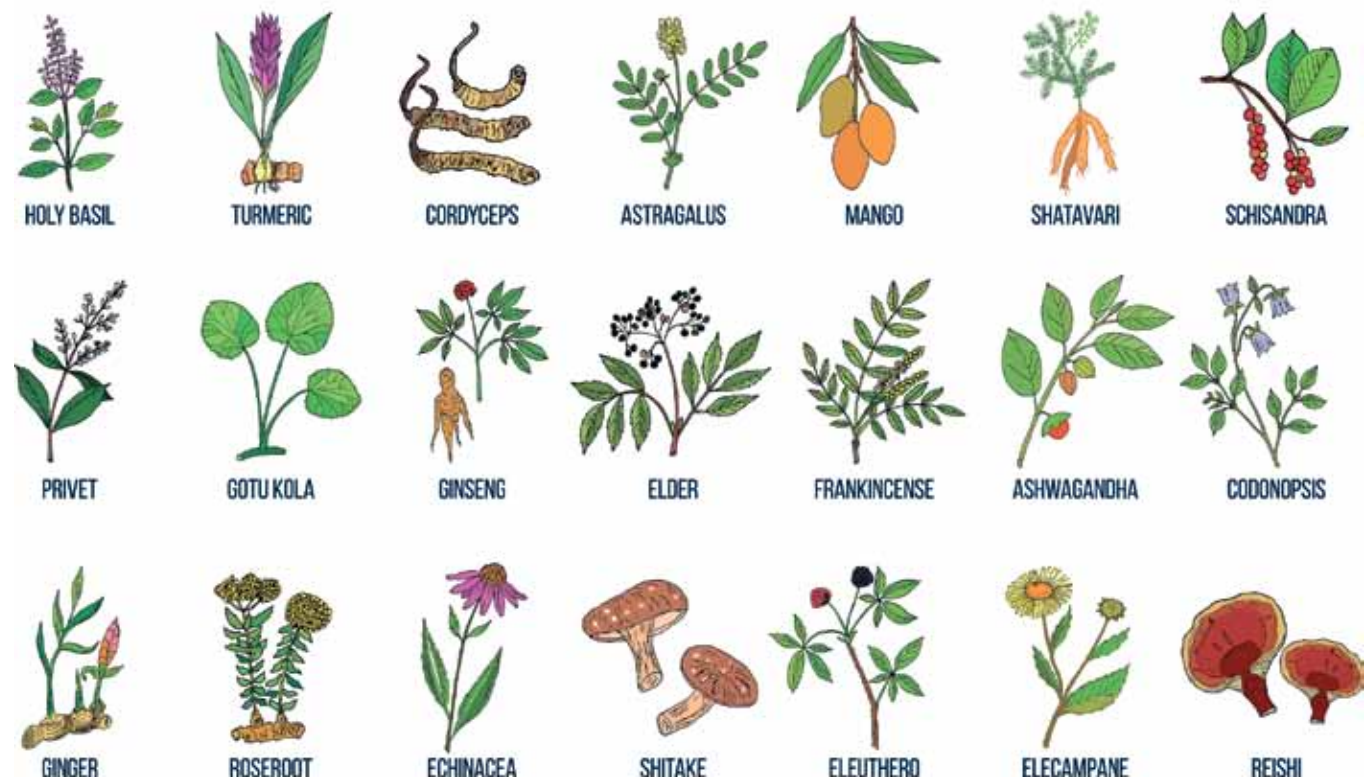
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Amp Up Immunity

Proven Boosters for Good Health

by Ronica O'Hara



As we head into the holidays, a gift that many of us wish for is a strong immune system to protect us not only from serious illness, but also from wintry coughs and sniffles. Robust immunity rests on three pillars, research shows: getting at least seven hours of sleep a night to allow immune functions to reboot; daily exercise to stimulate the production of white blood cells that fight off harmful bacteria and viruses; and plant-based foods to supply the antioxidants and phytochemicals needed to reduce inflammation and keep cells humming happily. In addition, we can enhance immunity by adding specific adaptogens and mushroom powders into our daily routine. These study-proven substances perform specific functions in the immune system that boost our resistance to illness. As powders, they can be easily added into drinks or foods, and they can also be taken as tinctures or pills.

Modulating Immunity with Adaptogens

Used for millennia in China and India, adaptogens are plants

that keep the body in balance by helping it adapt to stress. They interact with the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, a complex system of glands, hormones and receptors that helps manage homeostasis, stress responses and energy metabolism. “Adaptogens are a great way to boost immunity, especially if you are constantly sick and run down due to feeling stressed,” says Heather Hanks, a Plymouth, Michigan, nutritionist with USA Rx. Adaptogens typically take two or three weeks to become effective; follow package directions for proper dosage. **ASTRAGALUS** (*Astragalus membranaceus*), an herb called loco-weed in the U.S., boosts immune function by increasing natural killer cell activity and enhancing the function of macrophages, the “immune sentinels” that reside in tissues. A recent review suggests that long-term use of astragalus might help prevent colds, and taking it for up to six weeks may relieve seasonal allergy symptoms such as runny nose, itching and sneezing. It has also been shown to improve recovery after illness, disease or prolonged stress and to help post-chemotherapy patients regain health.

Polish researchers found that rowing team athletes given 500 milligrams of astragalus root extract each day for six weeks had immune systems that recovered faster after strenuous exercise. **PANAX GINSENG**, a perennial plant from East Asia, keeps the immune system in balance by regulating its components, including macrophages, dendritic cells and both T and B cells. It improves resistance to illness and microbial attacks, helps counter stress, controls inflammation, improves cognitive functions and has been found effective in the treatment of cancer, neurodegenerative disorders, insulin resistance and hypertension.

TULSI (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*), also known as holy basil, “enhances the immune response, protects the body against bacterial and viral infection and promotes clear and comfortable breathing,” says Ameya Duprey, a certified Ayurvedic practitioner in Nevada City, California. Studies show that it also helps prevent liver, kidney and brain injury by protecting against the genetic, immune and cellular damage caused by pesticides, pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals.

The Marvel of Medicinal Mushrooms

Used medicinally since at least 3,000 BCE, certain mushrooms have been found to have antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, cardiovascular-protective, anti-diabetic, liver-protective and anticancer properties. They are usually not cooked, but rather taken as a powder that can be added to foods like smoothies, cereals and stir-fries. Reishi mushrooms increase the activity of killer cells and lower inflammation in white cells, warding off infections. “They are used by cancer patients, as they support a healthy immune system, have antioxidant properties and may prevent or treat infections,” says Linda Strause, Ph.D., an adjunct professor of human nutrition at University of California San Diego, whose husband with brain cancer was encouraged to take the mushrooms as a supplement.

CORDYCEPS (*Cordyceps sinensi*) is harvested from the larvae of caterpillars in the high Himalayas. In a randomized, eight-week Korean study of 79 adults, supplementing with 1.7 grams of cordyceps extract daily led to a significant 38 percent increase in the activity of natural killer cells that protect against infection. It

has been used traditionally to treat fatigue, sexual dysfunction, asthma, kidney problems, high blood pressure and weak hearts. **TURKEY TAIL** (*Trametes versicolor*) contains a compound called polysaccharide-K that stimulates the immune system. It also acts as a prebiotic, which promotes the health of the gut microbiome, a key player in immunity. A Harvard Medical School study of 22 healthy people found that taking 3,600 milligrams of polysaccharopeptide extracted from turkey tail mushrooms each day led to beneficial changes in gut bacteria and suppressed the growth of problematic E. coli and shigella bacteria.

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



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The Best Books for Kids

Gift Choices that Can Open Up Worlds

by Sandra Yeyati



Helping children learn to read and love books is one of the greatest parental endeavors. Many kids learn their first words after hearing the adults in their lives sing a lullaby or tell them a nursery rhyme. “Building a child’s vocabulary is the key to reading, and rhymes, singing, word games, synonyms, homonyms and rap are great places to start,” says Claudette McLinn, executive director of the Los Angeles-based Center for the Study of Multicultural Children’s Literature and former librarian, teacher, school administrator and children’s bookstore owner.

A child’s first reading experience will likely involve a picture book. “What’s

powerful about picture books is that the illustrations and text intertwine,” McLinn explains. “You can read them aloud together. As the child looks at the artwork, the adult can ask, ‘What is that?’ And the child can use their imagination while you teach them to observe, articulate and start the reading process.”

To encourage childhood reading, it’s helpful to have a variety of books around the house and to set aside reading time every day. “It costs nothing to check out a pile of 25 books at the library, take them home and try them,” says Maeve Knoth, a librarian at Phillips Brooks School, in Menlo Park, California. When buying

books, she suggests consulting librarians and booksellers for recommendations, as well as relying on book awards such as the Newbery or Caldecott medals, and on book lists compiled every year by reputable organizations and committees, notably the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association.

Choosing books for kids should always start by discovering what their passions or interests are and then finding a good book on that subject, says McLinn, adding that encouraging children to browse the shelves and choose their own books is an empowering exercise that builds self-esteem and

a love of reading. Whether it’s dinosaurs, cars or the stars and planets, there’s a kid’s book about it. “Although fiction is important early on because it increases imagination, nonfiction books help kids learn new information and understand the role of the table of contents, the glossary and index, and informative diagrams,” she says, adding that she prefers award-winning nonfiction books because they’ve been vetted for accuracy.

“Kids often gravitate toward books that are a little bit less challenging,” Knoth says. “While I have no objection to those popular books, which are lots of fun, they’re not going to give kids a new way to think about themselves or the world. I want my children to have consequential reading experiences with books that offer new points of view where kids can live in someone else’s heart and mind for a little while. I want them to know what it might be like to live in a different time period or to grow up in China.”

According to Knoth, a great children’s book will include an engaging character that has an experience, prompting them to change and grow. “I want it to be well structured and beautifully written, with setting, point of view and all those elements that fit together to create a theme and give you a literary experience,” she explains. She looks for nuanced books that invite kids to use their imagination and find their own way. “The reader might be young, but they’re not dumb. They just haven’t had lots of experiences yet. If a book concludes with one narrow solution to a child’s problem, then I would say it’s not that useful or successful,” says Knoth, a frequent contributor to *The Horn Book*, a resource for children’s book reviews and articles.

McLinn believes that kids should be exposed to a diversity of authors and illustrators that explore the lives of all cultures. “We live in silos with the people in our group, and we don’t know anything about other groups,” she explains. “When you read about other cultures, you learn that we are more alike than we are different. We may eat different foods, wear different clothing and have different customs, but you find out that it’s not scary. Kids love to read about heroes that they can identify

with and become their friends. Children are into social justice and fairness. As a child, I loved biographies. I wanted to read about great people and what made them great so that maybe I could be great like them.”

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

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Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature: Tinyurl.com/Asian-Pacific-American-Award

Sydney Taylor Book Award, portraying the Jewish experience: Tinyurl.com/Sydney-Taylor-Award

CHILDREN’S BOOK LISTS

Rainbow Book List, presenting LGBTQIA+ viewpoints: glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks

Best Books by the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children’s Literature: csmcl.org/best-books-2020

Cooperative Children’s Book Center Booklists, various topics: Tinyurl.com/ccbcBookList

Association for Library Service to Children Book Lists, various genres and topics: Tinyurl.com/alscBookList

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HOLIDAY ZEN

Stress-Free Fitness and Self-Care

by Maya Whitman

Despite our best efforts, holiday time can frazzle our nerves and snag us in an unhealthy loop of overindulgence. To combat holiday pressure, the Mayo Clinic suggests maintaining a regular exercise program and investing in me-time activities like meditation and deep breathing. Movement and simple self-care, even for a few minutes, can lower cortisol levels that often contribute to excessive food cravings. Walking, going for a run, lifting weights, or getting into the pool or onto the yoga mat can help us enjoy the season with less angst.



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Cancelling Guilt, Staying Healthy

With simple strategies, enjoying the office party dessert table doesn't have to get us off track. "One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself when reaching for a cookie is to be in full approval of eating it. Let your experience of eating it be clean, present and so free of resistance that you can really experience it," says Maria Miller, a spiritual life coach in Oceanside, California.

Stephanie Mansour, host of the weekly national PBS health and fitness show *Step It Up with Steph*, also opts for a no-stress approach, especially when it comes to working out. "When cortisol levels are through the roof, we crave fattening, salty or sweet foods. Studies have shown that people have a more positive body image just after five minutes of exercise," says the Chicago-based wellness coach. "This mindset is huge when it comes to eating healthier and taming holiday cravings."

Bolstering neurotransmitters through good nutrition can take the edge off the to-do list or a gloomy winter day. "When we fuel our bodies with a variety of whole foods, we are also supporting healthy brain function, which has a direct impact on our emotions," says Teigan Draig, a life coach in Spencerville, Ohio. Draig suggests berries, citrus fruits, fresh fish, turkey, walnuts, almonds, avocados and eggs to boost serotonin and dopamine levels, "which improve mood and help to reduce the effects of stress and anxiety on the body."

Prioritizing Self

Most of us are short on time, but committing to good health doesn't require hours at the gym. "Many of my clients are looking for fast, simple workouts that they can squeeze in during the holidays," says Mansour. "Set the timer for five minutes and get down on the floor to do ab exercises. Doing leg lifts, bicycle abs and crunches for five minutes is an excellent way to fire up the core." She also suggests setting the morning alarm or going to sleep at night five minutes earlier to do some stretches in bed. "If you're cooking, you can do squats in the kitchen while a smoothie is blending or calf raises while stirring a pot on the stove."

For Miller, putting on some music and dancing in the living room is a sure way to get a boost. She is also a fan of guilt-free, unplugged intervals of shut-eye: "Five-to-25-minute power naps are a great way to rest and recharge with a very high return on your investment of time." During the winter months, it can be easy to turn to screens for distraction and as a way to cope with the stress of the season. Miller reminds us to nourish our souls and get out

in nature to "notice the way the weather impacts your body, the way it feels to draw in a breath and how you're part of a constant exchange with life through each breath you take."

Inhaling Peace

Conscious breathing makes the effects of workouts go further and halts the cascade of stress hormones. "Whatever fitness routine you're doing is fine, just always breathe through your nose. Mouth breathing triggers cortisol release," says Ed Harrold, breathwork and performance coach in Draper, Utah, and author of *Life with Breath*. "When we slow the breath rate, we encourage a relaxation response. We can manage the release of cortisol by inhaling through the nose, slowly from the belly to the collarbone and exhaling slowly through the nose by gently drawing the belly back into the lower spine. This is called diaphragmatic breathing and is our proper breath, even during exercise."

For nature, winter is a time of repose from which we can take a cue and enjoy the moment. Draig muses, "Mindfulness requires us to be present in the here and now, rather than worrying about the to-do list or stressing over holiday finances." 🧘

Maya Whitman writes about natural health and living a more beautiful life. Connect at Ekstasis28@gmail.com.

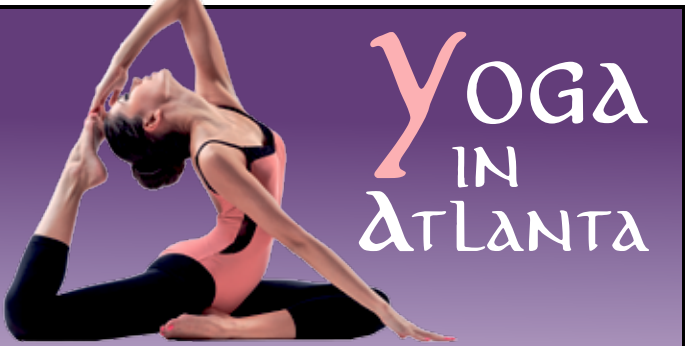
Winter Wisdom Tips

FROM STEPHANIE MANSOUR:

- If you know you're going to be out for holiday cocktails and sweets, commit to eating an additional serving of greens, perhaps by putting extra greens in your lunch salad, eating sautéed spinach before you leave for the party or adding greens to your protein shake in the morning.
- Set up a "self-care corner" in your home and stack it with motivational books, journals, candles and a cozy blanket. Designate this home sanctuary as a place you can go for peace, quiet and enjoyment without electronics.
- My clients have enjoyed using meditation apps that focus on a topic. Insight Timer has meditations that focus on self-care, weight loss and sleep. I like the prayer app Hal-low for people who are looking to improve their prayer life or do a meditation while praying.

FROM ED HARROLD:

- Practice diaphragmatic breathing while walking, then take it into whatever exercise routine you enjoy. If you feel the need to mouth-breathe, slow down and reestablish a steady rhythm of breath.
- Use your breath as a tool to stay in the present moment; don't place energy on outdated thought-forms. Be aware that you are exactly what the world needs right now, and the gifts you bring to the table are always big enough.



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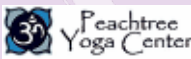
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Yoga Boot Camp – 6-7am. In-person & online. Get toned, build strength and flexibility. Yoga postures, breathwork, mudra and mantra in a physically challenging approach that will get you in shape fast. \$14/drop-in. Kashi Atlanta Urban Yoga Ashram, 1681 McLendon Ave NE, Atlanta. 404-687-3353. KashiAtlanta.org.

tuesdays

All Levels Yoga – 6-7pm. Also Thurs. Improve strength, flexibility and balance through fluid movement and sustained holds in asanas (postures). \$16. The Open Mind Center, 1425 Market Blvd, Ste 500, Roswell. 678-629-3630. TheOpenMindCenter.com.

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Yoga to Support Your Nervous System – 6-7pm. In-person & online. Class designed to tend and care for your specific system and be encouraged to make choices that feel the most supportive to you. No yoga experience necessary. \$14/drop-in. Kashi Atlanta Urban Yoga Ashram, 1681 McLendon Ave NE, Atlanta. 404-687-3353. KashiAtlanta.org.

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Circles of Healing

The Power of Gathering in Community

by Linda Sechrist

Had the intellectual achievements of human culture evolved during a revolution based on living systems in the natural world rather than one of rapid industrial growth and resource consumption, we might be experiencing interconnectedness instead of divisiveness during this time of social and ecological crisis.

A nature-focused revolution embracing humans as an integral part of the Earth's natural systems would have instilled a deeper understanding of the wonders of the human body as a living system imbued with inner intelligence, as well as the intelligence of the non-human living world. This perspective, held by Native Americans, would have helped to create sustainable human communities that flourish by connecting, collaborating, cooperating and communicating.

With such approaches as wisdom circles, story circles, power of eight intention circles, support groups, prayer circles and dialogue circles exploring conflict solutions, Western minds are just beginning to comprehend how small-community experiences of fellowship and communion can assuage feelings of separation and isolation, and create inner experiences of wholeness and belonging.

Mentoring Each Other

Although not always sharing a common geographical location, small communities formed around common interests and shared values enable emotional healing. The ManKind Project (MKP), which describes itself as a "men's community for the 21st century," has more than 1,000 peer-facilitated groups in 22 countries in which men mentor each other through their life passages.

"In our MKP communities, there's a sense of shared commitment and the shared values of accountability, authenticity, compassion, generosity, integrity, respect, leadership and multi-cultural awareness, along with a shared vision pointing us in the direction we want to go together," says Boysen Hodgson, MKP-USA communications director. "While MKP's mission statement informs our work, in New Warrior Adventure training, each man creates a personal mission statement. Mine is, 'I transform culture by designing change, building bridges and co-creating space for connection.'"

According to Hodgson, when a man shares how he hears his inner voice for the first time along with his story in another man's story, he becomes aware of his interior capacities and cultivates

internal and external listening skills. By sharing personal stories, men experience epiphanies that can result in connections and bonding.

Douglas Bonar, a 35-year veteran of mental health counseling and owner of A Center for Wellness, in Pinellas Park, Florida, has been facilitating men's groups for 22 years. Men and occasionally women that have been court-ordered to undergo counseling with Bonar for 29 weeks after their incarceration learn the value of growing together in community. "I initiate the uninitiated who've never heard about the powerful impacts of respectful, attentive listening without judgement, giving/receiving feedback and support, and learning about successes and failures in the company of community," says Bonar. "Actively engaging the minds, hearts and energy of people participating in community makes experiencing emotional healing possible. Feeling truly heard and deeply listened to and comprehending life from a multi-sensory human perception and a sense of oneness can lead to understanding that we are never alone, the universe is alive—conscious, intelligent and compassionate."

More about progress than perfection, Bonar's unique Roots and Wings Way of Wholeness approach to healing in community tills the soil of an inner world and plants seeds via the introduction of guidelines for creating authentic power, spiritual growth, levels of consciousness, coherence, the realization of one's true self as more than an enculturated personality, the Noetic experience of oneness, humans as energetic beings, emotions as energy in motion and a coherent energetic field that

the HeartMath Institute notes creates synchronization, or entrainment, between the heart and mind, as well as a sense of unity.

Sharing Sacred Space

Jean Shinoda Bolen, a Jungian psychiatrist, activist and author of *Moving Toward the Millionth Circle: Energizing the Global Women's Movement*, encourages everyone to follow a path with soul and take on a personal assignment that contributes to change, while relying on the support of circle communities of like-minded individuals. "Fundamental principles applicable to any group include creating sacred space, listening with compassion and for wisdom, speaking from the heart and personal experience, inviting silence and reflection when needed, taking responsibility for your experience and your impact on the circle, keeping the confidence of the circle and making decisions when needed by consensus," says Bolen, whose active events include a prayer circle and another with women she has been together with since the 1980s.

"The more frequently a circle meets to fully witness one another's life stories, including all the changes and crises, a growing trust and heart connection occurs and a coherent energy field is created," says Bolen. At the beginning of her circle gatherings, upon hearing the tone of a Tibetan bowl, she says, everyone immediately

The Mantram of Unification

The sons of men are one
and I am one with them.

I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not
exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward
of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer
form, and life and all events,
And bring to light the
love which underlies the
happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate
and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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drops into coherence; a state of connectedness in which the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Cultivating Deep Listening

As the host of *New Dimensions*, a nationally syndicated radio program that addresses cultural shifts, Justine Willis Toms has deeply explored interconnectedness with some of the greatest minds on the planet, including the Dalai Lama and physicist David Bohm. Referring to her circle communities as “friends of the heart,” she enthuses, “When I am deeply listening to another or speaking authentically aloud in a circle of trust, I get to hear myself in a way that I don’t if I’m only listening to what is in my head.”

Recalling a tumultuous time in her life, Toms relates a profound healing experience that occurred in a circle community in which she and her husband had been participating since the 1980s. “This particular circle usually gathers for an entire week-end. On one, I arrived in deep distress—so much so that on Friday I began pouring out my fears, anxiety, blame and judgments. I raged through the night and didn’t stop until after breakfast on Saturday, when I felt complete, totally heard, emotionally healed and revived.”

From a sense of peace and clarity, Toms knew that healing occurred because of the circle’s capacity for deep listening. “We know and trust the true genius that each of us is, and we know how to not be afraid for each other when life is in a rollercoaster cycle and we’re at the bottom, but don’t want to pull the brake because we’ll never have the momentum to go back up. This is the power of a circle of friends of the heart who love you,” says Toms, who shares a favorite African saying, “A friend is someone who knows your song and sings it to you when you have forgotten it. Those who love you are not fooled by the mistakes you’ve made or the dark images you hold about yourself. They remember your beauty when you feel ugly,

your wholeness when you are broken, your innocence when you’re feeling guilty and your purpose when you are confused.”

Connecting through Common Emotions

Physician Jennifer Phelps, owner of Phelps MD Integrative Medicine, in Redding, Connecticut, is a trained facilitator of small groups who has worked in communities traumatized by natural disasters and human-caused catastrophes in her role as a faculty member of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine, in Washington, D.C. “Where individuals listen to the grief and loss of others, emotional healing can be quite profound. Sharing stories in community, we learn we’re not alone and isolated, but rather related and connected in our human emotions,” says Phelps, adding that in groups of fewer than six people cohesiveness dissipates, leaving only conversation and cross-talk.

The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship and community. According to Cate Montana, of Kula, Hawaii, author of *The E-Word: Ego, Enlightenment & Other Essentials*, awakening to the illusion of separation, which can happen in community, sparks healing. “The persona of an individual as only a body and mind is the big sleep,” advises Montana, whose life work has been about waking people up to the truth of their essential spiritual nature and giving them tools for a more fulfilling life.

Having experiences of fellowship and communion with like-minded people can make it possible to observe and understand how ego and mind function, and to become aware of crippling social programming which fragments, separates and divides us. Experiencing a sense of wholeness in such an environment allows for healing naturally on many levels. 🌱

Linda Sechrist is Natural Awakenings’ senior staff writer. Connect at LindaSechrist.com.


A snowflake is one of nature's most fragile things,
but look what they can do if they stick together. ~Unknown



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Nature's Virus Killer

Copper can stop a cold before it starts

By Doug Cornell

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

Colds start when cold viruses get in your nose. Viruses multiply fast. If you don't stop them early, they spread and cause misery.

In hundreds of studies, EPA and university researchers have confirmed that viruses and bacteria die almost instantly when touched by copper.

That's why 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 and destroys the cell in seconds.

Tests by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) show germs die fast on copper. So some hospitals tried copper for touch surfaces like faucets and doorknobs. This cut the spread of MRSA and other illnesses by over half, and saved lives.

The strong scientific evidence gave inventor Doug Cornell an idea. When he felt a cold about to start he fashioned a smooth copper probe and rubbed it gently in his nose for 60 seconds.

"It worked!" he exclaimed. "The

cold never got going. That was September 2012. I use copper in the nose every time and I have not had a single cold since then."

"We can't make product health claims," he said, "so I can't say cause and effect. But we know copper is antimicrobial."

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 through 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 led one of the teams confirming the research. He placed millions of disease germs on copper. "They started to die literally as soon as they touched the surface," he said.

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

The handle is curved and textured to increase contact. Copper can kill germs picked up on fingers and hands after you touch things other people have touched.

The EPA says copper still works even when tarnished.

CopperZap is made in the U.S. of pure

copper. It has a 90-day full money back guarantee. It is available for \$79.95. Get \$10 off each CopperZap with code **NATA24**.

Go to www.CopperZap.com or call toll-free 1-888-411-6114.

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New device puts copper right where you need it.



Dr. Bill Keevil: Copper quickly kills cold viruses.

Thomas Moore on the Art of Soulful Listening

by Marlaina Donato



photo by Simone Anne

What inspired you to write Soul Therapy?

We need more therapeutic conversations in all areas of life, and my book is for the ordinary person, as well as the professional therapist. We could talk to each other with the intention of befriending and offering useful care. Medicine is in need of an injection of this therapeutic talking and listening to add soul and spirit to an otherwise materialistic approach to the human being.

What is soul therapy in modern times?

The ancient Greeks wrote extensively about the soul. Their word was *psyche*, so it takes very little effort to see how psychotherapy is about caring for the soul. The ancients felt that the soul's natural home is in the "underworld", and soul therapy sees it the same way. We are not interested in causing behavior changes or finding explanations for current problems. These don't go deep enough. They do not touch the underworld, or deep narratives and memories of a person. For example, if a person complains that he eats too much, then we might go deep and see if the underlying issue is a failure to nourish his life and person. We look for metaphors and layers of meaning. We don't want change for the sake of change. We don't necessarily expect a person to feel better or be better adjusted to life. We stay close to the symptom, like eating too much, and hope to see it fulfilled at a deeper level, truly nourishing your life.

What soul work is required of the helper to be able to address the needs of others?

The helper in soul therapy has to learn to observe carefully, and at a deep level, the narrative or story being lived out, often un-

consciously, in a client. The arts, mythology, alchemy, dreams—these can all give hints about the deeper story being lived. The soul therapist does not give much advice, if any, and doesn't try to figure a person out. He or she stays close to the symptoms to see what the pain and confusion are all about. A person gets to know better the desires and fears that motivate him, without judgment or agenda. You try to see where the soul might have been wounded or not cared for.

Why do you think there is a perceived increase in anxiety and depressive disorders?

Our underlying philosophy or way of seeing everything is based on quantified studies, brain and laboratory research and the need to explain and define everything. There is no room for mystery and its language, which is poetic and metaphorical. The soul suffers.

How can we truly listen to others and cultivate authentic presence?

Today we often debate rather than converse. We want to win arguments rather than gain deep insight. You listen well only when you find peace in yourself and give up the need to be always right.

What gives you hope for humanity?

In spite of all our problems today, I am an optimist. Humanity is very slowly evolving into a more humane community of Earth beings. We have a long way to go. I see our young people today, many of them impatient to create a different kind of global culture, one that has the courage and vision to deal with our ecological crisis and create a peaceful political planet. They are not plagued with cynicism or despair. We can't give up our idealism and surrender to pessimism. The world has always had deep troubles. The challenge should bring out all our creativity and passion for life. 🌱

Marlaina Donato is an author and recording artist. Connect at WildFlowerLady.com.



DYING WELL

Four Steps to a Good Death

by Ronica O'Hara

On his deathbed, Apple founder Steve Jobs looked for a long time at his children, his sister and his wife, then moved his gaze to the space behind them. “Oh wow! Oh wow! Oh wow!” he gasped. No one can know for certain what he was experiencing, but his words point to the deep, mysterious potential of our final hours—the awareness of which can transform our life long before its end.

“An awareness of dying, of death, can wake us up to life. It helps us live a life that’s rich and full and meaningful. When we deny the truth of dying, we live less wholeheartedly, less completely,” says Frank Ostaseski, founder of the pioneering San Francisco Zen Hospice Project and author of *The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*.

The pandemic has 51 percent of us thinking more about our own mortality, a survey shows. The subject of death has been slowly opening up in America: TV programs like *Six Feet Under* and *Alternative Endings: Six New Ways to Die in America* present dying and grief more realistically; thousands of small conversational gatherings called “death cafes” are being held each year; people are designing their own funerals and choosing green burial sites; and the field of “death doulas” is emerging to help families navigate the legal and emotional shoals. Half a century after the release of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’ seminal book *On Death and Dying*, palliative care to ease pain is offered by two-thirds of American hospitals, and Medicare funding for end-of-life hospice care has grown tenfold over the last two decades.

Yet for many, death remains the last taboo—85 percent of us have not discussed our last wishes yet with loved ones. Thousands of studies in the emerging field of experimental existential psychology have found that when reminded subconsciously of death, people tend to drive faster, drink harder, smoke more and get meaner to out-groups in attempts to lower their anxiety.

But when we look death squarely in the face, that anxiety recedes, the research concludes. Gratitude, self-honesty and the humility of recognizing our place in the larger whole are also proven antidotes. With less fear, we are better able to take the proactive, concrete steps that ease our passage—getting clear on our values and desires, having important conversations, attending to final decisions and opening to our spiritual process. Although death has its own ways and means, these four processes can make it more likely we will die as we would like to.

Defining What We Value “Deeply consider what your priorities in life are,” says Tarron Estes, founder and CEO of The Conscious Dying Institute, in Boulder, which has trained more than 6,500 doulas since 2013. “Ask yourself, if I had only three months to live, what’s important to me spiritually, emotionally, physically? What do I still need to do or say?” She recommends Stephen Levine’s book, *A Year to Live*, for exercises and meditations for that process.

“Don’t wait until the time of your dying to discover what it has to teach you,” advises Ostaseski, who has sat beside more than 2,000 hospice patients in their last hours. “When I’m with dying people, the things that are important to them are not their spiritual beliefs, but are more about relationships—‘Am I loved? Did I love well?’ Those two questions are useful inquiries now. They help us to discover where value and meaning can be found.”

By applying our values to the dying process, we can start sorting through options. Do we want to die at home or in a hospital? What medical procedures will we accept or decline? What measures do we want to be taken to sustain our life? Who do we want to be at our side? And what do we need to say before that time?

Having Important Conversations As daunting as the prospect of an end-of-life talk with family and friends may seem, it can start with simple words like “I want to talk with you about something important to me.” Without spelling out our desires, death can become inadvertently medicalized: Nine in 10 of us say we want to die in our homes, but only two in 10 do. “The default systems are all to treat, treat, treat, until someone finally says, ‘No,’ so many people end up on a high-tech conveyor belt to the ICU,” says award-winning journalist Katy Butler, author of *The Art of Dying Well: A Practical Guide to a Good End of Life*. Among people that undertake such talks, 73 percent describe the experience as positive, reassuring and productive. A downloadable Conversation Starter Guide (TheConversationProject.org) provides practical guidance for these critical conversations.

Attending to Medical and Burial Decisions Taking care of business—the paperwork aspects of death known as advance directives—spares loved ones from having to make tough decisions later. A last will and testament precludes pain and infighting among family and friends. A living will specifies what treatments are wanted under what conditions. A medical power of attorney designates a trusted person to make medical decisions if a patient is not capable. A Do Not Resuscitate order approved by a doctor means emergency medical workers are less likely to give CPR, which frequently causes trauma and broken ribs in elderly or frail patients. Either cremation or a burial can be decided upon; environmental options such as a forest burial in a wooden casket can be explored. Local hospice options can be surveyed in advance; nonprofits generally are rated better than profit-making groups.

Opening to the Spiritual Process Whether or not we have religious beliefs to carry us through waves of loss and sorrow, death can spur spiritual insight. “In dying, we withdraw from our outer circles and come into the inner circles of our lives—the rela-

tionships that matter most to us,” says Ostaseski, who has worked four decades with hospice patients. “There’s a growing silence that has us becoming more contemplative and reflective. Our sense of time and space changes and we enter into a kind of free flow. The boundaries we have lived by begin to dissolve, and we start to feel ourselves as part of something larger—not as a belief, but as a natural occurrence. Often people realize themselves to be more than the small, separate self they had thought themselves to be.”

Joan Tollifson, a Zen-trained spiritual teacher and author of *Death: The End of Self-Improvement*, concurs: “When the future disappears, we are brought home to the immediacy that we may have avoided all our lives. With no future left to fantasize about, the focus of attention may finally be fully on right Now, the only place where our life ever actually is. Really getting that ‘This is it,’ there may be a sudden recognition of the absolute preciousness and wonder of every simple ordinary thing and of the people around us, just as they are, with all their flaws and foibles. Old grudges and resentments often melt away, and love shines through.

“All the things which may have been part of our self-image—dependence, physical strength, cognitive sharpness, good appearance and so on—have either disappeared or are rapidly collapsing, which invites the discovery that none of that really mattered, that what we truly or more fundamentally are is not dependent on any of that.

“The greatest gift we can give to a loved one who is dying,” says Tollifson, is to “simply be present, listen, follow your heart, trust the process. Everything else will follow from that. There’s no right or wrong way.”

It can be difficult to know what to say to a loved one near the end, but hospice workers recommend five phrases that have deep healing potential, even if a person seems unconscious: “I love you,” “Thank you,” “Please forgive me,” “I forgive you,” and “Goodbye” or “Until we meet again.” As Butler points out, the first four phrases can be said any time in our lives.

Increasingly in hospice care, loved ones are encouraged to sit with the body after the death, touching it, sharing stories, perhaps gently bathing it and dressing it in favorite clothes. “Touching the body, feeling the coolness, makes the death real to the family,” Ostaseski says. “Research shows that people that went through that process still grieved, but they were able to be with the emotion and not be overwhelmed by it.”

Facing the reality of death—as hard and heartbreaking as that can be—can free us to truly live life, said Jobs. After his terminal cancer diagnosis, he told Stanford students in a commencement address, “Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.” 🌱

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

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.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

Editor's Choice **Callanwolde Winter House** – Thru Dec 11. Families can enjoy a well-coming, art-filled holiday experience that reflects our passion for arts education. Free admission. Callanwolde Fine Arts Center, 980 Briarcliff Rd NE, Atlanta. Details: Callanwolde.org.

Online: Crystals for Anxiety & Depression – 6pm. Join Lexie for an interactive chat where she'll illuminate tried and true crystals and techniques to relieve anxiety and depression. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

Service of Remembrance – 7-8pm. This is a time to remember those loved ones who have passed and to honor their light during the season of light. Unity North, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. 678-819-9100. UnityNorth.org.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4

Editor's Choice **Back to Nature Holiday Market** – 10am-4pm. Explore local artisans who have unique, handmade, and/or eco-friendly gifts for the holiday season. Art, jewelry, candles, children's gifts, bath products, food, nature gifts and more. Free admission. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

Stories with Santa – 10am. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

Remembrance Service – 7pm. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Enchanted Woodland Wonders – 12-4pm. Includes live reindeer, seasonal festivities, partner booths, crafts, lawn games and more. Included with General Admission, free/members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

How to Feel Joy: Half-Day Meditation Retreat – 10am-1pm. With Resident Teacher Gen Norden. Slow down before the holidays and take in some of Buddha's essential teachings and meditations on how to create a stable joy at the heart. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Online: Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Eventbrite. Info: 404-680-7423 or Info-SE@Share-International.us. Tinyurl.com/37hjtcwa.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

Solstice Winds: A Journey of Sacred Silence and Sounds – 7pm. Winter solstice with Gabriel Nelson Sears. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Service – 4:45pm, Christmas Music (Soloists); 5-6pm, Traditional Candle Lighting Service. Filled with Christmas Spirit. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 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, DECEMBER 16

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/vickievanShealing.

Christmas Eve Services – 6-9pm. In-person and online. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, Treehouse, 1190 W Druid Hills Dr NE, Ste 150, Atlanta. uuca.org.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

Online: Wave 2021 Goodbye, and Let's Get Ready for 2022 – 11:30am. With Chiara Prato. Let's say goodbye and thank you for the lesson to 2021 and let's get ready to welcome 2022. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

Family Hike Night – 6:30pm. Being out on the trails is a favorite past time of Mad Hatter Massage and Wellness and we'd love to share that. \$5. Elsie A. Holmes Nature Park, 88 Ben Holmes Rd, Ringgold. Register: Tinyurl.com/55b4j9ub.

Burning Bowl Ceremony – 6:30-7:30pm. An amplified time of healing, letting go, and empowerment as we return anything and everything that no longer serves us into the purifying fire of the light we discovered at Christmas. Unity North, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. 678-819-9100. UnityNorth.org.

Traditional New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Ceremony – 7:30pm. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Alternative New Year's Eve Celebration – 7:30-8:45pm. With Resident Teacher Gen Norden. Ring in the New Year in a meaningful and positive way, with compassion and beneficial intentions. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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.

Online: NWUUC – 10am. Via Zoom. Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation: 770-955-1408 or nwuuc.org.

SRF Atlanta Meditation Service – 10-10:45am. An opportunity to meet with other truth-seekers to commune with God and share spiritual fellowship. 4000 King Springs Rd, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. srfatlanta.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: Atlanta.Shambhala.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/yjzutjrf4.

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

Unity Atlanta Sunday Services – 11am. Attend in-person or watch via live stream. 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Online: UUCA Service – 11am. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta: uuca.org/live.

SRF Atlanta Reading and Inspirational Service – 11am-12pm. An opportunity to meet with other truth-seekers to commune with God and share spiritual fellowship. 4000 King Springs Rd, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. srfatlanta.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 Kosmic Brew. 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

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

30-Minute Guided Meditation – 8am. Be guided through a simple yet powerful meditation that gives rise to an experience of mental peace and wellbeing. No experience necessary. Beginners welcome. \$5. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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

Angel Message Circle – 6:30-8:30pm. Sharon Ragan works with the energy of thousands of Angels and guides you in your next steps. \$20. Heart Soul and Art, 1470 Roswell Rd, Marietta. Pre-registration required: Heart-Soul-And-Art.square.site.

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.

Meditation Fundamentals – 6:30-7:30pm. Suitable for complete beginners. Get a practical introduction to meditation and includes topics such as the benefits of meditation, mindfulness, good posture, types of meditation, and how to start a daily meditation practice. In-person & online. \$15. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.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 Pranich Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranicHealing.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.

saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations – 8-8:30am. A guided meditation to start your day with a positive state of mind and carry that inner light with you for the rest of the day. No prior meditation experience necessary; all welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. 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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Celebrating the NOW

by Natasha (Chef Beee) Brewley,
Ph.D, MBA, HHC

I visited some of my extended family in Washington, D.C. recently, people I had not seen for almost two years due to the pandemic. My husband and I had been invited to a birthday party for a beloved godmother-like family friend that was celebrating a milestone 75th birthday. When we first got word about it, we wondered if it would be safe and if we should go, but our reluctance quickly dissolved when we found out the event would be outdoors. We knew we wanted to be present for her special day. After all, she was a person that showed up for others, making them feel special and valued. It was only appropriate for us to show up for her and return the gesture. As we packed our bags for the short, impromptu out-of-town trip, we were absolutely giddy. It would give us some time to connect and get away from our everyday hustle and bustle—just the two of us.

When we arrived, I realized I had underestimated how much I had missed interacting with people. There we were, face to face, live and in person, lamenting that we had not laid eyes on any of these people for almost two years. If you ask me, virtual parties on devices, while necessary and convenient during these times, don't have the same effect as connecting in flesh and bone. If I couldn't be physically present, it felt pointless. And I wouldn't have even considered going to a gathering of more than ten people, much less flying to another city to attend an event. Some-

thing was shifting in me, and I knew that had to be present to understand it. More than ever, it was important to see and spend time with people again in real and authentic ways.

Spiritual teachers like Eckhart Tolle write about what being in the present moment offers us. It allows us to be still and be grateful for all the people and things we have in our lives right in this moment. Being in the now offers us more quality of life, more connection and more love. Living and celebrating in the now offers freedom from fear, regret, suffering, stigma and anxiety from the unknown. The moment-by-moment journey becomes the destination—with deep appreciation for everyone and everything that crosses one's path. It also offers a deeper sense of connection to everything and to all that we do.

I felt a shift in my sense of urgency. I felt an urgency to stand in the now and celebrate every moment of it with no fear and no regret. I felt an urgency to not take any one or thing for granted because tomorrow is not promised. I have more intention to recognize who and what matters to me the most—and a desire to demonstrate it by showing up. In the past, I might have had fleeting thoughts of people but wouldn't immediately see how they were doing or even ask if they needed anything. It wasn't selfishness exactly; it was an assumption that there was unlimited time to get to it. I figured I would get around to it

when it was more convenient.

I feel completely different about it now. With the tremendous loss in the world these past two years, I find myself needing to celebrate the people I know and love. Now. It is crucial for me to not delay calling, checking in or talking to anyone. So, now, when someone comes across my mind, I reach out with urgency and a sense of eagerness to connect immediately—like nothing else matters. Whether I know someone loosely or deeply, I urgently seek to create a live connection with them.

Celebrate the Now. As you go to your gatherings with friends and family during this holiday season, remember not to wait. Don't wait to tell that funny story. Don't wait to check in. Don't wait to say I love you. Don't wait to schedule a lunch date. Celebrate each and every moment that you can as if everything depends on it. When you approach life with this fervor, both the people you connect with and the things you do will become more luminescent. 🌟



Photo: Maurice Evans

Dr. Natasha Brewley, better known as Chef Beee, is a lifestyle medicine health coach, a raw and plant-based chef educator and author of the cookbook, Let

Plants Nourish You. For more information, visit ChefBee.com or find @IAmChefBee on Facebook, YouTube or Instagram.

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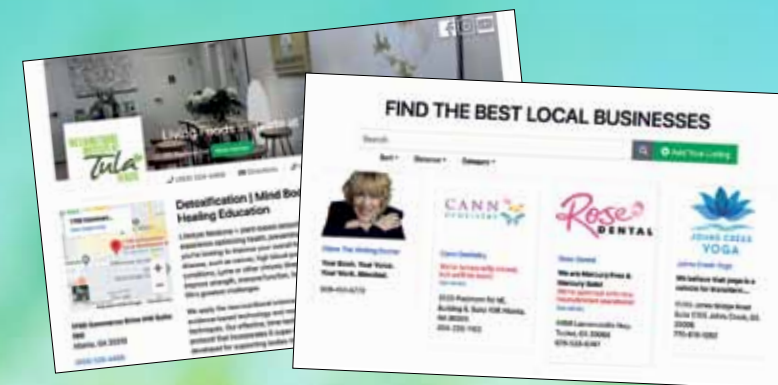
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