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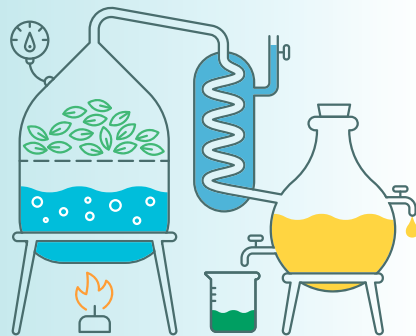
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The following list is of articles written by Atlanta staff and contributors. It consists of those articles that I perceived as the most informative.

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**CORRECTION:** In our January issue, the article "Local Author Launches Monthly Happiness Circle" incorrectly stated the title of Trish Ahjel Robert's second book. The correct title is *12 Steps to Mind-Blowing Happiness: A Journal of Insights, Quotes & Questions to Juice Up Your Journey*.

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# Mother o' Mine

**M**y mother passed away a little over a week ago. She lived in Atlanta, and I am the only one of three siblings that live here, too. Declining health—from sciatica, to spinal stenosis, to cancer, to Parkinson's—was her companion for 13 years, and I was her caretaker.

It almost goes without saying that work is a real struggle right now, so in lieu of words from me, here are a few from Kipling. Ideally, parental love is unconditional, and for the most part, I knew I could count on Mom. 🙏



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.

## Mother o' Mine

If I were hanged on the highest hill,  
 Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!  
 I know whose love would follow me still,  
 Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,  
 Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!  
 I know whose tears would come down to me,

Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!  
 If I were damned of body and soul,  
 I know whose prayers would make me whole,  
 Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

~ Rudyard Kipling





## MOON ORGANICS Offers Sculptural Lift

Susan Gonzalez, owner of MOON Organics and Esthetics, is now offering Sculptural Lift Facial services that help lift facial features and reduce facial tension and pain. A personalized session takes 90 minutes, 75 minutes of which consist of manipulation techniques unique to the treatment. A session also includes a hydrating and cooling mask, arm and hand massage, chakra reading and aromatherapy. The cost is \$285.



"Everyone who experiences this technique gets extreme relief—either physically, emotionally or both—because it's like nothing they've ever experienced," says Gonzalez. She is the only licensed esthetician in the Atlanta area that is fully trained by Yakov Gershkovich, the creator of the technique. Gonzalez is also certified in clinical aromatherapy and plant-based nutrition and is a Level 1 Healing Touch practitioner and a certified cancer coach with PCCI.

Most of her clients see a lifting effect of the face, including

lifted brows, cheeks, a sculpted jaw and an overall open expression, says Gonzalez. She adds that most everyone that comes to her with jaw pain reports experiencing immediate relief.

The technique involves manipulating the muscles, tendons and bones of the face in order to release tension, held emotions and stress buried deep in the tissue. It is especially helpful for those with grinding or clenching tendencies, TMJ issues, eye

strain and tension between the eyes, according to Gonzalez. It is also very effective for those who want a physical lift to their entire face without the use of injections, fillers or Botox. Most clients see a difference after one session, but many choose to have multiple sessions to deepen the results.

*Sculptural Lift Facials are available at Moon Organics in Decatur and at Kindred Studio in Grant Park. For more information, email Susan@MoonOrganics.com or visit MoonOrganics.com.*

## Yegos Launches Kickstarter Campaign

After 12 years of development and design, Atlanta yoga instructor Merri Benham introduced a Kickstarter campaign and product launch for her innovative magnetic interlocking yoga block system called "Yegos" this January.

The patent-pending interlocking yoga block system can replace the need for bulky headstand mounts, backbend benches, meditation seats and more but only requires about two feet square of space to store.

Benham, who has taught yoga for more than 20 years and owned two studios in Buford and Gainesville, specializes in anatomy, alignment and overcoming limitations. "I quickly recognized that conventional props are a challenge for the ordinary yoga student," says Benham. "I wanted my students to get the most out of their practice while still being able to follow along with a multilevel class. They simply needed more versatile yoga



props."

The complete Yegos system includes 11 blocks of six different shapes to help people bring their practice to the next level. It includes a standard yoga block, a half-block to make gradual adjustments, a large wedge for lifted heels, a mini-wedge for wrist relief and a padded roller to conform to one's grip and the curves of one's back. It also doubles as a roller. The system also includes a bench top for building a meditation

bench or for tying several props together into supportive assemblies.

The Kickstarter campaign continues through February 12.

*For more information, email Merri@DoinYoga.net or visit YegoBlocks.com or Kickstarter.com/Projects/Yegos/Yegos-the-all-in-one-yoga-block.*

## 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."



**New device puts copper right where you need it.**

"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.



**Dr. Bill Keevil: Copper quickly kills cold viruses.**

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### HEALTH BRIEFS

## Try Probiotics to Lower Pregnancy Nausea and Soothe Fussy Babies



Two new studies suggest that the right probiotics can offer relief for the 85 percent of pregnant women with nausea and for the 25 percent of fussy newborns with colic. In the journal *Nutrients*, University of California, Davis researchers reported on a study in which 32 pregnant women that had nausea, vomiting and constipation took a probiotic capsule twice a day. The over-the-counter probiotics formula contained 10 billion live cultures, mainly *Lactobacillus*. After 12 days, the number of hours participants felt nauseated was reduced by 16 percent, and they vomited one-third fewer times. Constipation was also reduced. Quality of life markers

such as fatigue, poor appetite and difficulty maintaining normal social activities also improved. Examining biomarkers in fecal samples, the researchers found the probiotics increased vitamin E and a bile salt enzyme that helps prevent vomiting and nausea.

In a second study published in *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics*, University of Naples researchers explored whether a particular probiotic strain (*Bifidobacterium animalis* subspecies *lactis* BB-12) could help soothe babies with colic, a common gastrointestinal disorder in the first three months of life that studies have linked to maternal postpartum depression, parental guilt and frustration, drug use and long-term behavioral and sleep problems. They found that the probiotic reduced the duration of daily crying by 50 to 80 percent in the 40 infants that received it once daily for 28 days, compared to a 32 percent reduction among 40 babies receiving a placebo. The probiotic also had beneficial effects on sleep duration and on stool frequency and consistency. It increased gut production of butyrate, which positively regulates intestinal transit time, pain perception, the gut-brain axis and inflammation.

## Improve Sleep and Lower Anxiety with Black Cumin Oil

Black cumin seeds that come from the flowering fennel plant (*Nigella sativa*) flavor cuisines from the Middle East to the Far East and have been used for centuries to treat chronic and infectious diseases. In a new study in the *Journal of Herbal Medicine*, Indian researchers report that 15 volunteers with insomnia that took 200 milligrams of black cumin oil after dinner for 28 days experienced significantly better sleep. They fell asleep sooner, slept longer and recorded increases of 82 percent in non-rapid eye movement sleep and 29 percent in rapid eye movement sleep. Stress and anxiety levels were also dramatically reduced.



## Keep Moving to Sidestep Depression

In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, people were sitting around a lot more and getting depressed, report researchers from Iowa State University. Analyzing data between April and June 2020 from 3,000 participants throughout the country, they found that people that ordinarily met the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines of exercising 2.5 to five hours a week reported cutting back their exercise routines by 32 percent when pandemic restrictions kicked in. The same participants reported feeling more depressed, anxious and lonely. In a second study in the following months, people's mental health generally improved as they adjusted to life's new rhythms. "But for people whose sitting times stayed high, their depressive symptoms, on average, didn't recover in the same way as everyone else's,"

says lead author Jacob Meyer, assistant professor of kinesiology. He suggests taking short walks before and after Zoom calls at home, as well as walking around the block before and after the workday to mimic the pre-pandemic commute.



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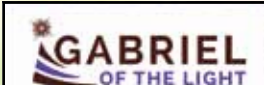


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# Fermenting for Foodies

## PRESERVING FOOD AND TRADITIONS

by April Thompson



If fermented food is a trend, it's the oldest one on the planet. More and more people are rediscovering the time-honored foodways of fermentation to promote health, boost flavor and preserve the bounty of the seasons. "There is huge potential to use high-quality fermented foods to enhance our health and well-being," says Sandor Katz, a so-called "fermentation revivalist", in Liberty, Tennessee, and the author of several bestselling books on fermentation, including the newly released *Sandor Katz's Fermentation Journeys: Recipes, Techniques, and Traditions from Around the World*.

Katz caught the fermentation bug after moving from New York City to rural Tennessee in the 1990s and being faced with the "positive problem" of an overly plentiful garden to preserve. He's since wandered the globe teaching and learning about fermentation traditions, from Korea's spicy kimchi to Mexico's funky pineapple tepache drink.

Fermentation is defined as the chemical breakdown of a food by bacteria, yeasts or other microorganisms. An estimated one-third of all foods are fermented, including coffee, cured meats, cheese, condiments and chocolate. Pickles and yogurt are traditionally fermented through lactic acid bacteria, while beer and bread are typically fermented through yeast. Kombucha, an ancient tea drink, is made using a symbiotic culture of yeast and bacteria.

Pascal Baudar, a Los Angeles writer, instructor and self-proclaimed "culinary alchemist," turned to fermentation techniques to preserve the precious wild ingredients of the fleeting seasons. His books and workshops cover unusual

culinary territory, like fermented and aged vegan cheeses from acorns and "seaweed" made from fermented broadleaf plantain, a common weed, using methods he's studied and perfected. "I investigate new and lost flavors, and conserve them as gourmet foods through preservation," he says.

### Fermentation with Benefits

Fermentation transforms the nutrients in food in several ways, Katz explains. In a process known as predigestion, it breaks macronutrients down into more digestible forms (think proteins turned into amino acids) and renders minerals more bio-available. Gluten, too, is broken down by fermentation, he says, as are potentially toxic compounds in foods such as cyanide and oxalic acid. The process also releases vitamins B and K and other micronutrients as metabolic byproducts.

Fermentation reduces the short-chain carbohydrates that are poorly absorbed in the small intestine and are prone to absorb water and ferment in the colon, causing gas and bloating. Found in wheat, beans and other foods, they can pose digestive problems for people with irritable bowel syndrome and other conditions, says Tayler Silfverduk, a registered dietitian nutritionist in Columbus, Ohio, specializing in celiac disease.

"The most profound nutritional benefit of fermentation is the live bacteria itself. You are ingesting a rich biodiversity of beneficial bacteria that can potentially improve immune function," says Katz, an AIDS survivor who considers fermentation an important part of his healing process.

### No Starter Required

"There is nothing you can eat that can't be fermented, but the easiest and safest place to begin is with vegetables," which need no special equipment or a starter like sourdough, kefir or kombucha, says Katz. To make sauerkraut, for example, simply shred cabbage, lightly salt and season it, and submerge it in a jar under its own juices, "burping" it daily for a week to 10 days to release the fermentation gases.

Katz and Baudar both like to debunk myths that fermenting foods is difficult or dangerous. "You don't have to sterilize everything or have precise laboratory control conditions. People have been practicing fermentation for years, and they began before they knew bacteria was a thing. To the contrary, fermentation is a strategy for food safety," says Katz.

While yeast or mold can grow on the top layer that is exposed to oxygen, Katz says "a lot of sauerkraut is needlessly discarded. Most such growth is harmless and normal, and can be skimmed off the top."

Baudar, a University of California Master Food Preserver, has kept foods he's fermented for up to three years and only once encountered mold. "You need to work with the ferment," he says. "That means regularly burping it, then shaking or stirring to promote the acidity that prevents bad bacteria from taking hold."

"If it looks or tastes bad, throw it away," he adds. "Some of my early experiments tasted horrible, but I just took my failures as learning and kept experimenting. The more you understand the

fermentation process, the more you can play with it creatively and push the envelope." 🌱

Connect with Washington, D.C., freelance writer April Thompson at [AprilWrites.com](http://AprilWrites.com).

## Fermented Pickled Carrot Sticks

**YIELD: 1 QUART-SIZE JAR OF PICKLES**



2 sprigs fresh dill  
1-2 cloves garlic  
2 lb whole carrots  
1 Tbsp sea salt  
1-2 cups distilled water

Wash and peel the skins of the whole carrots. Cut the peeled and washed carrots into carrot sticks. Peel and finely slice the garlic cloves. Wash and dry 2 sprigs of dill.

In a wide-mouth, quart-size jar, pack in the carrot sticks. (Tilt the jar to locate more places to squeeze in the sticks.) Add in the sea salt, then the sliced garlic and sprigs of dill.

Cover the ingredients with distilled water (Be sure to leave about an inch of free space from the waterline to the opening of the jar.)

Place an airtight lid on the jar and let it sit for a week or until the carrots have reached desired taste. Make sure to burp the jar at least every two days while fermenting.

Once the carrot sticks have reached their desired taste, place the jar in the fridge for storage. Enjoy.

Notes: If using organic carrots, leave the skin on and just wash the carrots very well before chopping into snacking sticks.

When burping the jar, use this time to check on fermentation to make sure it's growing healthy. Look for bubbles on top of the water and along the water line. Seeing mold is a sign that good bacteria is struggling to start a culture and we may need to try again.

Courtesy of Tayler Silfverduk, registered dietitian nutritionist.







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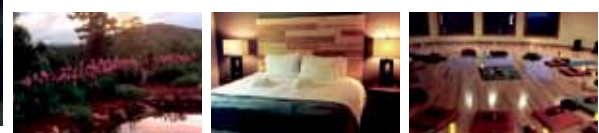
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## Curry Kraut

YIELD: 1 QUART

2 lb organic cabbage head  
2 Tbsp sea salt  
½ cup organic yellow onion, thinly sliced  
½ cup shredded carrot  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 Tbsp fresh, grated ginger (1 Tbsp ground powder alternative)  
½ Tbsp ground coriander  
½ Tbsp ground cumin  
½ tsp ground cayenne pepper  
½ tsp ground turmeric  
½ tsp curry powder  
¼ tsp black pepper  
¼ tsp cinnamon

First, rinse all of the produce. Then peel the outer layers off the cabbage, saving a couple of the cabbage leaves.

Cut the cabbage in half (through the core), then in half again, then core the cabbage by placing wedges up vertically on a cutting board with the core touching the board and holding it at the tip. Position the knife at the start of the core and slice downward, cutting off the hard portion.

Place the cabbage on a flat side and slice shreds to desired thickness (about ¼ inch). Start at the tip and work down.

Thinly slice the onion and then shred carrots using a cheese grater.

Place it all into one very large or two non-reactive bowls (not metal). Pour the spices on top. Massage the mixture of veggies and spices until a lot of brine has

been created and the mixture has shrunk down to about half its original size.

Take the massaged veggies and spices, and start packing them into a 1-quart fermenting jar with an airtight lid. (The packing will help bring the brine to the surface.) After every scoop that's put into the jar, pack it down with a fist. Leave several inches at the top of the jar.

Fold up the saved cabbage leaves and put them on top of the cabbage in the jar. (Make sure the brine goes over the top of the cabbage leaves.) Place the weight—either a fermenting weight or rocks inside of a bag—on top of the cabbage leaves. Leave about 1 to 2 inches at the top of the jar.

Close the jar's lid and put it in some sort of basin (I use a casserole dish) to catch the brine that comes out. The brine will come out of the jar because the cabbage will swell during the fermentation process, and the basin will catch the brine instead of it spilling onto counters.

Notes: Over the next few days, the mixture will turn into curry kraut through a lacto fermentation process. Bubbles and the bright green cabbage will become yellow. How long to wait depends on the level of sourness desired and how warm the house is kept.

Check the curry kraut for taste. It's good to check after about three to five days to see if it's sour enough. It's also good to do a quick check for mold. It's likely a white, scummy-type substance will form at the top of the brine; this is okay and part of the process. It can be scraped off or left there.

When curry kraut reaches desired taste, take out the cabbage leaves and the weight, close the lid and put it in the fridge.

Make sure to start with a clean surface and utensils. Dirty supplies can mess with the bacteria in the fermentation.

Courtesy of Kyrie Luke, *Healthfully Rooted Home*.



## Rosy Raspberry Soda

YIELD: 2, RESEALABLE,  
1-QUART-SIZE  
AND 1-LITER PLASTIC BOTTLES

½ cup/70 grams raspberries  
Juice from ½ lemon  
2-4 Tbsp honey  
1 tsp rose water  
Yeast



Combine and blend. Place all the ingredients except the yeast in a bowl with a bit of water and mash together with a fork, or put them all in the blender.

Divide between two, 1-quart/1-liter bottles. Top off with warm water. Add yeast. Sprinkle about ¼ tsp bread or champagne yeast into each bottle. Let it sit for a few minutes, then shake the bottles to dissolve and distribute the yeast.

Let ferment on the counter. Check the carbonation after a few hours. Bleed carbonation by gently and slowly opening the bottles. Refrigerate when they seem strongly carbonated, generally within six to eight hours.

From Sandor Katz's book, *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods* (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2016).

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# The Heart-Mind Connection

## How Thoughts and Emotions Affect Our Heart Health

by Ronica O'Hara



“Does your wife show you her love?” In a study of 10,000 married men, this question turned out to be revelatory. Among men with high levels of anxiety, a whopping 93 percent that answered “No” developed angina-related chest pains within five years—nearly twice the rate of those answering “Yes.”

This 1976 Israeli study was one of the first to clearly document how emotions affect the physical heart. Today, the research is so vast and compelling that last year, the American Heart Association issued a statement urging that psychological factors be taken into account in cardiovascular care—which may result in doctors asking patients about depression and anxiety as well as testing for blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

“What’s on your mind really does affect your heart,” says leading researcher and cardiologist Michael Miller, M.D., author of *Heal Your Heart* and director of the Center for Preventive Cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical System. “Our hearts require emotional health in order to maintain cardiovascular health.”

Two emerging fields are probing the mind-heart connection: neurocardiology, which studies their neurological interplay; and behavioral cardiology, which examines how psychological and social factors lead to heart disease. Increasingly, researchers are documenting that the brain and the heart form an intricate feedback loop that works neurologically, biochemically and electromagnetically to optimize well-being. What hurts one—be it artery-clogging foods or angry outbursts—can hurt the other.

What heals one—be it exercising or a good belly laugh—can heal the other. There’s good news in that, says Miller: “You can heal your heart by actively engaging in positive emotions each and every day.”

### Unveiling the Heart’s Role

In Western medicine, the heart has been downplayed historically as a pump mechanically taking orders from a bossy brain, but recently, the heart’s role is being reexamined: With 40,000 neurons, it sends more signals to the brain than it receives. As integrative cardiologist Mimi Guarneri, author of *The Heart Speaks*, puts it, “The heart is a multilayered, complex organ, possessing intelligence, memory and decision-making abilities independent from the mind.”

The electromagnetic field it generates is about 100 times stronger than the brain’s magnetic range and can be detected up to three feet away from the body, report researchers at the pioneering HeartMath Institute, in Boulder Creek, California. They found that one person’s brain waves can synchronize to another person’s heart and two hearts can synchronize to each other, which may help explain why people are drawn to or repelled by each other. When the heart’s rhythm pattern becomes erratic and disordered during stress and negative emotions, they report, the neural signals traveling to the brain’s emotional centers also get disrupted, hindering clear thinking and reasoning—which may help explain why we make dubious decisions under stress.

### The High Toll of Tough Emotions

Although scientists debate whether emotions start in the brain, heart or from physical sensations elsewhere in the body, it’s clear through magnetic imaging technology that it’s the brain’s task to process and regulate emotions via the flow of neurotransmitters through the amygdala, hypothalamus, hippocampus, prefrontal cortex and other brain regions. Emotions like anger, fear, grief and anxiety set off a cascade of reactions involving the hormone cortisol and proteins called cytokines, creating an inflammatory response that, if it becomes chronic, can promote the accumulation of plaque in the arteries that can become unstable and rupture, triggering blood clots that lead to strokes and heart attacks.

Surveying 25,000 participants in 52 countries, the landmark INTERHEART Study in 2004 concluded that about 30 percent of heart attacks and strokes are due to psychological factors, and ongoing research supports this finding.

**DEPRESSION.** Adults that are depressed are twice as likely to develop heart disease. In one study, moderate to severe depression quadrupled the death rate in heart failure patients.

**ANXIETY.** Researchers have linked chronic anxiety with a 48 percent increased risk of cardiac-related death over 11 years. It has also been shown to be a risk factor for angina, heart attacks and ventricular arrhythmia.

**SHOCK.** A sudden emotional or physical shock, like a death in the family or an earthquake, can trigger stress cardiomyopathy,

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known as broken heart syndrome, which resembles a heart attack.

**ANGER.** An episode of intense fury—described as “body tense, clenching fists or teeth, ready to burst”—increases by 8.5 times the risk of a heart attack within the next two hours.

**LONELINESS.** Being socially isolated and lonely is linked to a higher risk for cardiovascular death than hypertension and obesity—alarming information since more than 60 percent of Americans report feeling lonely, left out, poorly understood and lacking companionship, according to a 2020 survey.

**Boosting Both Brain and Heart**

“There’s no damage caused by negative emotions that positive emotions can’t heal,” says Miller. A large body of research has shown that cardiovascular disease risk can be reduced by up to half with optimism, a sense of humor, forgiveness, social support, religious faith, vitality, gratitude, altruistic behavior, emotional flexibility and coping flexibility. People that are optimistic are less likely to be rehospitalized or die from heart disease, Finnish researchers report.

“For optimal health, maximize the health of both brain and heart. For example, if you eat well and exercise, but are still stressed out, your heart will suffer. Conversely, if you are not stressed out, but overeat and do not exercise, your brain will suffer,” says Miller. Some heart-and-mind-healthy strategies include:

**DOING THE BASICS.** Exercising a half-hour daily and eating a largely plant-based,

Mediterranean-type diet that’s low in saturated fats has been found in numerous studies to lower the risk of both cardiovascular disease and cognitive decline. Working with health practitioners to get blood pressure, blood sugar and inflammation levels under control, perhaps using supplements or medications, is also a key preventive step.

**GIVING AND GETTING HUGS.** Oxytocin, the “love hormone” released from the pituitary gland during touching and hugging, lowers blood pressure and heart rate, and regenerates new heart tissue in animal studies. Proactively reaching out to family, friends, neighbors and co-workers can nurture affectionate ties, but if a human isn’t nearby, even hugging a teddy bear has been shown to release oxytocin—which may explain why 40 percent of U.S. adults sleep with stuffed animals. Owning a dog, but not necessarily a cat, makes us more likely to survive a heart attack, report researchers.

**MINDFULLY LETTING GO.** As studies with police officers, healthcare workers and firefighters have demonstrated, mindfulness training effectively lowers anxiety and depression, even for those in life-threatening situations. “To be present, ever acutely aware of our thoughts, emotions, feelings and how we are choosing to react is critical,” says cardiologist Cynthia Thaik, author of *Your Vibrant Heart* and the founder of the Holistic Heart Healing Center, in Los Angeles. “Once we are aware of our reaction, the ability to let go—of judgment, doubt, anger, resentment, fear, all our negative thoughts, emotions and feelings—is crucial to our healing process.”

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**LAUGHING A LOT.** Many of us have a chuckle deficit in our lives: The average 5-year-old laughs up to 300 times a day, the average adult only four. To lower the risk of heart attack and stroke, find ways to laugh long and hard—such as watching hilarious films or videos on YouTube or TikTok. Physiologically, the endorphins released by a hearty belly laugh bind to receptors that release nitric oxide, relaxing blood vessels.

**BREATHWORK.** To bring the mind and heart into a healthy, coherent rhythmic pattern, the HeartMath Institute suggests heart-focused breathing, which involves imagining that we are breathing in through the heart as we inhale in a smooth, comfortable manner to the count of five or six, then breathing out for five or six counts while visualizing that the breath is flowing out of the heart.

**MEDITATION.** People that practice meditation are significantly less likely to have a heart attack or stroke, perhaps because it has been shown to lower heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, oxygen consumption and cortisol levels. Alzheimer’s expert Dharma Singh Khalsa, author of *Meditation as Medicine*, advocates kirtan kriya, a 12-minute, daily meditation that includes chanting, finger movements and visualization. Research has demonstrated that it slows cognitive decline, eases depression and increases anti-aging telomerase activity at a cellular level by 43 percent in eight weeks.

**YOGA OR TAI CHI.** In studies, yoga has been shown to lower inflammation and metabolic syndrome markers linked to heart disease and reduce atrial fibrillation episodes. The slow, graceful movements of

tai chi reportedly lower blood pressure and strengthen the hearts of people with heart failure.

**MUSIC.** Whether it involves listening, playing an instrument or singing, music has been shown to lower heart rate, reduce inflammation, enable longer exercise periods, ease anxiety after heart surgery and heart attacks, and help stroke victims regain the ability to speak. Choose music of whatever genre inspires joy and sing along for extra benefit, advises Miller. “If your partner is flummoxed by your enthusiasm for yodeling or your neighbor doesn’t exactly approve of your attempts at arias, kindly inform him or her it’s doctor’s orders,” he jokes in *Heal Your Heart*. 🎵

Health writer Ronica O’Hara can be contacted at [OHaraRonica@gmail.com](mailto:OHaraRonica@gmail.com).

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# Truly Making Love

## Sex and Intimacy as a Healing Force

by Marlaina Donato



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Intimately connecting with a loved one is one of life's most precious gifts, but it's easy to lose sight of our innate sensual energy in the maze of the mundane. Through lovemaking, we can harness our life force, and according to abundant research, reduce the risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, manage pain and improve brain health. A significant correlation also exists between higher ejaculation frequency and a reduced risk for prostate cancer later in life, Boston University researchers report in *European Urology*.

Making love is also good for boosting our natural immunity. College students that engaged in amorous activity once or twice a week—especially with long-term partners—had 30 percent higher levels of the antibody immunoglobulin A in their saliva, concluded research by Wilkes University, in Pennsylvania.

### Stripping Down to Basics

A few lifestyle adjustments can do wonders for worn-out romance. Quality sleep itself can be a potent aphrodisiac. Women are more likely to be “in the mood” after a good night's sleep, even with just an extra hour of shut-eye, according to a 2015 pilot study

in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

Therapist Kurt Smith, clinical director of Guy Stuff Counseling and Coaching, in Roseville, California, advocates limiting phone use and engaging in non-technological activities. “Phones have moved from being used as a communication device to becoming many people's connection to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, when used as such, they pose a threat to the emotional connection with our partners,” he says. “With all distractions removed, sit on the sofa, face each other and talk. This suggestion can make many people very uncomfortable, because they have no idea what they'd say to their partner. Actually, talking to your partner without a purpose other than to just listen and connect with each other has become rare.”

An element of fun can go a long way in the quest to stay connected. “Approach your sex life like a science experiment or an art project instead of a math problem,” says Jamie Elizabeth Thompson, a holistic intimacy expert in Austin. “It's an exploration with no one right answer. Attitude is important when it comes to sex because people can take it so seriously and place crippling pressure on having this fantasy Hollywood sex life.”

### Aphrodite's Plate

Feel-good neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin all contribute to the pleasure response, and sharing luscious food with a lover can be sensuous, as well as endorphin-friendly. Nutritious foods such as almonds, walnuts, asparagus and avocados support reproductive health, and a dessert of dark chocolate and honey-drizzled fruits like berries, figs and cherries can support libido in both women and men. Nixing excessive alcohol and sugar is also a good romantic investment.

### Partnership as Sacred

Deep relationship is only possible when we are willing to be vulnerable. “Porn is a drug that people unknowingly use to self-medicate and manage uncomfortable thoughts and emotions,” explains Smith. “Many men have no idea what they're missing because they've never had an emotionally intimate relationship without the negative influence of porn. Porn makes sex self-focused, rather than what it's supposed to be, which is the intimate connection of two people. Porn is selfish, rather than loving, giving and sharing with a partner.”

Thompson attests that lovemaking can help us align with the divine, especially “when people have reverence for the power of their erotic life force. When people open their view of what sex is, it can become an act of worship.”

Love prompts us to become more ourselves. “When erotic life force is flowing freely, the body is vital and the system is turned on. When channeled properly, this energy is highly creative,” muses Thompson. “It's the fuel of your vehicle, the charge of your battery, and when you are full on life force, it organically overflows into service.”

Marlaina Donato is an author and composer. Connect at [WildflowerLady.com](http://WildflowerLady.com).

## Fun Homework for Couples

**FROM KURT SMITH:** Remain connected by having “no-tech nights”. Try turning all devices off for an evening and find something to do together that doesn't require them. This could be watching a movie, playing board games (yes, they still exist), going out for dessert, etc. It can be fun to brainstorm creative, low-cost ideas.

**FROM JAMIE ELIZABETH THOMPSON:** Journal about why sex and intimacy are important to you, how it serves the rest of your life and what you see available through having a consistent, potent, deep, hot erotic life. Share this vision with your partner and keep it somewhere you see it often. Knowing why something is a priority makes you far more likely to follow through.

Flirt with each other. Couples who flirt their way through their communication fight much less. Flirting creates a playful, fun flow of energy between you. It's a way of keeping the fire stoked so you're not completely restarting from cold coals every time you want to heat up the house.



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# Parents as Role Models

## How to Help Kids Discover Positive Behaviors

by Sandra Yeyati

Like the familiar adage, “Monkey see, monkey do,” children learn habits, attitudes and values by observing and mimicking their parents. This phenomenon, known as modeling, is a double-edged sword. Sometimes parents unintentionally teach their kids by example to smoke, eat too much candy or bully people. On the other hand, with awareness, planning and strategic modifications, parents can use modeling to instill in their kids good habits, positive attitudes, healthy emotional intelligence and strong self-esteem.

“We parent what we know, very often on automatic mode,” says Debra MacDonald, a certified parenting educator at the Center for Parenting Education, in Abington, Pennsylvania. “How many times have you said, ‘I will never say that to my kids,’ and then fast-forward several years, those words are coming out of your mouth. Awareness is your first step.”

“Look at how you handle stress or express anger,” MacDonald suggests. “If you slam the table, break something and yell, that’s what you’re teaching your children to do when

they’re angry. To teach them constructive ways to express anger—like taking deep breaths or running around the block—you’ve got to employ those tools yourself.”

Actions speak louder than words. “To teach your child good values, you have to demonstrate them through your deeds. If you tell your child that they must always be on time for school, but you’re late for work every day, your child hears one thing, but sees another,” MacDonald explains, adding that kids are adept at sniffing out these inconsistencies.

Saying, “Eat your spinach,” while regularly gobbling ice cream won’t inspire desired results. When MacDonald’s son was young, she realized she wasn’t setting the right example at the dinner table. “Slowly, over time, I began to improve our family’s lifestyle choices, and now that he’s in college, he knows how to cook healthy meals, practice portion control and clean up after himself,” she boasts.

### Tackling Childhood Anxiety Through Modeling

In his 2021 book, *Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD*, Yale University Professor Eli Lebowitz offers a scientifically proven parental modeling program called Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions (SPACE). Although the goal is to treat a child’s anxiety, parents meet with a therapist and learn tools to modify their parenting approach in two ways: being more supportive and reducing accommodations.

On the support side, SPACE parents learn to show a genuine acceptance and understanding of their child’s distress and to communicate their confidence in the child’s ability to tolerate and cope with the anxiety. The support can be as simple as saying, “I get it. This is really hard. You’re upset, but I know you can handle this.”

“Supportive statements aren’t always intuitive for parents,” says Lebowitz, director of the program for anxiety disorders at the Yale Child Study Center. “Sometimes they don’t believe that their child is feeling anxiety. They might think that the child is being manipulative or attention-seeking. Or, when parents do believe that their child is anxious, they want to protect, soothe and reassure them, but by doing these things, parents aren’t communicating their belief that the child can handle it, which is critical to helping them overcome the anxiety.”

The second change that SPACE parents learn to make is to gradually and systematically reduce all the accommodations they have been making to help their child not feel anxious, such as sleeping beside a child that is afraid of being alone or not inviting company to the house to avoid upsetting a socially anxious kid.

“Research indicates that even though parents are trying to help, accommodations that rush to the rescue tend to maintain or worsen anxiety over time,” Lebowitz says. “I worked with parents of a child who had panic attacks at night and would say, ‘My heart is racing. I can’t breathe. I think I’m going to die.’ Feeling overwhelmed and scared, her parents would rush her to the hospital again and again, even after doctors assured them that she was healthy and didn’t need to come in. From the child’s perspective, when your parents rush you to the ER, that confirms that this is literally an emergency. You feel more worried and scared. When the parents were able to take a breath, give her a hug and say, ‘We know this is uncomfortable, but it’s going to pass, and you’re going to be okay,’ she began to learn that she didn’t need to be afraid of anxiety. She could handle it and didn’t need to avoid it.”

Sandra Yeyati, J.D., is a professional writer and editor. Reach her at [SandraYeyati@gmail.com](mailto:SandraYeyati@gmail.com).



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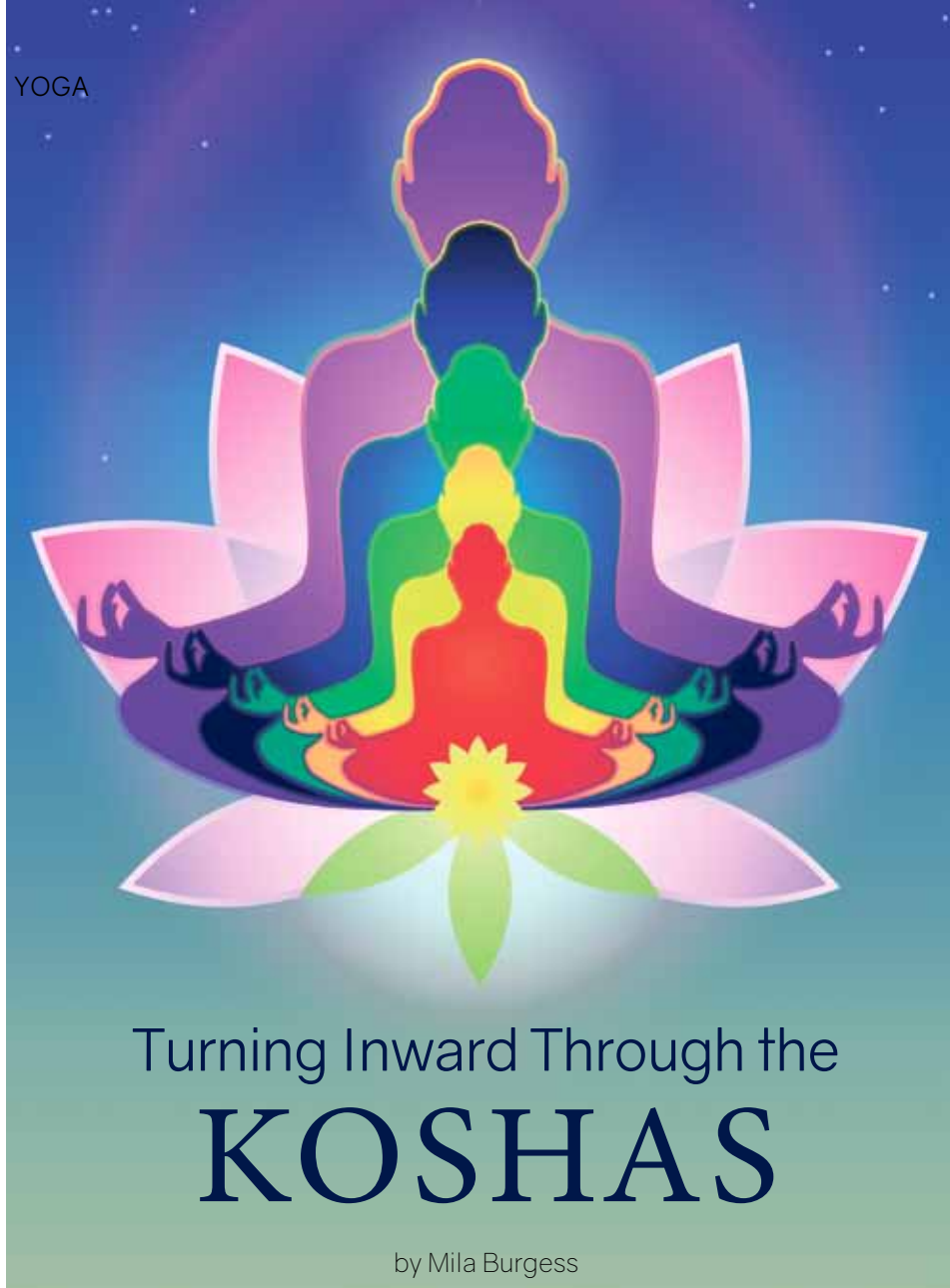
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## Turning Inward Through the KOSHAS

by Mila Burgess

According to yoga tradition, each person has five energetic layers called *koshas*. Sometimes referred to as “veils,” koshas are metaphorical sheaths that move from the body’s outer layer, through the mind, to the inner spiritual core. Like Russian nesting dolls, the koshas are encased within each other as they move from the density of the physical body to the subtlety of inner spirit and highest self. These koshas, left untended, can become barriers to accessing one’s true nature. Yoga empowers the practitioner to work through these layers to peel back the veils and reveal the innermost self.

First described in the text of the ancient *Upanishads*, the theory of koshas provides a framework for understanding the deepest level of self and posits that attention to these layers enhances awareness, develops a stronger mind/body connection and leads to greater levels of fulfillment. Each kosha can be accessed through practice. In his book, *Light on Life*, B.K.S. Iyengar, the founder of the Iyengar yoga method, explained that the koshas do not exist in a clearly defined, linear fashion but, rather, are integrated to create oneness or bliss. Yoga and meditation are excellent vehicles for not only tapping into each layer but also seamlessly blending them together.

Many yoga classes begin with a few moments to create a personal space on the mat. Yoga teachers invite students to notice how they have arrived and often suggest that

they not only look at the physical aspects of their being but also look beneath the surface to see what lies there energetically, mentally and emotionally. It’s a reminder from the outset that one arrives on the mat as a whole, multilayered being, not just a physical one.

Annamaya kosha, the outermost layer, refers to the physical body and all of its systems. It is associated with the earth element. “Anna” means “food” in Sanskrit; this layer gets its name because food nourishes and sustains the human form. In the early stages of a yoga practice, annamaya kosha is the primary focus as students work through the bodily sensations and alignment of the poses. Those who adopt a regular practice generally fine-tune their self-awareness; gain strength, flexibility and balance; and experience a greater feeling of groundedness. In that way, yoga enables students to metaphorically peel back and move through the somatic layer to better attune to what lies beyond the physical.

*Pranamaya kosha*, is also known as the “energy sheath” and refers to the vital energy that flows through and around the body. It includes the movement of breath, blood, lymph and spinal fluid. The Sanskrit word *prana* means “life force,” and *pranayama* refers to the practice of directing or controlling the breath in both yoga and meditation practices. Associated with the water element, this kosha fuels the mind and body, allowing for the movement of both physical and mental energies.

On the mat, breath and breath awareness serve as bridges between the body and the mind; a breath-centered focus diminishes distracting thoughts, allowing the practitioner to concentrate more fully on the poses’ alignment, sensations and flow. While asana is considered to have the greatest effect on annamaya kosha, the breathing practice associated with asana also nourishes pranamaya kosha, as does meditation.

*Manomaya kosha* is the third layer and is subtler than the first two. It is the “mental sheath” that consists of the thinking mind and the emotions. Associated with the fire element, this kosha is

responsible for an individual’s perception of the world, as well as their values and belief systems, opinions and even certain patterns of behavior. Referred to as *samskaras* in Sanskrit, these patterns are subconscious and typically cycle on repeat, keeping practitioners stuck in a proverbial rut until they become aware of them. Connecting more deeply with the manomaya kosha helps bring these impressions to light. Yoga practitioners cultivate a strong focus on physical sensation, breath and energy as they move through sequences on the mat. Both yoga and meditation work to diminish cerebral distractions, allowing practitioners to notice thoughts, judgments and emotions as they arise. With a quiet mind come greater clarity, presence and mindfulness. It’s worth noting that in the human body, emotions begin as physical sensations before becoming emotional ones. Yogis learn the art of turning inward to move through sensation, including discomfort, one breath at a time, paving the way for the healthy expression of both physical and emotional feelings.

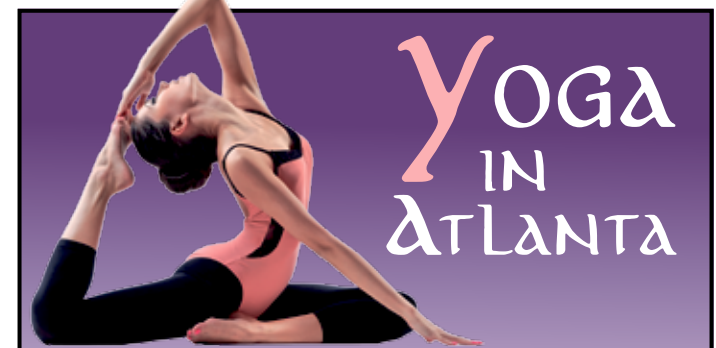
The “knowledge sheath,” the *vijnanamaya kosha* permeates the denser veils and is comprised of wisdom and intuition. It lies beyond the thinking mind, revealing deeper insight, and is associated with the air element. Both on the mat and off, yogis work on *dharana*, which is loosely translated as “concentration.” Cultivating the ability to find a singular focus allows the practitioner to access this kosha. The feeling of being in the zone and completely immersed in an activity is an example of this higher state of consciousness. In *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, a collection of aphorisms on the theory and practice of yoga, Patanjali defines yoga as the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind and suggests that when the active becomes still, the practitioner rests in their true nature [*Yoga Sutras 1.2, 1.3*]. Yoga and meditation allow practitioners to access the vijnanamaya kosha by providing tools to be focused, to be present and to quiet the distraction of mental chatter, allowing the active to become still.

*Anandamaya kosha*, which is associated with the ether/space element, is the innermost sheath. “Ananda” means “extreme happiness, joy, and bliss” in Sanskrit. Yoga philosophy explains that all people are born inherently blissful, but age, experience and conscious thinking, over time, can bury or mask this inner peace. By accessing the anandamaya kosha, humans have the capacity to return to or retain this joy. This connection with the natural self is attainable through consistent, focused practice of yoga and meditation.

As it gets progressively inward-focused, the practice of yoga brings together body, breath, mind, wisdom and spirit to promote overall health and well-being. The five koshas, with their increasingly finer grades of energy, collectively serve as a guide to integrating these various parts of oneself. 🧘



Mila Burgess, E-RYT500, YACEP, teaches at LifePower Yoga in Sandy Springs. She is the owner of Metta Yoga, offering workshops, private lessons, virtual classes, teacher trainings and retreats. Contact her at [Mila@MettaYoga.studio](mailto:Mila@MettaYoga.studio).



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enue West Cobb, 3625 Dallas Highway, Ste 470, Marietta. Register: [Tinyurl.com/yck6ap26](http://Tinyurl.com/yck6ap26).

### THURSDAYS

**Yoga at The Avenue West Cobb** – 6-7pm. An all-levels beginner friendly practice with Mia Yakei. Free. The Av-

### SATURDAYS

**Zen Sound Bath** – 11:30am-1pm. 3rd Sat. With Gabriel Nelson Sears featuring crystal and Himalayan singing bowls, gongs, bells, flutes, drums and chimes. \$16. Trinity Center for Spiritual Living, 1095 Zonolite Rd, Atlanta. Registration required: [TrinityCenterAtlanta.org](http://TrinityCenterAtlanta.org).





# Ask a Coach



by Adele Wang

## “How can I keep other people from energetically draining me so much?”

Introducing our new ASK A COACH column where you can ask one of our three consulting coaches about just about anything! A new column will appear every month on our website and once a quarter in our print magazine. To submit a question, go to [bit.ly/naa-ask-a-coach](http://bit.ly/naa-ask-a-coach).

This is probably one of the most common questions I get, so know that you're not alone. Many people often feel exhausted and drained by other people, even people they love. Sensitive people, in particular, often feel other people's energies even more than their own. Without knowing any other way to deal with it, they often avoid or retreat from others. But that can backfire. It's more about learning how to hold your energy around people so you can fully show up and be present.

Energy is the sum of all of you—your thoughts, your emotions, and how your

body is carrying its life force. Your energy field is like a golden cocoon of life force that powers your body or like a beautiful marshmallow that holds all of your light. This light is yours and needs to stay with you, not drift away toward other people.

Everyone has an energy field, even if they're unaware of it. And almost everyone can feel when something is “off.” Feeling easily drained by other people tells you that something can use a bit of attention.

One of the most common reasons people lose their energy around others is that they have a strong desire to be liked and approved of by others. So they send their energy out to see how other people are feeling about them, trying to get information about them so they know how to respond in return. It's a subconscious, instantaneous habit.

Is that you? Do you have a strong need to make other people happy? People pleasers typically expend a lot of energy trying to read people and provide solutions to their problems. They can send out so much energy to tune into others that they often don't notice what's happening with their own energy. Trying to anticipate what others want and trying

to say something useful or helpful can be exhausting.

Sometimes people get drained because they let go of their energy in order to “disappear” energetically. Sensitive people tend to do this when they feel uncomfortable or anxious around others or when they're in a crowd with a lot of people's energies pressed close together. It's a survival technique—a way to hide and be less noticeable when the environment feels unsafe and chaotic. Sensitive people can disappear this way, or they can absorb other people's energies without knowing they're doing it. Either way, it doesn't feel good.

No matter what your pattern might be, the key is to develop more energetic awareness of what's happening in the moment. It's like the difference between a wad of cotton candy and a ripe, juicy tomato. People who are easily drained have energy fields that are very porous, like cotton candy. It doesn't take much to blow away some of that energy.

In contrast, if you held your energy as if you were a ripe tomato, you'd be full of light and juice, sealed up with a smooth, supple skin. Your energy would be more tangible and contained.

If your energy is contained like a tomato, you can sustain it inside your energy cocoon. You don't generate more energy only to have it sucked away like cotton candy, and you don't need to expend energy trying to block out other people's energy, either.

Here are two energy practices to help strengthen your energy field:

1 The next time you're around someone, give only 25 percent of your energy to the person and keep 75 percent of it focused on yourself, internally. Notice what's happening to your physical body, your emotions and the thoughts that cross your mind. That 75 percent of your energy should be way down in your lower belly, noticing yourself. This extra emphasis and awareness on your own field will keep your energy from being pulled away or drifting the other person.

2 If you feel drained in some situation, you can pull it back through your eyes. Energetic drain happens as if energy is pulled out of our eyes. So imagine you're pulling your energy back in, through and behind your eyes, and then back down into your body, all the way down to your lower belly. Settle there, breathe and feel the stability.

Both of these practices will help you feel more stable around other people's energies. You might even notice that it gets easier to connect with people when your energy is more contained and not getting lost, pinging into everyone else. With practice, you'll likely find it easier to be around people. You'll become more curious and feel less triggered by other people's emotions. Some of my clients report that they feel more “at home” energetically and even improve the quality of their relationships without having to “work” on specific issues. 🙌

Adele Wang is a coach, podcaster, energy healer and author. She helps overwhelmed professionals clear stress and attract what they want. Follow @AdeleWang.TheOriginalOne on Instagram or listen to her podcast “All Things Human” wherever podcasts are available.

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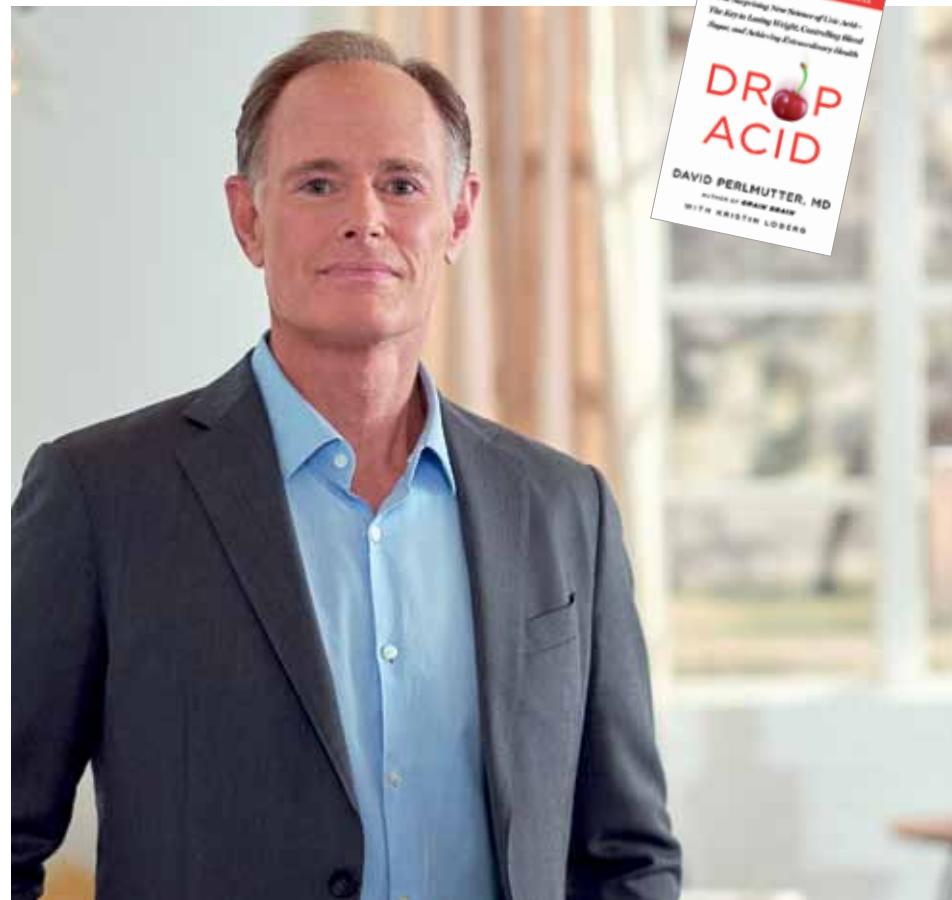


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## WISE WORDS



## David Perlmutter on the Role of Uric Acid in Metabolic Health

by Sandra Yeyati

**B**oard-certified neurologist David Perlmutter, M.D., has written five *New York Times* bestsellers, including *Brain Wash*, *Grain Brain* and *Brain Maker*. His latest book is *Drop Acid: The Surprising New Science of Uric Acid—The Key to Losing Weight, Controlling Blood Sugar, and Achieving Extraordinary Health*. A recipient of the Linus Pauling Award for his innovative approaches to neurological disorders and the National Nutritional Foods Association Clinician of the Year award, he has appeared on *20/20*, *CNN*,

*Fox News*, *The Today Show*, *Oprah* and *CBS This Morning*.

### *What is the most significant threat to our health and longevity today?*

Metabolic issues like high blood pressure, increased body fat and high blood sugar are at the root of our most pervasive health challenges. According to the World Health Organization, the number one cause of death on planet Earth are chronic degenerative conditions like Alzheimer's, coronary

artery disease, diabetes and cancer, all of which are fundamentally metabolic problems. Astoundingly, 88 percent of American adults have at least one component of what is called the metabolic syndrome, which means only 12 percent of Americans are metabolically healthy.

### *What is the basic premise of Drop Acid?*

The book shows how uric acid elevation, previously thought of only in terms of gout, is the centerpiece for metabolic dysfunction and how you can easily bring your uric acid under control and regain metabolic health. You can test uric acid levels at your doctor's office or with a home monitor that you can buy online, so this is a powerful new tool to help you be healthier.

### *What is the role of uric acid in our body?*

Having elevated uric acid was a survival mechanism for our hunter/gatherer, Paleolithic and primate ancestors because it allowed their bodies to make more fat to protect them during times of food scarcity. Today, high levels of uric acid are leading to elevated blood sugar, increased production and storage of fat, and high blood pressure. Everything we do that raises our uric acid puts us at risk for these profound metabolic threats to our health.

### *What foods and beverages should we reduce to control uric acid levels?*

Alcohol, purines (the breakdown product of DNA and RNA in certain foods) and most importantly, fructose. In the 1900s, we consumed 10 to 15 grams of fructose per day, as opposed to over 70 grams today. The average American consumes 55 pounds of sugar each year. It's absurd. High-fructose items like sodas, sauces and desserts are absolutely off the table, as is fruit juice, a powerful initiator of high uric acid. Fruit isn't an issue. There may be five grams of fructose in an apple, and fruit contains vitamin C, which dramatically lowers uric acid, and fiber, which slows fructose release.

High-purine foods are organ meats, shell-

fish and small fish like anchovies and sardines. There are modest amounts of purines in red meat and chicken. I'm not saying these foods should be avoided; we want people to limit their consumption of chicken, fish and red meat to six ounces a day.

With alcohol, the big issues are hard liquor and beer. Beer contains a very concentrated source of purines because it's made with brewer's yeast. Though wine contains alcohol, it has polyphenols that help to reduce uric acid, possibly by nurturing the gut bacteria. Research demonstrates that a glass or two of wine is associated with either no change or a minimal decrease in uric acid. Coffee seems to lower uric acid.

### *Will these lifestyle choices really make a difference?*

Patients are confronted with a mentality from marketing that you can do whatever the heck you want with your food and lifestyle, and then take a pill. I've been to dinner with diabetics who eat the *creme brûlée* then pop a pill. But pills don't treat diabetes. They may lower blood sugar, but they won't treat the underlying problem, which is that the body isn't responding to insulin. The moment patients stop the drug, much to the joy of the drug maker, their blood sugars go right back up. You've only treated the smoke. You haven't looked at the fire. This approach of lowering uric acid puts the fire out.

### *Are you hopeful that more people will make better lifestyle choices?*

I see a bit of a trend where people are looking for more empowerment. They have greater access to data with wearable devices like continuous glucose monitors or an *Oura Ring* to tell you how you sleep. By better understanding moment-to-moment how our choices affect certain measurable factors, we're slowly getting into the driver's seat and becoming empowered to keep ourselves healthy. 🙌

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

## Messages from MAITREYA The World Teacher

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Place yourselves behind Me in My Task and allow Me to take you on the Lighted Way.

— Maitreya

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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**Learn Easy Breathing Techniques to Affect Positive Change for Mind, Body & Soul** — 11am. Easy breathwork for enhanced cognition and intuition, blood circulation and oxygenation, accelerated healing, nerve function toning and more. \$11. More info & to register: [WithLoveAndLight.com](http://WithLoveAndLight.com).

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

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## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

**Volunteer with the Conservancy** — 9am-12pm. Volunteers will be cleaning up litter, prepare landscape beds for spring, and removing invasive plants. All materials and tools provided. Washington Park, 1125 Lena St NE, Atlanta. Register: [ParkPride.org](http://ParkPride.org).

**Winter Family Night Hike** — 7-9pm. Listen for the sounds of winter in the woods and gaze up at the stars while enjoying the crisp air of the season. A campfire, where you can roast a marshmallow, will be waiting for you as we wrap up the evening. \$12/nonmember, \$10/CNC member. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: [ChattNatureCenter.org](http://ChattNatureCenter.org).

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

**Lovebirds Valentine's Day Bird Walk** — 9-11am. From dancing to eating to nest building to singing, birds have many courtship rituals. A naturalist-led hike to spot some of these

unique behaviors right here at the Nature Center. \$10. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: [DunwoodyNature.org](http://DunwoodyNature.org).

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

**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. Register: [Tinyurl.com/58czxw3b](http://Tinyurl.com/58czxw3b)

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

**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. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: [UnityAtl.org](http://UnityAtl.org).

### FEBRUARY 17-20

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## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

**Advanced Invasive Plant Management Workshop/Workday** — 10am-1pm. You can help protect the urban tree canopy. How? By managing and removing the invasive plant species in your park (or home garden) that might threaten to outcompete or otherwise smother trees. Ashford Nature Preserve, 3890 Clairmont Rd, Chamblee. Register: [ParkPride.org](http://ParkPride.org).

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

**Believing the Impossible** — 12pm. It's so easy to fall into asking why? Let's turn that wondering why into believing. \$10. More info & to register: [WithLoveAndLight.com](http://WithLoveAndLight.com).

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

**Online: Connect with Your Spirit Animal** — 7-8pm. An open discussion and enjoy a live-guided mediation as we embark on a journey to meet your spirit animal in their natural habitat. \$20. Register: [TheOpenMindCenter.com](http://TheOpenMindCenter.com).

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## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6

**Art of Breath Class** — 12-1:30pm. With Noel Plaughter. Covers breathing techniques used in many disciplines to provide relaxation, focus and better health. Love offering.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

**Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys** — 7-8:30pm. Also Feb 24. 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/vickievanhealing](http://PayPal.me/vickievanhealing).

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

**Change Your Interiors, Change Your Life with Feng Shui** — 2-3:30pm. With Roberta Grant. Informative, interactive and fun workshop to learn about the history, principles, Bagua map, The Five Elements, Ch'i Enhancers, clutter clearing and much more. Free; love offering appreciated. RSVP.

**Online: The Nature Club Dine and Discover** — 7-9pm. With Rose Guerra, Chattahoochee Nature Center Naturalist. Learn about adaptations that allow local wildlife to survive winter in Georgia. Learn how you can make your yard a winter haven for the natural world. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. Via Zoom. Registration required: 770-992-2055 or [ChattNatureCenter.org](http://ChattNatureCenter.org).

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

**Wildlife Baby Shower** — 10am-3pm. Learn all about CNC's efforts to help injured wildlife. Includes unique wildlife walks at 11am, 1 & 3pm with wildlife specialists. Plus, there will be fun and games for the whole family to learn about their favorite baby animals. Included in general admission. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: [ChattNatureCenter.org](http://ChattNatureCenter.org).

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Break Free from Ego** — 11:30am. Help yourself to be the person you are and want to be and stop your ego from interfering. \$10. More info & to register: [WithLoveAndLight.com](http://WithLoveAndLight.com).

# 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](http://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](http://RedClaySangha.org).

**Online: NWUUC** — 10am. Via Zoom. Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation: 770-955-1408 or [nwuuc.org](http://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](http://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](http://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/yjzutf4](http://Tinyurl.com/yjzutf4).

**One World Spiritual Center Sunday Service** — 11am. To watch: [OneWorldSpiritualCenter.net](http://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](http://UnityAtl.org).

**Online: UUCA Service** — 11am. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta: [uuca.org/live](http://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](http://srfatlanta.org).

**Sunday Morning Talks and Discussion** — 11am-12pm. With Vedanta Center of Atlanta via Zoom. To watch: [VedantaAtlanta.org](http://VedantaAtlanta.org).

**Unity North Online & In-Person Sunday Service** — 11:15am. 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: [UnityNorth.org](http://UnityNorth.org).

**Last Sunday Social** — 12:12-3:33pm. Last Sun with Cosmic 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@CosmicBrew.com or [Linktr.ee/CosmicBrew](http://Linktr.ee/CosmicBrew).

## 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](http://SamaFoodForBalance.com).

**Online: Monday Night Meditation** — 7-8pm. A live, instructor-led meditation and discussion. Develop a meditation practice by maintaining a moment-to-moment relaxed awareness of our surrounding environment, bodily sensations, thoughts and emotions. All levels. \$10. Register: [TheOpenMindCenter.com](http://TheOpenMindCenter.com).

## Tuesdays

**Online Meditation Open House** — 7pm. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: [Atlanta.Shambhala.org](http://Atlanta.Shambhala.org).

**Metro Atlanta Sierra Club Meeting** — 7:30pm. 2nd Tues. More info: [SierraClub.org/georgia/atlanta](http://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](http://MeditationInGeorgia.org).

**Zoom Check-In: Wellness Wednesdays** — 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. [slc-atlanta.org](http://slc-atlanta.org).

**Online: Joy of Breathing Class** — 1-1:30pm. Learn the Joy of Breathing technique, practice a deep Pranayama session and enjoy the benefits. Free. Register: [Tinyurl.com/muwwanm9](http://Tinyurl.com/muwwanm9).

**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](http://Heart-Soul-And-Art.square.site).

**Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience** — 7pm. To watch: [UnityNorth.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 Pranici Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: [AtlPranicHealing.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://DunwoodyNature.org).

**Oakhurst Farmers' Market** — 9am-1pm. Year round. 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](http://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](http://Tinyurl.com/y3x5yy2s).

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# Growing Wings



by Mindy Strich

*How strange that the nature of life is change, yet the nature of human beings is to resist change. And how ironic that the difficult times we fear might ruin us are the very ones that can break us open and help us blossom into who we were meant to be.*

~Elizabeth Lesser

In the early 20th century, experiments on parasites revealed that when rose bushes infested with them died, the parasites, previously wingless, would grow wings. Once their source of food was dead, a metamorphosis took place, and they grew wings to help them avoid starvation and support them in finding a new source of food.

For the last two years of my marriage, I knew something was terribly wrong. Despite my worry, anxiety and confusion, my husband continued to deny it. "I don't know what you're talking about. Please stop. How many times do I need to assure you that everything is fine? I'm just tired and stressed," he'd say.

I didn't buy it. The constant weight on my chest eventually landed me in the hospital. After three days of tests, the doctors concluded there was nothing physically wrong and recommended I see a psychiatrist. In other words, they agreed with my husband: It was all in my head.

Well, they were wrong. Not long after my hospital stay, I was diagnosed with a condition called postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, a disorder of the autonomic nervous system. Everything that felt "off" in my marriage was expressing itself

in my body and alerting me to a reality that neither my husband nor I wanted to see.

## The Body Doesn't Lie. But the Head Does.

There are moments in my life I will never forget—memories that are indelibly etched into my cell tissue; transformational times that stick to my psyche like glue. Watching my granddaughter being born, the day my mother died, and the day my husband finally admitted he was gay.

I wasn't crazy after all. As the words tumbled from his mouth, I could barely digest what I was hearing. In a flash, everything I believed in dissolved. The life I thought I was living and the future I dreamt of exploded in front of my eyes. My "source of food" was dying.

I had no idea how I was going to survive it, but I loved him enough to know that I had to let him go. I had an enormous amount of healing to do, but first, I had to fall apart. Before I could imagine a new life, I had to watch the old one die.

I needed to grieve, to crumble, and to retreat into my pain. To provide safe passage for my broken heart, I withdrew into the darkness. It was there inside my cocoon, alone with my despair, that I grew my wings.

There's always a greater purpose at work behind the scenes. Amid all the broken pieces, glimpses of hope began to peek through the cracks. I stopped myself from becoming "the victim" and emerged to see our breakup through Divine eyes.

## What if This Is Happening for Me Instead of to Me?

Divorce tested my faith, exposed my vulnerability and reminded me of my strength. Sorrow forced me to face my greatest fears and my innermost insecurities. And my heart endured it all. The time I spent in that deep dark hole was the vehicle that initiated my return to wholeness.

It's been ten years now, and Mike and I are still close. We care about each other's happiness and joyfully share in the blessings of our two—soon-to-be three—grandchildren. Through it all, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to recreate our relationship, rebuild our family and support each other through life's challenges.

Not long ago, I found out he is getting remarried. For an instant, that old familiar pain rose back to the surface, but it didn't stick for long. This was the last attachment to what was my marriage. The final cords were being cut, and the gaping hole that used to reside in my heart was now a perfectly designed space, Divinely formed, for my wings. 🦋



Photo: Jennifer Connelly

Coauthor of *The 28-Day Thought Diet and F\*A\*I\*T\*H\**: Finding Answers in the Heart, Mindy Strich is a certified I.E.M. Biofield Therapist and I.C.F. Life Coach. For more information, call 678-642-7771 or visit [MindyStrich.com](http://MindyStrich.com).

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