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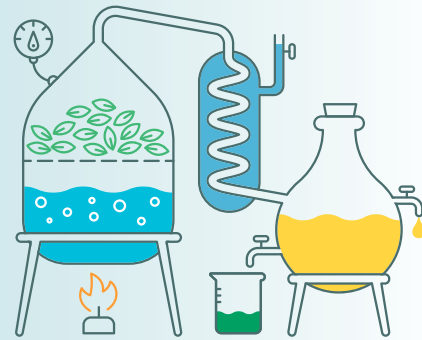
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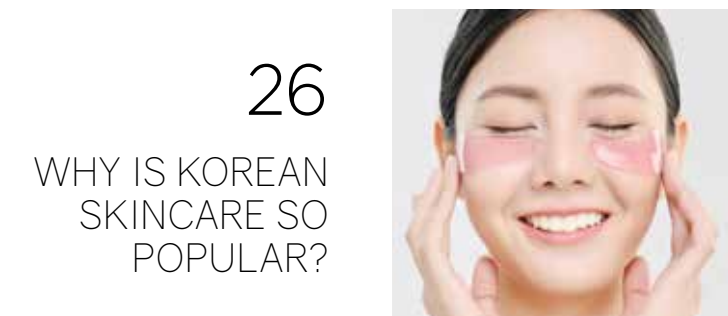
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OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR IS HOT!

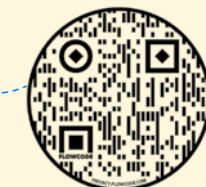
The Community Calendar has always been popular. I remember one of my first meetings with a customer. She had our then-current issue with her, opened to the calendar pages, with several events circled. Some *Natural Awakenings* publishers say the calendar is their most popular section.

We've been promoting our online Community Calendar for years, and it is now the second most-visited page after our homepage! In addition to its popularity, 17 percent of the Top 500 pages on our website since the beginning of the year have been specific event listings! Several businesses and organizations have caught on and regularly post their events.

Many of us seek compelling things to do, and we're Atlanta's primary resource for events that can change lives. Get in the habit of checking out our online Community Calendar! For obvious reasons, it holds many more events than our print magazine. During Alive! Expo, a reader suggested making a refrigerator magnet with a QR code for the Calendar. She could then easily check it out anytime she wants. Brilliant! We made some! While there's not a magnet on the back of this page, cut it out and tape it to your fridge!

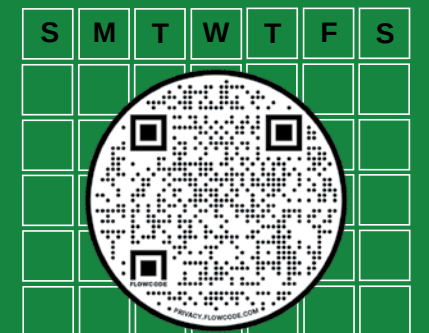
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CORRECTIONS: In June's sidebar "Black Holistic Health Practitioners in Atlanta," the address for Dr. Serena Satcher's practice, Treat Yourself to Health, was incorrect. The correct address is 555 Sun Valley Dr, STE C1, Roswell.

In June's article, "Wonderful Wizards of Raw Ten Years Celebrating Raw Food," Nyemay Aya's name was misspelled.

In the article, "Yoga Forever: Starting a Practice After 60 Can Be Just the Beginning," Donita Crockett's name was misspelled.

Natural Awakenings is a network of natural lifestyle magazine publishers empowering local communities with knowledge, resources and connections to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



On Serving One's Country

It's Monday morning of production week, and I am at the courthouse serving jury duty. Given that my mind is focused on civic duty and that this is the July issue, it seems a good time to contemplate the nature of serving one's country.

In America, we tend to interpret "service to country" as "serving in the military." Obviously, there are an infinite number of ways Americans can serve their country, but with the war in Ukraine in its second year and no end in sight, with tensions between China and the U.S. on the rise, and with life in the U.S. becoming increasingly violent, the age-old question of "when to go to war" can't be far from many minds.

I look to world religions for context. Interestingly, the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, discusses the prospect and conduct of war against one's own cousins. The conversation between Krishna and Arjuna concludes with the determination that some wars are just and that one is obligated to fight them. However, there is a Himalayan caveat. Krishna tells Arjuna:

When you have made pleasure and pain the same—also gain and loss, and victory and defeat, then join yourself to battle; and in this way, you will not cause harm.

In an essay, political theorist Sreejith Sugunan, Ph.D., writes:

According to Krishna, Arjuna should partake in war when his conduct in the

battlefield is devoid of 'passion and hatred' and instead exhibits a sense of 'restraint' as it is only 'the one who thus restrains the self, and who governs the self, attains peace.' Seen from this perspective, the Gita's message on the combatant's disposition during war is more fundamental to the text than all the justifications it provides for waging war. This is because, as Krishna suggests, one who does not embody the spirit of peace, restraint and calmness in the midst of war is unworthy of being called a warrior and can only cause 'harm...'

If such were the requirements of all who fight, there would be, practically speaking, no fights—after all, how many of us are that spiritually advanced? And if we were, wouldn't we find other ways to solve differences?

The other tradition that I have a fair amount of familiarity with is Buddhism, and I have not found anything in Buddhist scripture that justifies war; the dictum to do no harm is absolute.

There is, however, a story of the Buddha when he was not yet fully enlightened, killing a fellow passenger on a ship. With clairvoyance, the Buddha could see that this passenger was intent on killing everyone on the ship. The pure Buddha Mind produces only pure intent, so, with compassion as his only motivation, he slayed the passenger. His compassion toward

the other passengers is clear as he saved them from certain death, but perhaps even more grand is the supreme compassion he bestowed upon the passenger he killed. For if Buddha had not done so, the killer would have taken on huge amounts of negative karma that would have resulted in enormous suffering over a very long time. Instead, knowing that he was far more able to mitigate the consequences of his own non-virtuous actions than the would-be killer, Buddha took on the karma that would have befallen his shipmate.

In Christianity, St. Augustine promulgated a just war doctrine, but his words bring to mind Krishna's criteria that one must meet before taking up arms: "We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to the prosperity of peace." The BBC, in a piece on the ethics of war, wrote that Augustine "stated that Christians did not have the right to defend themselves from violence; however, they could use violence if it was necessary to defend the innocent against evil."

It would seem that at least three of the world's great spiritual traditions suggest that a country's choice to take up fighting and killing is rarely, if ever, justified—even less so for launching a full-scale war—and that the requirements for individuals to join the prosecution of such wars is even more demanding. Thus, we must ask ourselves: What better and more productive ways might there be to render "service to country"? Can anyone doubt that if the Peace Corps were funded at the level of the Pentagon that the world would be a much better, much safer place? 🌱



Publisher of Natural Awakenings Atlanta since 2017, Paul Chen's professional background includes strategic planning, marketing management and qualitative research. He practices Mahayana Buddhism and kriya yoga.

Get Off the Grid Fest RETURNS IN AUGUST



The biennial Get Off the Grid Fest (GOTGF) will take place August 18 through 20 at The Music Camp in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Its mission "is to explore and present practical methods of protecting and preserving natural resources through a forum for sharing know-how and experience in sustainable living within a minimal-impact solar-powered music and camping festival," according to the event's website.

The three-day festival will feature three music stages with performances from Solar Family Jam with Donna Hopkins and Ralph Roddenberry, Darrell Scott's Electrifying Trio, Amanda Platt and the Honeycutters and more. The festival will include speakers, a solar expo, sustainability fair, healing heart cave and eco-conscious vendors. On-site camping will be available.

Kids of all ages will be welcome to join the Gnome Zone for entertaining and eco-conscious programming. GOTGF will also feature EDUfest, which enables qualified students 15 years old and up to get an exclusive backstage tour of the festival before the gates open. They will meet the team, attend workshops and learn about the power of the sun.

GOTGF co-founder, co-producer and former Atlanta resident Bill Fleming says, "The festival is a vehicle by which information can be shared and disseminated, helping people to achieve energy self-sufficiency."

A one-day pass to the festival costs \$50 plus tax, a three-day pass costs \$150 plus tax, and an Eco Camp pass costs \$300 plus tax. Kids 15 and under will be admitted free when accompanied by an adult ticket holder.

For more information, visit GetOffTheGridFest.com or email Hello@GetOffTheGridFest.com. Disclosure: Natural Awakenings is a sponsor of Get Off the Grid Fest.

Bill Fleming

METAPHYSICAL STORE OPENS IN KIRKWOOD

Jewelry maker and crystal enthusiast Charlie Ware has opened Aureole, a metaphysical store in Kirkwood. Aureole specializes in crystals, herbs, soaps, plants, candles, clothing and other unique gifts. It also provides local art and custom henna. Located at 1272 Dahlgren Lane SE, Unit 1281, Aureole is open Tuesdays through Fridays from noon to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Because of the unique location, the store is easily accessible via the Beltline and MARTA.

"Aureole is a special place that prioritizes and promotes products, art and services by BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and people of color]. At Aureole, we have carefully curated beautiful collections of your favorite metaphysical needs. Our products are locally sourced and sustainable."

Ware started Aureole in 2015 after she was gifted some tools and stones and quickly discovered her love for making jewelry. Soon, friends and family members began requesting customized pieces, and she accepted the challenge. Ever since, Ware has remained committed to providing high-quality metaphysical necessities for her community.

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Ginger Jones, right, owner of Naughty Bites, captured first prize for the second year in a row at the raw chef cookoff contest at the 10th annual Wonderful Wizards of Raw festival last month at Tassili's Raw Reality Café. Daudi Mclean, center, of Da Vegan Guru, placed second, and Satis Martin of Lively Up Icells won third prize. [Photo: Hope Rugley]

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CONSCIOUS EATING

Hues of Health

BENEFITS OF A COLORFUL DIET

by Veronica Hinke



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Eating plant-based foods from every hue in the rainbow provides an exceptional array of health benefits. Rich in essential vitamins, minerals and fiber, vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables also contain phytonutrients such as antioxidants, flavonoids, carotenoids and polyphenols that contribute to the color, flavor and aroma of such foods. There are thousands of phytonutrients and, according to a 2022 review of clinical studies published in *Nutrients*, these natural chemical compounds “play an important role in the prevention of serious chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension, along with different types of cancer or degenerative diseases.”

From a culinary perspective, colorful, plant-based foods add pops of color and flavor to a dish, and simple techniques can transform uber-nutritious fruits and veggies into crave-worthy delights. From tasty spreads and luscious dressings to pungent pickling recipes and rich soups, eating the rainbow can be a scrumptious and sustainable everyday lifestyle.

Keeping a medley of wholesome choices in the house is a good tactic to help a family adopt a rainbow-based diet. According to Registered Dietitian Olga Kras, “Not any single fruit or vegetable provides all of the nutrients we need. Making a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables visible increases the likelihood that they will be part of a daily routine.”

When her children were younger, instead of giving them sugary treats, she would cut fruits and vegetables into shapes with cookie cutters. “They loved opening their lunch boxes to find the fun shapes,” she recalls, noting the allure of visually pleasing treats. As the first-century Roman Apicius said, “We eat first with our eyes.”

According to Sarah Stegner, co-owner and chef of Prairie Grass Cafe, in Northbrook, Illinois, “Food is medicine. It is what lifts us up. When we allow ourselves to get run-down or we are tired, that is when we are the most vulnerable, and we reach for that highly processed, packaged thing. That’s when we compromise, and compromise leads to long-term illness.”

Stegner compares food shopping to a trip to an art store for the artist that is about to paint a rainbow. “Center yourself,” she counsels. “Don’t put anything into the cart that shouldn’t be eaten. The key word is choice. If people don’t understand and realize what the choices they have are—for example, what herbs are and how to use them—then that is not a choice for them when they go home to cook a meal.”

“It’s just fun to have foods that are colorful,” says Erin Hoogendyk, a cooking instructor at Grebe’s Chef Center, in Wausau, Wisconsin, whose favorite flavor accents are onions, lemons and limes, as well as a panoply of herbs, including basil, rosemary, chives, parsley and mint. To add color and nutrition to everyday salads, she tosses in blueberries or dresses them with homemade vinaigrettes made with strawberries and balsamic.

Hoogendyk recommends farmers markets, individual farm stands and community-supported agriculture subscriptions to discover the freshest, in-season ingredients. When it comes to cooking and putting meals together, a sense of adventure and enjoyment is paramount, she says. Her

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MARINATED BEETS AND GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI

Deriving their deep-red color from phytonutrients called betalains, beets are rich in nitrates, which help to lower blood pressure. They also provide calcium, folate and fiber. The pistachios in this recipe contain potassium, fiber, vitamins B6 and C, iron, magnesium and calcium.

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

- 1 lb mixed-color baby beets
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 cup honey
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 pinch grain mustard
- 3 oz goat cheese
- 2 Tbsp herbs (chives, basil, mint), chopped
- 3 oz olive oil
- 3 oz chopped pistachios
- 1 toasted baguette, sliced

Remove the beet tops and reserve for other uses. Boil the beets in salted water until tender. Allow to cool slightly and rub the skin off the beets. Using an old dish towel will help the skin come right off.

Mix the vinegar, honey and orange juice in a bowl. Add the thyme and mustard. Add the beets, cover and allow them to marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.

Place the oil, sea salt, herbs and pistachios in a blender. Pulse until slightly pureed and chunky.

To assemble the crostini, remove the beets from the marinade and slice. Spread the goat cheese onto the toasted baguette slices and top with the beets. Drizzle the pistachio sauce on top and serve.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Sarah Stegner.





SUMMER BROCCOLI SOUP WITH HERB CROUTONS

This vibrant, lime green-colored soup is an excellent source of potassium, fiber, vitamins B6 and C, iron, magnesium and calcium. It also contains several phytonutrients, including the carotenoids lutein, zeaxanthin and B-carotene, as well as tocopherols. For the croutons, choose a healthy bread, such as sprouted whole grain, gluten-free, almond flour or flax loaves.

YIELD: 2 TO 6 SERVINGS, DEPENDING ON PORTION SIZE

FOR SOUP:

- 6 cups broccoli florets, chopped
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 generous pinch of sea salt
- 1 pinch of chili pepper flakes
- 3 Tbsp butter

FOR CROUTONS:

- 1 cup diced bread
- 2 Tbsp melted butter
- ½ tsp fresh thyme, chives or other fresh garden herbs, minced

Bring the stock to a boil. Add the sea salt and chili flakes. Add the broccoli and cook

until fork tender and bright green. Transfer to a blender, add butter and blend well. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve with aged cheddar cheese and croutons.

To make the croutons, toss the diced bread in a bowl with melted butter, salt and fresh herbs. Spread the bread in an even layer on an oven-safe pan. Bake at 350° F and toast until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Sarah Stegner.



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coleslaw recipe includes red and green onions, radishes and red cabbage. “I don’t like coleslaw to be boring,” she quips, adding that her next project is to pickle an ingredient she has never pickled before: celery. “I can’t wait to see how it turns out.”


For those wanting to optimize their rainbow-based diets, “testing can help people understand how to best support their biology and determine what their bodies need,” says Dr. Véronique Desaulniers, a chiropractor and author of *Heal Breast Cancer Naturally*. She recommends the DNA test kit and whole-body health report from Nutrition Genome to pinpoint which foods to enjoy or avoid, depending on genetic weaknesses. Close monitoring of blood sugar levels is also important, she notes, as daily glucose and insulin spikes “can turn on cancer-causing genes and cancer-causing pathways.”

Veronica Hinke is a food historian and author of The Last Night on the Titanic: Unsinkable Drinking, Dining and Style. Learn more at FoodStringer.com.

CHEESY CAULIFLOWER MUSHROOM STEAKS



This dish can be served as a meal or cut into smaller pieces and presented as party appetizers. Cauliflower provides vitamins B6, K and C, magnesium and fiber. It is also a great source of glucosinolates and isothiocyanates, two types of antioxidants that have been shown to slow the growth of cancer cells...

 See the web version of this article for the complete recipe.

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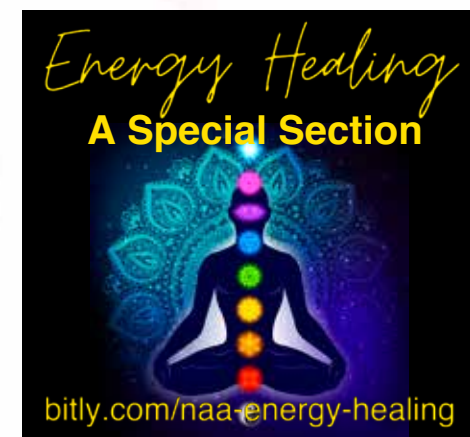
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Photo by Rodale Institute

THE MICROBIOME CONNECTION

HOW SOIL AND HUMAN HEALTH ARE RELATED

by Kelcie Ottoes

The human gut microbiome, which is critical to fighting off disease, and soil microbiome, which enables plant growth, are vitally important to maintaining all life on our planet. These two communities of microorganisms are indirectly connected in important ways, and researchers are trying to find out more about their interplay.

Human Microbiome

The human gut microbiome consists of trillions of microorganisms of different species. These microbes help to digest food, synthesize vitamins and other important compounds, regulate our immune system and even influence behavior and mood.

The gut microbiome includes both helpful and potentially harmful microbiota that coexist peacefully in a healthy person. But certain diets, or the use of antibiotics or other bacteria-destroying medications, can upset the balance, a state known as dysbiosis, which can impair the microbiome's functions, leaving the body susceptible to disease.

Soil Microbiome

The soil microbiome has many parallels to the human gut scenario. It consists of bacteria, fungi, archaea and viruses—microorganisms that play an important role in maintaining the health of the soil. They do this by breaking down organic matter, cycling

nutrients and protecting crops against harmful pathogens.

Regenerative organic farming practices that promote biodiversity and disdain the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers develop robust soil that is rich in nutrients and beneficial microbes. In such settings, farmers don't need to use chemicals, because the microbiome creates disease-resistant soil to fight off threats.

The Nutrition Link

While a direct link between the soil microbiome and the gut microbiome has yet to be proven, soil certainly impacts our health through our diet. A diverse and active soil microbiome is responsible for supporting plant growth. Plants then provide us with the nutrients that our gut microbiome needs to thrive, including calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, E, K and the B complex.

Dan Kittredge, founder of The Bionutrient Institute, explains, "The sophistication of the soil microbiome is connected to the nutritional value of the food that's produced. The healthier the [soil] microbiome, the healthier the food." The use of fertilizers and pesticides does not directly produce less nutritious food, but rather their impact on the health of the soil microbiome can impact the crops' nutritional value.

There is a hypothesis that food has become less nutritious since the mid-1900s. In a 2004 study, University of Texas scientists examined the nutritional value of 43 garden crops from 1950 to 1999 and found that while all 43 foods showed a statistically reliable decline in nutrition, it was likely due to cultivating plants with desired traits, such as larger sizes, faster growing rates and increased pest resistance. It wasn't the soil that was the problem, but that growers had not prioritized breeding crops for higher nutritional value.

According to Jack Gilbert, a pediatrics professor at the University of California San Diego and co-founder of the Earth Microbiome Project and the American Gut Project, "There is an indirect relationship between a healthy soil microbiome and healthy gut microbiome. While we need healthy soils to grow plants, a healthy soil microbiome does not equal a healthy gut microbiome."

He explains, "The link is really about diet in the gut microbiome. Precision nutrition is the idea that how we all respond to food is unique, and that we can predict those responses if we understand what kinds of bacteria are in the gut. This is because the gut microbiome varies between people, and those same gut microbes can mediate how food influences our physiology. Eating a healthy diet can have a



Photo by Rodale Institute

profound impact on reducing the risk of developing chronic diseases."

The nutritional value of food is more complicated than the quality of the soil in which the crops grow. It is also impacted by the processing of the food. As Kittredge notes, when the bran in wheat is removed—a common process that turns flour white—wheat loses much of its nutritional value. Unprocessed foods allow us to access more of the nutrients within them.

Digging in the Soil

There is another way that soil microbes can benefit human health: spending time in nature. Exposure to the soil microbiome has been shown to stimulate the immune system. When outside, we are exposed to a diverse array of microorganisms that increase disease resistance and provide neurological benefits.

Gilbert has largely built a career on the benefits of getting his hands dirty. He is currently conducting a study to find out how giving children two hours of outdoor learning a day can impact their metabolic health and help them avoid diseases. According to Kittredge, playing in the dirt isn't just for kids. "It is beneficial to expose ourselves to soil microbes," he says. "Everyone should nature bathe."

"Exposure to soil microbes, like *Mycobacterium vaccae*, can positively impact our physical and mental health," says Kathleen DiChiara, a Functional Diagnostic Nutrition practitioner and digestive wellness educator. "We are losing diversity and not getting the exposure we used to." She points out that the gut microbiomes of urban citizens in the U.S. have lower bacterial diversity than those in rural societies, including hunter-gatherers from Tanzania and the Amazon.

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While diet, lifestyle and genetics play a role in the host-specific differences, the microbiome composition in adults is also based on exposure to microbes in the environment. According to DiChiara, there is no perfect profile for the gut microbiome, and our gut microbial communities ebb and flow. “If a specific strain of bacteria suddenly disappears, perhaps due to an illness, another species can take on its task,” she explains. “Like nature, it’s about working together on our behalf.”

Diversity, richness and symbiotic behavior of the gut microbes are central to our well-being. DiChiara notes that many variables can negatively impact the gut microbiome. Some result from the choices we make voluntarily, such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol, eating ultra-processed foods, being chronically stressed and leading a sedentary lifestyle. Other factors are beyond our control, such as neurological injuries, illnesses and hormonal shifts due to puberty or menopause.

Human Impact on Soil Health

The soil microbiome and the gut microbiome both need our support to maintain proper health. Although our gut microbiome may not be directly impacted by the health of soil microbes, it can be impacted by the pesticides, herbicides and fungicides in our food.

Degradation of the soil microbiome occurs in many ways. Tillage, bare soil, dry soil, fertilizer, chemical sprays and fungicides all harm the soil microbiome. These non-regenerative agricultural practices can have negative impacts on the health of individuals that eat the plants and on the health of the broader ecosystems.

Chemicals like glyphosate can damage the gut microbiome by creating oxidative stress, which agitates the microbiome and impedes its ability to function properly. Pesticides can also have a detrimental impact on the gut microbiome. Each year the United States uses 1 billion pounds of pesticides that may be damaging our bodies when we eat our veggies. “What we are not doing is prioritizing protecting the microbiome—for us and the soil. It’s time we recognize the interconnections between climate, soil and the gut,” DiChiara says.

There are multiple ways we can cultivate a closer, healthier relationship between our soil and our gut, such as supporting sustainable agriculture, avoiding processed foods, frequenting farmers markets for organic produce or spending time in nature. Better yet, Kittredge suggests planting a pesticide-free garden at home and eating carrots straight from the soil. 🌱

Kelcie Ottoes is a copywriter and content creator specializing in sustainability and environmental topics.

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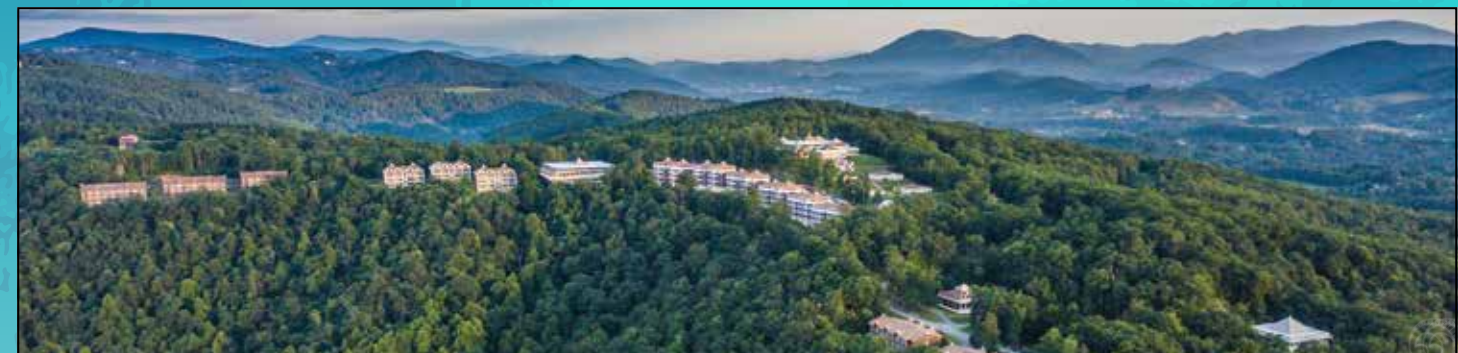
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Too Much Histamine

NATURAL SOLUTIONS TO AN EXCESSIVE ALLERGIC RESPONSE

by Carrie Jackson



Histamine is an organic chemical produced by the body as a protection from allergens. It is also found in some of the foods we consume. While certain levels of this compound are considered normal and healthy, an overabundance can cause troublesome symptoms—from runny noses and hives to intestinal discomfort and brain fog. Histamine intolerance, as this condition is called, is often caused by food triggers or the body’s inability to break down the excess histamine. Over-the-counter antihistamines promise short-term symptom relief but may have unappealing side effects. Long-term, drug-free resolution is possible with a little sleuthing and holistic lifestyle adaptations.

A Wide Array of Symptoms

“Histamine intolerance can affect every area of the body, including the brain. The inflammation created by excess histamine often leads to brain fog and other neurological symptoms,” says Michael Ruscio, a naturopathic practitioner, doctor of chiropractic, clinical researcher and author of *Healthy Gut, Healthy You*.

Symptoms of histamine intolerance often start in the intestinal tract with diarrhea and bloating and contribute to leaky gut. “If the sensitive gut lining is damaged, histamine can permeate to other areas of the body and lead to redness, swelling and itchiness, as well as respiratory issues, joint pain and anxiety. These seemingly unrelated symptoms can all have the same underlying cause, and patients, as well as many doctors, are not aware of these connections,” says Arti Chandra, a Seattle-based family practice physician who is certified in functional medicine and serves as faculty at the Institute for Functional Medicine.

Knowing the Triggers

“Mast cells, a type of white blood cell, are responsible for releasing histamine and other chemicals that cause inflammation. A histamine intolerance or exposure to high-hista-

mine foods can lead to mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS), where they release excess amounts into the body. Typically, enzymes will break down the histamine so that it doesn’t build up, but if the body doesn’t have the proper level of enzymes to break it down or if too much histamine is being released, then persistent symptoms can occur,” Chandra asserts.

Symptom management begins by healing the digestive system. “A healthy gut biome supports the body in producing one of the enzymes needed to break down histamine and can help lower inflammation,” she explains. “Dysbiosis, which is when the gut flora is out of balance, is often caused by the Standard American Diet, also known as SAD. Processed foods, fillers, chemicals, additives and other unnatural substances can all compromise the gut flora and gut function. Dysbiosis often leads to low levels of DAO [diamine oxidase], an enzyme in the gut that helps break down histamine. Some people can have a genetic basis for this—a mutation—that can also lead to excess histamine from impaired breakdown.”

Solutions for Histamine Overload

Per Ruscio, “A simple, balanced, whole foods diet like the Paleo diet is a great starting point to calm inflammation and heal your gut. This means aiming for a variety of vegetables, fresh fish, eggs, meat, nuts and seeds, and fruits in moderation. If symptoms continue, try a low-histamine diet.”

Chandra suggests avoiding processed and fast foods, gluten, dairy, sugar and artificial sweeteners. Foods that are naturally high in histamine, including aged cheese, fermented foods, cured meat, alcohol, caffeine and tomatoes, can exacerbate symptoms. She recommends eliminating triggers for three weeks and slowly reintroducing them one at a time to see which are still problematic. “As the gut biome becomes stronger, the body may naturally be able to tolerate high histamine foods better; eating a diet rich in prebiotic foods and sometimes taking an appropriate probiotic supplement can help with this,” she says.

Environmental factors can also trigger histamine reactions. “The body produces histamine to ward off substances like pollen, infections, chemicals and mold. Many people get what they think are normal allergies in the spring, with symptoms like runny noses, watery eyes and a scratchy throat. However, if these symptoms occur year-round, it could be a sign of a histamine intolerance or MCAS. Mold contains mycotoxins that are known to activate mast cells and lead to a histamine release. If someone is living in a building with mold and the exposure is continuous, it can lead to chronic inflammation and histamine issues. Proper air filters can help, but they ultimately may need to eliminate the mold or move out of the environment,” says Chandra.

While over-the-counter antihistamine medications may help, they can have a sedating effect and other side effects, including cognitive issues. Natural and holistic treatments work just as well and are often better tolerated by the body, Chandra says. “Quercetin, found in apple skin and onions, can stabilize mast cells and make them less leaky, as can luteolin, both of which are available in supplement form and in Himalayan Tartary buckwheat. Vitamin C is a natural antihistamine, and omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil or supplements have anti-inflammatory properties. Stinging nettles, another stabilizer, can be used as a tea or in supplement form. Spices such as curcumin are natural anti-inflammatories and a nourishing addition to any diet,” she advises.

Stress management can help reduce histamine reactions, too. “Stress can trigger mast cells, causing a release of histamine and other inflammatory chemicals, as well as causing dysbiosis and leaky gut,” Chandra says. “Breathwork and meditation, as well as restful sleep, can help reduce histamine intolerance symptoms, support the gut and contribute to an overall level of internal balance.”

Carrie Jackson is a Chicago-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings magazine. Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.

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Why Is Korean Skincare So Popular?

by Susan Gonzalez



Korean skincare—or K-Beauty, as it is affectionately known—has become a global phenomenon in recent years. It's hard to find a skincare influencer or celebrity who hasn't mentioned their experience with Korean skincare at some point. K-Beauty is known for its multi-step skincare routines, its pure, nature-based ingredients and its focus on obtaining smooth, glowing, supple skin with a flawless, even skin tone. Any age, skin type, skin color or ethnicity can find value in Korean skincare.

Korean skincare's rich history dates back centuries. The ancient Koreans were known for their holistic approach to beauty that emphasized not only wholesome ingredients but the importance of internal health. Women in the eighth century would brighten their skin using a paste of rice water and mung beans. Flawless, bright, smooth skin was always the goal.

In the 1960s, after the Korean War and the introduction of industrialized manufacturing, Korean skincare popularity took off. As the worldwide beauty industry grew, so did the demand for Korean products. Today, there are thousands of Korean companies to choose from. Some of the most popular brands are Soko Glam, COSRX, Innisfree and Laneige, but there are many more.

The Process

There is a specific process to implementing a full traditional Korean skincare routine that consists of 10 steps, but not every-

one incorporates all 10. The key is to find what works best for your skin type and tailor the routine accordingly. Here are the 10 customary steps of a Korean skincare routine:

1 OIL-BASED CLEANSER Oil cleansers break up makeup and oils on the skin and loosen them so they can be removed more easily. Even oily skin can use an oil-based cleanser as long as it does not contain pore-clogging ingredients such as coconut oil.

2 WATER-BASED CLEANSER A gentle, non-stripping water-based cleanser removes anything left behind by the oil cleanser and may also contain ingredients to soften and condition the skin.

3 EXFOLIATOR Exfoliation, the process of removing dead skin cells from the surface of the skin, is crucial to smooth, evenly-toned skin. This is achieved by either physical exfoliation, such as scrubs, or chemical exfoliation, such as acids or enzymes. [See "Exfoliation Revealed" at [NaAtlanta.com/2021/05/01/354605/exfoliation-revealed](https://naatlanta.com/2021/05/01/354605/exfoliation-revealed)]

4 TONER Toners are used to balance the pH of the skin and prepare it for the next step. Korean toners are sometimes referred to as "skin softeners" and are usually extremely gentle.

5 ESSENCE This is a lightweight, water-based serum that contains skin-nourishing ingredients such as hyaluronic acid, vitamin C and snail mucin.

6 TREATMENTS Treatments can include sheet masks, which are very popular in K Beauty, or serums that target specific concerns such as acne, hyperpigmentation or red and irritated skin.

7 EYE CREAM This is a special cream or serum to hydrate and brighten the eye area and prevent fine lines.

8 MOISTURIZER Often lightweight, Korean moisturizers hydrate, moisturize and protect skin from environmental stressors such as climate, pollution or lack of humidity. It is important to find one that is supportive of your specific skin type.

9 SUNSCREEN Sunscreen is vital in the Korean skincare routine because it protects the skin from harmful UV rays that would cause hyperpigmentation and premature aging. Using Korean sunscreens can be a lovely experience as they are often very luxurious and finish the skin with a dewy look. All skin tones, light and dark, can use Korean sunscreens. A high-quality, broad-spectrum SPF 30 or more is always included in a K beauty routine, even if it's a shortened one.

10 SLEEP MASK A specific cream is applied at night a couple of times a week for intense hydration and nourishment.

Unique Ingredients

K-Beauty has numerous benefits, including achieving a radiant, youthful complexion, improving skin texture and elasticity, reducing or fading dark spots and reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. The meticulous attention to detail and the use of high-quality, natural ingredients have contributed to its popularity. Korean skincare companies are also known for having innovative products that incorporate unique ingredients.

Two of the most popular unique ingredients include bee venom and snail mucin. When applied to the skin, bee venom can increase collagen and elastin production, reducing fine lines and wrinkles and giving a smoother, firmer appearance to the skin. Snail mucin is the slimy stuff left behind when snails move across a surface. Snail mucin is extremely moisturizing and great for dry skin. Both bee venom and snail mucin are said to be ethically harvested without killing the bees or snails in the process.

Even with all its allure, Korean skincare is also known to have a few potential drawbacks. One of the downsides of

K-Beauty is that it can be time-consuming and expensive. A typical Korean skincare routine involves multiple steps, each with its unique product, which can be costly. Additionally, it can take up to 30 minutes to complete a full routine, which might not be practical for those with busy schedules. Concerns about time and convenience have recently given rise to abbreviated versions of the routine consisting of five or even three steps in the morning.

Many jump into using Korean skincare products because they've heard of the gentle ingredients and mild natural products and they feel they are safe from potential negative reactions.

However, just because a product has a Korean brand doesn't mean it is safe and won't cause irritation. It's essential to research and read ingredient lists carefully before trying new products—which might be a challenge if the label is all written in Korean.

The rise in popularity of K-Beauty has also caused a rise in counterfeit knock-offs. Skincare enthusiasts looking for discounts often find themselves with imitation products with packaging that looks like a top

brand but are, in fact, fakes. Caution must be taken when buying from a third-party website. If the price is too good to be true, it probably is. Incomplete labels and misspelled words are often a good giveaway to knock-offs. Another way to spot a fake product is to cross-check the packaging with the product's website. The package should look exactly like the one you purchased. It's always safest to purchase from the manufacturer's website.

Despite these potential drawbacks, Korean skincare remains the most popular brand of skincare in the industry, with skincare enthusiasts consistently singing its praises. The purity and simplicity of the skincare products produced in the Korean tradition will be around for a very long time. 🌸



Susan Gonzalez is a holistic licensed esthetician, author, nurse and owner of MOON Organics, a skincare company providing clean, healthy skincare and personal care products. Reach her on FB, IG and Twitter @MoonOrganics or visit MoonOrganics.com.

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HEALTHY KIDS

Gut Health for Kids

CLEVER STRATEGIES FOR PICKY EATERS

by Sheila Julson



Most kids look forward to summer vacation, but the dog days can eventually lead to boredom and over-snacking. By creatively offering children healthy, diverse foods, presented in ways to please even finicky palates, parents can support microbiome health while establishing a lifetime of good eating habits.

Tickle Their Palate

“Foods with probiotic-containing living cultures or fermented foods can add beneficial bacteria to the gut,” says Jill Castle, a Massachusetts-based pediatric dietitian and founding CEO of The Nourished Child, an online nutrition resource for parents. She recommends incorporating treats that are alive, tart and bubbling with healthful microbes.

“Parents can make sure they offer a variety of prebiotic and probiotic foods routinely at mealtimes as options to taste and try. The good news is there are many healthy, gut-supporting foods for children to eat,” she advises.

Yogurt with live or active cultures and kefir, a fermented milk drink, both contain these beneficial probiotics. “Although kefir tends to be sour, some brands have flavored kefir, such as strawberry, mango or peach,” Castle explains. “I’ve had great luck introducing this to children who are picky, because it’s smooth and creamy and tastes like a smoothie.”

She also notes that kombucha, a fizzy, fermented tea with live and active cultures, is available in fruity flavors that appeal to children. Pickles fermented over time with salt

and water are a source of healthy bacteria for the gut. And although cheeses are fermented, only a few have live, active cultures. Castle recommends gouda, mozzarella or cheddar.

Sneak in the Fiber

According to Dr. Joanne Aponte, a naturopathic doctor at Lakeside Natural Medicine, in Milwaukee, a diverse diet high in fiber is key to supporting a healthy gut microbiome. “All veggies are beneficial, but ones high in galacto-oligosaccharide (GOS) and fructo-oligosaccharide (FOS) prebiotics help grow and support healthy gut bacteria,” she explains. GOS-rich foods include beans, lentils and peas, along with broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, while FOS-predominant choices are garlic, onions, asparagus, artichokes and leeks.

Aponte also recommends chia, flax, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, which can be ground up in an inexpensive coffee grinder and added to smoothies, oatmeal, yogurt or home-baked goods such as cookies, pancakes or waffles. “Sunflower butter can be used to make cookies,” Aponte notes. “I make oatmeal-sunflower butter cookies that are packed with microbiome-supporting oatmeal, pumpkin, ground chia seeds and, of course, chocolate chips.”

For children that are choosy about vegetables, Aponte suggests making zucchini or carrot muffins with ground chia seeds or walnuts. Entice children to eat



raw veggies by offering dipping sauces, such as teriyaki, ranch dressing or salsa. Aponte notes that skins should be left on vegetables whenever possible because they contain fiber, which helps feed the gut microbiome.

“It takes some experimentation, but encourage your child to try lots of different foods,” Aponte says. “Some kids might prefer a black bean spread or dip, or refried beans, versus eating whole beans. There are also pastas made with chickpeas or lentils. Veggies like onion or zucchini can be chopped small and hidden in spaghetti sauce.”

Add a Pinch of Fun

Katrina Lien, the program development specialist for Sanford *fit*, a children’s fitness program in rural South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota, suggests that parents find ways to engage and empower kids to make healthy lifestyle choices.

“Try offering new foods with foods that you know your kids already like,” she says. “When you introduce something new or unfamiliar alongside foods that are a well-known favorite, kids are more open to trying the unfamiliar food.”

Attempt to make foods more interesting and fun, Lien advises. “This can be done by how you arrange the food items on the plate or cutting foods into different shapes. For example, use a cookie cutter to turn simple cucumber slices into a heart or a star.”

According to Lien, when parents involve their children in snack and meal preparation, kids feel included and excited to try the foods they helped create. Although getting kids interested in unfamiliar foods can be laborious and time-consuming, parents should remind themselves to be patient and remain consistent. 🍌

Sanford fit offers free, online resources through printable literature, videos, lessons and games at fit.SanfordHealth.org.

Sheila Julson is a freelance writer and contributor to Natural Awakenings magazine.



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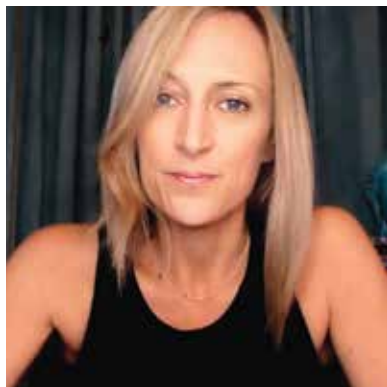
Photo: Alia Debuuro

THE DYNAMIC VIGOR OF Ashtanga Yoga

by David Penn

Ashtanga yoga is a dynamic, challenging form of hatha yoga. It is a rigorous style that has a specific set of sequences, with each movement building on the previous posture. It also involves a focus on synchronizing the breath with each movement. Practitioners develop flexibility, strength, balance and purification of the body and mind.

Timothy Burgin, the founder and executive director of YogaBasics.com, a respected online yoga resource, writes, “The intensive physical processes in Ashtanga are all about pushing through mental blocks and emotional baggage to cultivate mental clarity, mindful breathing, physical strength, flexibility, and endurance.”



Brice Elizabeth Watson
[Photo: Brice Watson]

Atlanta Ashtangi Brice Elizabeth Watson has been practicing Ashtanga yoga for 12 years. “I was always a seeker, even as a child,” she says. “With Ashtanga, I felt, ‘This is truth.’ You’re forced to free yourself. This practice breaks you down for you to know who you are. You’re made to do hard things. What you thought was impossible becomes possible.”

With descriptions like “dynamic,” “challenging” and “rigorous,” it seems as though Ashtanga is only for athletes, CrossFit types, or those that get bored in restorative yoga classes. The conclusion is understandable but might be shortsighted.

K. Pattabhi Jois (1915-2009) is the yoga guru credited with systematizing Ashtanga yoga as it is practiced today. Jois’ specific guidance about who can practice Ashtanga yoga is often quoted: “Anyone can practice. Young man can practice. Old man can practice. Very old man can practice. Man who is sick—he can practice. Man who doesn’t have strength can practice. Except lazy people. Lazy people can’t practice Ashtanga yoga.”

Risks and Rewards

Considering that it is an intense practice, it’s important to step carefully into the practice of Ashtanga yoga. Glenn Black has been studying yoga, movement and therapeutic bodywork for 50 years. He is known in the yoga community as a master teacher, and he consulted with William Broad for Broad’s book, *The Science of Yoga: The Risks and Rewards*. In this *New York Times* bestseller, Broad reviews the often neglected potential dangers that exist on the yoga mat. Using research and data, he argues that it’s naive to assume yoga can only heal and never harm and explains why it’s important to be aware of your body and your limitations. “Asana is not a panacea or a cure-all,” he writes. “In fact, if you do it with ego or obsession, you’ll end up causing problems. A lot of people don’t like to hear that.”

Yoga instructor Rusty Wells explained the importance of safety in his *Yoga Journal* article, “Creating a Safe Space.” “I work to communicate what’s crucial in the foundation of the posture and then allow them to explore while honoring their edge. I ask them not to force their bodies to be as they were in the past and then remind them that if they can’t perform a more advanced state of any posture, they can still be a happy and healthy person.”

To avoid injury in Ashtanga, speak with the studio offering the class, and chat with the instructor. Individuals should find an instructor that addresses their unique needs, limitations and concerns.

While Ashtanga is a vigorous and challenging practice, the ways in which a practitioner assumes each pose can be adapted to

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calendar

SUNDAY, JULY 2

Free Kundalini Yoga Class – 10-11am. With Nataly Baiz. Immerse yourself in the transformative energy of Kundalini Yoga, as we also share exciting news about our upcoming Alma Retreat: “A Rebirth Experience” in Chichen Itza, Mexico, Aug 6-11. Decatur Healing Arts, 619-AE College Ave, Decatur. 404-378-6288. DecaturHealingArts.com.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

TEACHING KIDS’ YOGA WORKSHOP

2-6pm.

A fun workshop exploring the science and teachings of yoga in regard to children. Learn how to develop a kids’ class that will keep them interested until the very end. With Kelly Yount. 4 CEs. \$65. Peachtree Yoga Center, 6046 Sandy Springs Cir, Atlanta. 404-847-9642. To apply: Ilona@PeachTreeYoga.com. PeachtreeYoga.com.

MONDAYS

Yoga with Angie – 6pm. Whether you’re a beginner or intermediate yogi, we welcome you. Free. Neva Lomason Memorial Library, 710 Rome St, Carrollton. Tinyurl.com/2p9x5pn6.

WEDNESDAYS

Atlanta Laughter Yoga Club – 12-12:30pm. 1st Wed. With Celeste Greene. Come as you are. Free. Trolley Barn, 963 Edgewood Ave NE, Atlanta. CelesteGreeneLaughs.com.

FRIDAYS

Community Vinyasa Flow – 6pm. Pre-registration required. Donations welcome. Liff Dunwoody, 1705 Mt Vernon Rd, Ste E, Dunwoody. Also at Liff Alpharetta, 501 S Main St, Ste 101, Alpharetta. LiffYogaStudio.com.

SATURDAYS

Online Sunrise Yoga Meditation – 7-8am. Simple mantras, gentle asanas, pranayama



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Yoga at Preston Ridge Community Center – 9am. Grab your mat and join our amazing instructors for a complimentary class. 3655 Preston Ridge Rd, Ste 100, Alpharetta. Liff-YogaStudio.com.

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.



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their needs. Props, such as blocks, blankets and straps are at hand, and beginners can modify poses to make them more accessible. As with all yoga classes, students need to listen to their bodies and not go beyond what their body tells them that day for that class. Being in tune and empathetic with oneself, along with finding the right instructor, can yield an interesting journey into this intense practice.

Ashtanga in Atlanta



Todd Roderick [Photo: Brice Watson]

Ashtanga Yoga Atlanta is a destination for Ashtanga students around the world to practice and visit. Owner and founder of Ashtanga Yoga Atlanta, Todd Roderick is the most experienced Ashtanga yoga teacher in the Southeastern United States. Starting in 1997, Roderick spent more than a year—on multiple

trips—studying at the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute in Mysore, India. During his time there, Roderick studied directly with Sri K. Pattabhi Jois at a time when classes were limited to just 12 students. In 1998, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois gave Roderick direct permission to teach the Ashtanga yoga system.

Roderick explains why he chose Ashtanga over other styles of yoga. “The intensity of Ashtanga is what drew me to it. That and the fact that it was a traditional yoga practice. It’s connected to this long line of teachers that stay true to a traditional lineage.”

Another studio, Mysore Yoga Atlanta, is an authentic Ashtanga yoga studio dedicated to preserving the essence of yoga and teaching it in its original form. Owner Giorgi (“Sava”) Savaneli has the rare distinction of being certified by the Sri K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Institute, also known as KPJAYI. He continues to travel to Mysore, India, to study with Sharath Jois, the lineage holder of Ashtanga.

“I consider this practice to be life-changing,” says Savaneli. “This is a re-wiring of the brain. Deleting the whole programming. If you’re not flexible, you may have a better experience. If you’re tight, you’re going to have the best experience. You have something to work with; you have something to overcome. In asana practice, having that tightness as a focusing point of something to overcome, initially, can help train and focus the mind.”

As with all styles of yoga, benefits build over time. “With sustained diligence and dedication, the heat generated burns away the poisons of desire, anger delusion, greed, envy, and sloth,” says Savaneli, “and the light of our inner nature shines forth.”



David Penn, E-RYT 200, founded Sun Dragon Yoga studio in 2015. He offers private instruction at homes and businesses throughout metro Atlanta and offers classes online. Contact him at 313-303-0096.

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Fighting Climate Change in the Garden

REGENERATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM

by Julie Peterson



Reversing global warming may feel like a challenge that is out of reach, but anyone can make a difference by planting an ecologically supportive garden. Regenerative techniques employed in the backyard, a community garden or even an apartment patio can significantly improve local ecosystems. And because living systems are interconnected, a healthier ecosystem boosts the well-being of all life forms, as well as the environment.

“Growing a garden is one of the most powerful things we can do as individuals to enact positive change and make a difference,” says Emily Murphy, the California author of *Grow Now: How We Can Save Our Health, Communities, and Planet—One Garden at a Time*. “If you’re looking for practical solutions to the climate crisis and the resulting loss of biodiversity, the answer is right out your door and in the earth beneath your feet. It’s possible to sequester enough carbon to offset your carbon footprint while supporting wildlife.”

According to Jessica Walliser, the Pennsylvania author of *Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden* and co-founder of *Savvy Gardening.com*, “Regenerative practices are simple, proactive steps that millions of gardeners should be adopting. They not only simplify your gardening practices and reduce time and budget in the long term, they are also the right thing to do in this modern age of human disturbance.”

Layer Soil

A key principle of regenerative gardening is to add layers to the soil instead of digging downward or tilling. “Layering up increases the water-holding capacity of the soil and the ability of the soil to sequester carbon,” Murphy explains.

“Addition of organic matter, such as compost, leaf mold or well-aged manure, helps build good soil structure and feeds beneficial soil microbes,” says Walliser, who recommends adding one to two inches per year to gardens.

Making compost onsite is valuable, but not always possible. In some cities, free compost is available through community

compost hubs where residents drop off bins of yard and food waste. “Purchasing commercially produced compost may be a worthwhile investment, particularly when growers are just getting started and soil quality is poor,” suggests Bryan O’Hara, the Connecticut author of *No-Till Intensive Vegetable Culture: Pesticide-Free Methods for Restoring Soil and Growing Nutrient-Rich, High-Yielding Crops*.

Plant Perennials

Perennials come back every year and can provide food for people and wildlife. Many varieties of fruiting shrubs, trees, vegetables and nuts can form the backbone of a garden with annual plants interspersed throughout. Adding beauty to the mix, perennial flowers—some of which are edible—are essential food for bees, butterflies and birds.

“Choose plants with different flower shapes, sizes and colors, as well as plants with a diversity of bloom times,” Walliser advises. “Opt for plants native to your region, as they have co-evolved with native insects and may provide better resources for them.”

Embrace Biodiversity

“When you’re fostering biodiversity, you’re supporting the mutualism that naturally exists in wildlife. You’re increasing and improving ecological relationships,” says Murphy. Instead of planting monoculture rows in a vegetable garden, mix up the plants the way Mother Nature does, Walliser recommends. And if abandoning tidy rows of the same type of plant seems too unruly,

interplant the rows: a few beans, a tomato, flowers, then more beans and peppers, for example.

Another suggestion is to plant a variety of salad greens, carrots and radishes in a raised bed and interplant edible nasturtiums, chives and violets. “Interplanting makes it harder for pests to find their favorite host plant. It also makes it harder for diseases to spread from one plant to the next,” Walliser explains.

Avoid Chemicals

Skip the pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers. “Even organic pesticides can be harmful to pollinators and pest-eating beneficial insects like ladybugs, lacewings and others,” says Walliser. A chemical-free, biodiverse garden is a safe place for beneficial bugs. Trust that the good bugs will find the bad bugs and there will be balance.

A sun-kissed organic tomato from the garden will forever ruin us for grocery store produce. And when we sink our hands in healthy soil to retrieve a beet or plant seeds, we may feel a wave of positive energy because soil microbes have been found to work like natural antidepressants, making us happier and healthier.

“When we begin to understand the inner workings of our greater ecosystem through the ecosystems closest to home, such as our gardens and communities, we come to see that we each have the power to grow positive change beginning at home,” says Murphy. 🌱

Julie Peterson writes on health, wellness and environmental topics. Reach out at JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com.



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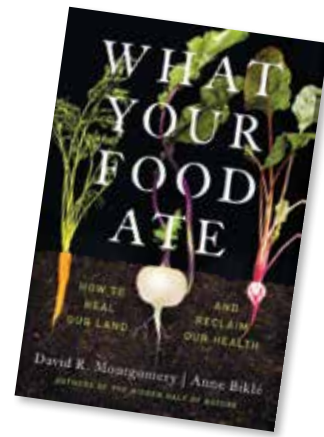
Anne Biklé

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF REGENERATIVE FARMING

by Linda Sechrist



Anne Biklé and David R. Montgomery, a husband and wife team, collaborated to write *What Your Food Ate: How to Heal Our Land and Reclaim Our Health*. A biologist, environmental planner and gardener extraordinaire, Biklé earned degrees in biology and natural history from the University of California (UC) Santa Cruz and a master's degree in landscape architecture from UC Berkeley. She uses her endless fascination with the natural world to explore the tangled relationships between people and their environments. She also helped Montgomery, a professor of Earth and space sciences at the University of Washington, research and write *The Hidden Half of Nature: The Microbial Roots of Life and Health*, as well as *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life*. Explor-



ing the connection between soil health and human health, the duo shows us how the roots of our good health begin on farms.

Why did you write this book?

It was a case of evolution, a progression of our research and thinking, as well as the culmination of a journey that we've been on, looking into how soils affect human societies. When you're a writer and you're constantly looking for connections and patterns, this is what can happen. When David was writing *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*, he discovered that how we treated the land in the past shaped the way that the land was able to treat the descendants of people. In other words, if you don't take care of your land, it doesn't take care of you.

What effects do soil erosion and degradation have on our food supply?

In looking at the UN's "Status of the World's Soil Resources" from 2015, the study concludes that 33 percent of the Earth's soils are already degraded, and we're losing about 0.3 percent of our ability to feed ourselves—to grow food on this planet every year—due to soil erosion and soil degradation. That doesn't sound like a big number in any one year, but adding it up over the rest of this century, it comes to 30 percent of our ability to feed ourselves. Adding to this is the serious degradation of the world's agricultural land from long-term farming practices, such as tilling or plowing, which is the villain in what is

becoming a significant planetary problem that can be reversed with regenerative farming practices.

The plow is one of the more destructive implements that mankind has ever invented despite its ability to help feed us in the past. It contributes to soil degradation and erosion because it fundamentally alters the balance between how fast soils are being made and how fast they're being lost.

What are the benefits of regenerative farming practices?

Regenerative agriculture uses less fertilizer, less pesticide and less fossil fuel. It also increases the carbon content in the soil. Carbon-rich soil retains more water and contains more life, such as whole new worlds of microbial metabolites [the energy and nutrients needed to live and reproduce] that come from soil microbes.

Do farming practices influence the health of crops and human health?

Conventional farming practices use synthetic nitrogen, which degrades organic soil matter and alters the communities of life in the soil. In studies of organic versus conventional, we've found that there's almost always evidence that there are differences in micronutrients and phytochemicals, with organic crops having higher levels of both. Micronutrients are the vitamins and minerals that we need in trace amounts for our health—for example, selenium, boron, zinc and iron—which we need just a little bit of, but that little bit has an oversized effect on our health.

Conventional crops almost always have higher levels of pesticides and heavy metals. There's a lot of controversy scientifically about how much is enough to affect human health. The companies that make pesticides assure us that the levels in food are perfectly safe. But there are now scientists who are starting to investigate chronic exposure to even small amounts over a whole lifetime. How much does that influence our health? We think there are reasons to keep asking those questions.


It is highly suggestive that the idea of a connection between soil health, crop health and animal health translates into what's in our food. If we're getting more vitamins, phytochemicals and mineral micronutrients, which are shown to support health, you can make the argument that these regeneratively grown foods are probably healthier for us to eat.

What influence do farming practices have on livestock and human health?

The nature of what ruminants eat greatly influences the nature of the fats that are in meat and dairy. Livestock grazing on

leafy green plants are getting an omega-3-rich diet. Ruminants that eat predominantly seed- or seed oil-derived rations in a feed lot are getting a mainly omega-6-derived diet. Omega-6 fats help trigger inflammation. We want our bodies to be able to trigger inflammation when we need it, but we also want it to turn off when it's done. Inflammation is not a process that just stops, so we need omega-3 fats, which are central to the process of terminating or quelling inflammation. 🌱

Linda Sechrist has been a contributing writer to Natural Awakenings publications for 20 years.




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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

SATURDAY, JULY 1

Editor's Choice **Energy & Art Festival** – 11am–6pm. 1st & 3rd Sat/Sun thru Aug. Community gathering to enjoy the local talent on The Honey Pot Stage and connect with metaphysical practitioners in reiki, tarot and psychic mediumship. Can also purchase art from some of the most talented local artists in the Atlanta area and get all your summer crystals, charms, candles and jewelry from various local artisans. Free. Findley Plaza, Little Five Points, 1083 Euclid Ave, Atlanta. 678-327-9447. EnergyAndArtFestival.com.

Online: Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Eventbrite. Info: 770-302-2208 or Info-SE@Share-International.us. Register: [Tinyurl.com/mwhhw6rt](https://tinyurl.com/mwhhw6rt).

FRIDAY, JULY 7

Editor's Choice **Free Cacao Ceremony** – 6–7pm. With Nataly Baiz. During this 45-min ceremony, enjoy ceremonial-grade Cacao from Guatemala while learning about the upcoming Alma Retreat: “A Rebirth Experience” in Chichen Itza, Mexico, Aug 6–11. Decatur Healing Arts, 619-AE College Ave, Decatur. 404-378-6288. DecaturHealingArts.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 8

Summer Birding – 8–10am. Join Master Birder Rose Guerra as she guides you through the Nature Center trails and help you to identify the birds present at this time of year. Free/member, \$10/nonmember. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

Editor's Choice **Plant. Eat. Repeat. Workshop: The Basics of Integrated Pest Management** – 9:30am. Also held July 12, 6pm via Facebook Live. Learn the basics of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to keep your garden space practically pest free. Free. Fair Oaks Community Garden, 1465 W Booth Rd Ext SW, Marietta. AtlantaBG.org.

SUNDAY, JULY 9

Breakfast with Butterflies – 10am–12pm. A family-friendly morning with exclusive access to CNC's Butterfly Encounter, where you can enjoy a light breakfast, experience several species of butterflies, and explore the grounds prior to opening. Ages 4+. \$25/general, \$15/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChattNatureCenter.org.

Camp Confidence: Believe in You – July 9–30. 10:30am–12pm. For youth ages 5–13. Designed to build self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-confidence and character. Love offering. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. For more info & to pre-register, Leshey Williams: Leshey@UnityAtl.org. UnityAtl.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 15

Energy & Art Festival – 11am–6pm. See July 1 listing. Findley Plaza, Little Five Points, 1083 Euclid Ave, Atlanta. 678-327-9447. EnergyAndArtFestival.com.

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SATURDAY, JULY 8

Ice Cream Social – 1:30–3:30pm. Mix and mingle with us during our first Ice Cream Social hosted by Chef David Stample complete with all the toppings. During this interactive evening David will share insightful messages from spirit through Oracle cards. Every guest gets one card pull during this collective reading. \$16. Call to register.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

What is Retrograde? – 6–8pm. Join our in-house-reader Shae Anthony to have a complete understanding of the word retrograde. This class will breakdown the basic knowledge of astrology, the phases of the moon, and the different kinds of retrogrades. \$30. Call to register.

SUNDAY, JULY 23

Group Reiki Session – 1–2 or 2:30–3:30pm. Prepare to relax and release during this chakra balancing group reiki session hosted by David Stample. Be sure to dress comfortably with intentions and manifestations on the forefront of your mind. \$16. Call to register.

SATURDAY, JULY 22

Editor's Choice **Family Night Hike** – 8–10pm. Explore the sounds and sights of the forest. Includes an animal encounter and a relaxing campfire where you can roast a marshmallow. Limited space available. All ages. \$12/general public, \$10/members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Register by July 20: ChattNatureCenter.org.

Community Garden Workday – 9am–12pm. Learn more about community gardening and urban agriculture while helping out in a garden. For location & registration: HandsOnAtlanta.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

The Nature Club Dine and Discover – 7–9pm. Join Nature Club back in person for an exciting speaker on the natural world. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

PLAN AHEAD

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1

Online: Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Eventbrite. Info: 770-302-2208 or Info-SE@Share-International.us. Register: [Tinyurl.com/4sm2frnf](https://tinyurl.com/4sm2frnf).

ONGOING

Sundays

A Course in Miracles: Practicing the Presence – 8:45–10:30am. This virtual weekly study group aims at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. Facilitator: Michael Wilkinson. An open and ongoing class. All welcome. Drop-in any time. New people are very welcome to join. Via Zoom. Unity Atlanta Church: 770-441-0585. Register: MWilkinson@leadstrat.com. UnityAtl.org.

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/yjzutfj4](https://tinyurl.com/yjzutfj4).

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

Unity Atlanta Church Sunday Services – 11am. Attend in-person or watch via live stream. Nursery service available 10am–12:30pm. 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.

Meditation Classes – 4–5pm, Level I; 5–6pm, Level II. All religions, all ages and all people. Learn how to meditate for spiritual enlightenment. \$15. 5161 Brook Hollow Parkway, Ste 220/225, Norcross. Register, Andrea: 404-557-4306. MeditationWellnessClub@gmail.com. MeditationWellnessClub.com.

Mondays

Top Shelf Toastmasters Club – 6:30–8pm. Meets in-person 2nd, 3rd, 4th Mondays. Looking for an opportunity to improve your public speaking and presentation skills? Toastmasters International Clubs empower members to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth. Guests are welcome to visit for free. New members pay a \$20 one-time fee. Dues paid every 6 mos include \$15 Local and \$45 International. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. More info, Ajaye Hopper: 678-622-2225, tm.ajhopper@gmail.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.

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7:30–9pm. With Resident Teacher, Gen Kelsang Norden. Talks, guided meditation, discussion and Q&A. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Tuesdays

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

The Paradigm Shift – 7–8pm. 1st & 3rd Tues. Join international speaker, teacher and Atlanta-based chiropractor, Dr. Wade Port for the latest in self-care strategies. Free. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

Twin Hearts Meditation – 7–8:30pm. A short, guided meditation blessing the Earth with loving kindness, peace and good will. Donation. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Unit A, Atlanta. 404-417-0008. [Meetup.com/Twin-Hearts-Meditation](https://meetup.com/Twin-Hearts-Meditation).

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.

30-Minute Guided Meditation – 12:15pm. 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.

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](https://tinyurl.com/muwwanm9).

Decatur Farmers Market – Thru Nov 15. 4–7pm. First Baptist Church of Decatur, 308 Clairmont Ave, Decatur. 404-373-1653. cfmatl.org/Decatur.

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.

She Recovers Foundation Atlanta Sharing Circle – 7:30–8:30pm. 2nd Wed. Come join us as we support one another on our journey to wholeness. We are all recovering from something. With Allison Stanley. Free. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

Thursdays

Tai Chi & Qigong – 9:30am. For beginners. \$7/at door. Meets in The Jefferson Parks and Recreation Dept, 2495 Old Pendergrass Rd, Jefferson. 678-510-9573. CarolOsborne.org.

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 Pranic Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: ATIPranicHealing.com.



Create your event listing at
WWW.NAATLANTA.COM/CALENDAR
Basic online listings are free.

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.

Meditation Classes – 6pm, Level I; 7pm, Level II. See Sun listing. 5161 Brook Hollow Parkway, Ste 220/225, Norcross. Register, Andrea:404-557-4306. MeditationWellnessClub@gmail.com. MeditationWellnessClub.com.

Prayers for World Peace – 6:30-7:15pm. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching and chanted prayers for world peace. No experience necessary. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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.

Morningside Farmers Market – 8-11:30am. Year-round. Offers organic produce, bread, pastries, grains, meat, honey, along with chef pop-ups, prepared foods, coffee, in-season fruits, and locally produced crafts. Morningside Presbyterian, 1411 N Morningside Dr NE, Atlanta. MorningsideMarket.com.

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 – 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.

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.

Reiki Share Group – 3:30-5:30pm. Last Sat. A gathering of like-minded reiki practitioners who participate in group healing treatments on each other. \$21. Healing Hands Reiki & Spiritual Development, Inc, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/2rykarft.

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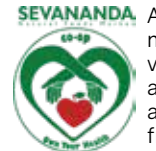
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If a tree dies, plant
another in its place.

~Carl Linnaeus



The Blessing of My Body

by Rev. Jenn L. Sacks

Once the COVID lockdown ended—along with my pre-dawn power walks through the neighborhood with my flashlight—I’ve loved being back in the gym. Headphones on, music rocking, heart pounding, I move in meditation, noticing thoughts without latching onto them.

Inspiration is always available if I want it. Whether I’m pumping the elliptical, balancing on the Bosu or deadlifting dumbbells, I honor my progress and what I can do to dissolve stress, sculpt muscles and shed pounds.

A sign on a gym wall says: “We reject the notion that beauty is one size fits all.” But occasionally, I still compare myself to others: the petite mom who trains with her daughter, the tall man who climbs the Stairmaster, the marathoner with the blondish ponytail who runs for hours. Sometimes I wonder what they think about me.

When I watch ESPN or HGTV, commercials offer keto gummies that they claim will dissolve 50 pounds in 15 days. A vitamin-enriched hair-growth supplement promises new growth

in 10. A green drink purports to provide all my daily nutrients.

These products might help me feel more positive about my body, yet eternal positivity about my physique, like many things in life, isn’t always easy. Sometimes, I’m not feeling it. But, as I remind myself and my congregants, I needn’t feel negative either.

Recently, I heard Cleveland Clinic Psychologist Susan Albers Bowling, PsyD, offer a powerful alternative. She recommends body neutrality, “a middle-of-the-road approach” which is “neither loving nor hating your body. It’s based on the notions of acceptance and having respect for one’s body,” she says. Her wisdom rekindled memories of my youth and two strong young women that helped me appreciate this type of respect.

As a preteen, I met Susan, a style icon, at a local beach club. I thought she was the prettiest in our group. She had long, dark hair, wore fancy bikinis, walked with crutches and covered the stump of her right leg with a white sock when she swam in the ocean. Sometimes, at parties, she showed off her designer jeans and elite sneakers. One day, I saw her without crutches and shyly asked how she walked so well. She lifted her right pant leg and revealed her prosthesis, explaining that she rarely wore it because it hurt.

Susan was a kind-hearted, compassionate friend and animal rights advocate. She worked part-time as a pet sitter and wanted to be a veterinarian. She lived the principle, “Pretty is as pretty does,” reminding me that style has little to do with one’s body and everything to do with one’s spirit.

As a teenager, a few years later, I babysat for Lauren, who lived her whole life in a wheelchair. She was the most gifted child I had ever met, and we bonded so deeply that I attended the Easter Seals telethon with her and her family when she was Child of the Year.

Lauren, who eventually died from the wasting syndrome she was born with, knew she wouldn’t have a long lifespan. But she savored every moment she had, living in the now much better than I did, telling jokes that often sent her brothers and me into fits of hilarity. In grade school, she loved reading and studying advanced mathematics. She helped me avoid judging others because she never judged me, even when I struggled to lift her onto the toilet or when I needed her assistance with my algebra homework.

Neither Susan nor Lauren ever talked about hating their bodies. They maintained a positive outlook and celebrated themselves, even though their physical appearance didn’t fit some societal standards. They respected what their bodies could do and lived fully with confidence, faith and joy.

I believe my body is a sacred temple, but it isn’t all that defines me. For me, fitness is an investment in my self-care and well-being, a way to nurture my creativity and soothe my soul. I might not wear the hippest leggings or spin like a pro, but I bless my body daily. And I’m always grateful for the youthful role models who showed me how strong one’s spirit can be. 🙌

Photo: Nicole Tyler Photography



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



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