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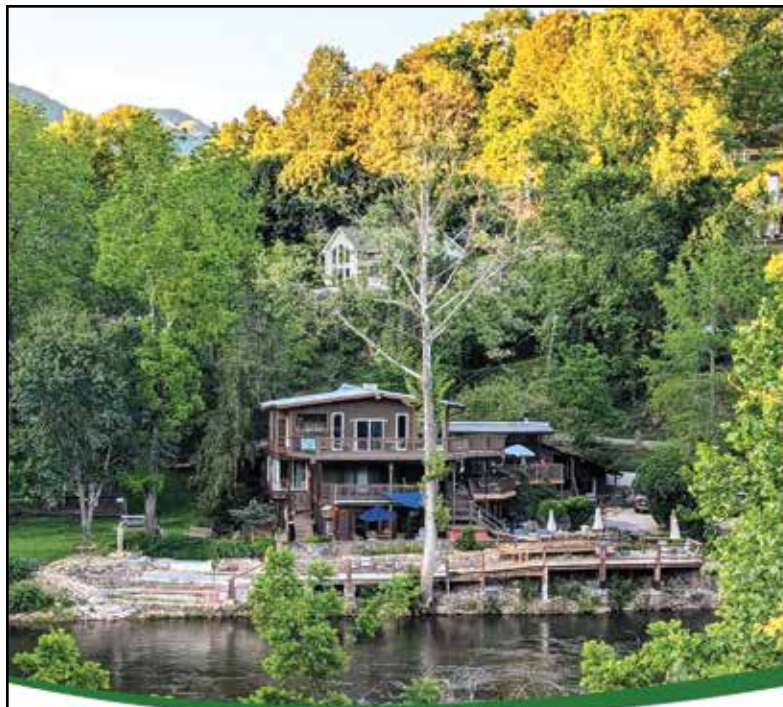
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10 MOST-READ ARTICLES, FIRST HALF 2026

One surprise: the #1 article has never appeared on any previous most-viewed lists before. Four 2026 articles made the list. And two of our perennial Top 10s make yet another appearance: The Varieties of Energy Healing Modalities and Three Black Holistic Healing Superstars Make the Rounds. From a publisher's perspective, I'm particularly pleased to see two of the four articles from our latest series on Death, Dying and Grief make the list as well.



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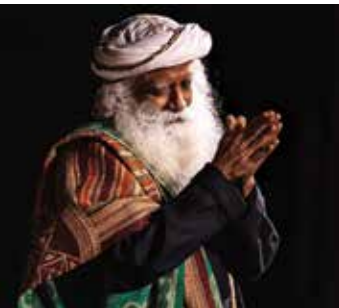
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Unexpected Joy

It started innocently enough when I texted this bit of news to my former wife: “Scotland fans arrive in Boston for World Cup. They say they ran out of beer on the flight.”

We had a Scottish au pair back in the day, and because we always wanted her to feel at home, we asked what her family did on Christmas Day. “Drink,” she said, and then she provided details: She preferred Scotch, and, “We start in the morning.”

I had no intention of paying attention to the World Cup. I’ve never been a football fan, and like many Americans, I found its low-scoring nature off-putting. But I do watch YouTube videos, and once I looked at the Scots in Boston, my feed was flooded with World Cup fan stories. Overnight, I was deep into the World Cup, not because of the game—that came later—but because of the pure joy I experienced watching others have the time of their lives.

Many have said that the US needed the World Cup; I couldn’t agree more. With all the horror unfolding in this country and the world, we all needed the stark reminder that we are more than capable of getting along with each other. As several social media posts have said, the World Cup is like the sleepover party you’ve always wanted with your favorite cousins but couldn’t have because your parents don’t get along. To see tens of thousands of people partying, dancing, hugging and having a brilliant time together brought tears to my eyes many times. From the Scots and Norwegians in Boston, the Dutch in Kansas City and the Koreans in Mexico City, people from all over the world brought their love of the game and their joie de vivre to our shores. And we responded in kind.

The joy I’ve experienced as a function of this World Cup is multi-layered. At first, it was the joy of simply watching others have so much fun. And then the reviews of visiting Europeans started to clog the internet. So many of them were surprised—shocked even—to discover they loved our country. Their impression of America, which was mostly a function of their media, was



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that we’re a dangerous, violent, racist and unwelcoming country. But their videos were full confessions: they had been lied to, America was an amazing place and all Europeans need to visit for themselves.

What they loved about us began with the quality and portions of our food and drink—so many Meg Ryan re-enactments! They talked about the size of everything, from Cheese Ball containers to Walmarts to the country itself. They loved our tailgat-

ing, and, for the love of God, ranch dressing. I watched one video of a guy saying, “I could drink this!” and another of a woman actually drinking the stuff! One European compared it to crack; another said ranch dressing should be a human right.

But what really got me more than anything else was their praise for the friendliness and kindness of Americans. The European image of the Ugly American, while not misinformed, appears well overblown. One Brit noticed it on his very first day in America. Another: “Something that genuinely confuses me about America ... it’s the fact that strangers are so genuinely kind. I thought maybe I was just getting lucky in the other states that we went to ... but it’s all over. Every single state I have been to, Americans go out of the way to say hello and be kind.”

It is very easy at this time in our history to despair about the state of the U.S., our standing in the world and the state of the world in general. Football fans are fond of saying that the beautiful game unites people across the globe. On the one hand, that’s a massive claim. On the other, I have yet to see conflicting evidence. What I am sure of is that the videos I’ve enjoyed are exhibitions of heartfelt camaraderie and pure joy. And, given a Scottish lass in our past, I’m particularly emotional about the Tartan Army, of which one American said: “I’ve decided you guys are the global ambassadors of joy.”

From drinking Boston dry—a phrase I thought I would never hear in *any* context—to playing the bagpipes at 6 a.m. to crowning every statue in sight with a traffic cone, the Tartan Army made their chant ring true: *No Scotland? No Party. No Scotland? No Party.* 🇬🇧



Publisher, Natural Awakenings Atlanta. Paul’s professional background includes strategic planning, marketing management and qualitative research. His spiritual orientation is nondual, drawing from Buddhism, yoga and Advaita Vedanta.



Photo courtesy of Forever Young

Andrew Young Foundation Opens Urban Farming Project

On June 2, Forever Young Aquaponics opened a three-acre urban farming facility with 47,000 square feet of greenhouse plus operations structures on land that had for years served as an easement for capturing rainwater from I-75. The project was initiated and made possible by a decades-long partnership between the Andrew Young Foundation and Delta Air Lines.

The intention of the \$14 million project is to create a hyper-sustainable, scalable urban food production system, promote urban farming, invest in Atlanta communities and help build a skilled, thriving workforce.

Aquaponics is a sustainable closed-loop farming system that creates a symbiotic environment between fish and plants. Forever Young raises hybrid striped bass, which are found in freshwater waterways of Georgia. Fish waste provides nutrients for the plants, while plant roots filter the water that returns to the fish environment. The result is highly efficient. “Our greenhouses operate with automated controls that produce 10 times more food in the same amount of land,” says Arvind Venket, Chief Technical Officer of Forever Young Aquaponics. He designed and developed the facility and now oversees its operations. The system also uses just five percent of the water used in conventional agriculture.

“Once it goes into full production, Atlanta will be just the second city in the country to have commercial greenhouse production, second only to New York,” says Venkat. “And the Andrew Young Foundation made that happen.”

The facility currently supplies Emory Healthcare, the Atlanta Aquarium and the Trillet Soccer training center. It also has its sights on getting food goods into Atlanta schools and the SNAP program, so SNAP participants can receive fresh food boxes by mail.

The Foundation wants to support the career paths of those interested in urban agriculture. For more info, contact the Andrew Young Foundation. Email info@andrewyoung.org or call 404-685-2786.



Inkret from Getty Images Signature/CanvaPro

Nordic Walking for Heart Health

Nordic walking incorporates trekking poles, similar to ski poles, to simultaneously engage both the upper and lower body, providing a comprehensive approach to fitness. A 2013 study in the *European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine* highlighted Nordic walking as an accessible method to support cardiovascular health.

In a 2022 study published by the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, 86 participants with coronary artery disease were randomly assigned to three groups: high-intensity interval training, moderate-to-vigorous-intensity continuous training and Nordic walking. Following a 12-week exercise program and a subsequent 14-week observational period, the Nordic walking group demonstrated the most significant statistical and clinical improvements compared to the other groups in functional capacity, as measured by the distance participants could walk in six minutes.

The six-minute walk test serves as a predictor of cardiovascular events in patients with heart disease. Functional benefits achieved during the exercise program were sustained by the Nordic walking group throughout the end of the observational period. All three exercise programs improved the participants’ quality of life and alleviated depression symptoms. Notably, a 2025 systematic review and meta-analysis of 22 studies involving nearly 1,300 participants concluded that Nordic walking reduces cardiovascular risk factors in individuals over the age of 65.

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Tapas With a Twist

Small Plates With Big Health Benefits

by Maya Whitman



Tapas—small-portion, sharable dishes—are a staple of Spanish culture that can be served hot or cold, vary by region and are the perfect culinary backdrop to spending unhurried, quality time with family and friends. Beyond their culinary appeal, these bite-sized offerings can also support a strong foundation for health. By focusing on whole ingredients, balanced flavors and nutrient-dense combinations, small plates can shift from an occasional indulgence to a mindful, everyday approach to eating.

A collection of small dishes can become a meal itself, offering flavor explosions for memorable entertaining, encouraging guests to sample ethnic inspirations like crispy Indian tofu with tamarind chutney or sautéed Asian shrimp and snow peas. “The beauty of tapas is that you can take your

guests on a trip around the world without ever leaving the table. Nobody feels like they’re eating health food; they just feel like they’re eating really well,” says Julia Chebotar, an award-winning private chef and certified health coach in New York City.

Ideally, small plates can showcase bounty from farmers markets and home gardens. Whether methodically assembled at the table from themed central platters, plated from backyard grills or served up impromptu with basics foraged from the fridge, tapas build healthy foundations, nourish social connection and inspire us to eat lighter while feeling satiated.

Passionate Simplicity

Small feasts are best comprised of three or four small dishes served in sequence. Rounds of inspired, mindful eating allow

guests plenty of time to enjoy good company. “With so much variety, there’s genuinely something for everyone,” explains Chebotar. “Everything stays on the table; people graze at their own pace; the conversation flows; and nobody is stuck waiting for the next course.”

Her peak-season favorites are grilled corn cut off the cob with lime, cotija and chili; roasted eggplant finished with pomegranate molasses and fresh mint; and ribbons of raw zucchini tossed with lemon and parmesan. Her breakfast tapas come together in minutes and kick off the day with quality protein such as soft-boiled eggs with olive oil and za’atar, a traditional Middle Eastern herb and spice blend; a small plate of whole-grain toast with almond butter and sliced strawberries; and little bowls of Greek yogurt topped with crunchy walnuts and a drizzle of honey.

Fresh Joy

Cathy Vogt, a board-certified health counselor and professional whole foods chef in the New York Hudson Valley is a proponent of robust flavors and seasonally available ingredients such as late summer corn incorporated into a tangy relish or juicy tomatoes in a luscious salad. The author of *Cultivating Joy in the Kitchen: Plant Forward Recipes & Soulful Nourishment* also delights in roasted garden eggplant with olive oil and fresh garden herbs; grilled summer peaches or sweet melon paired with thinly sliced cured ham; and a bowl of briny olives, marinated artichoke hearts, fresh figs stuffed with blue cheese and colorful roasted peppers.

Her most delicious, small plates include smoked salmon salad served over tart endive leaves and a tangy spread made with roasted beet, walnuts and balsamic vinegar that pairs beautifully with a seedy, crusty bread or sliced sweet peppers and cucumbers. Vogt recommends locally sourced eggs that can be hardboiled or whisked into a simple Spanish tortilla paired with fresh

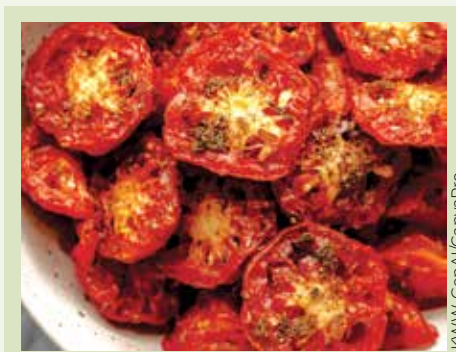
herbs, diced tomato or garden greens. She also champions the endless variety of lentils and legumes, such as her savory spread made with cannellini beans, sundried tomato and an herb-based pesto.

Everyday Surprises

Chebotar points out that tapas can make meal prep for the week easy and enjoyable. She recommends roasting some vegetables, cooking a grain, making a dip and preparing a protein on Sunday, allowing members of the household to build their own small plates throughout the week. “Healthy eating starts to feel spontaneous and fun, even on a Wednesday night,” she explains, adding that small plate meals are also a great way to get kids excited about healthy eating. “Getting them involved in assembling their own tapas—picking the dip, choosing the veggie, adding the protein—builds curiosity and ownership over what they’re eating.”

Vogt suggests diving deeper for an inspired experience. “If you are interested in exploring traditional tapas, visit a restaurant or tavern that serves traditional tapas. Be curious about experimenting and trying new foods and flavors.”

Maya Whitman is a frequent writer for Natural Awakenings.



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CORN AND BASIL PANCAKES

YIELD: 16 TO 20 PANCAKES

- ½ cup fine-ground cornmeal
- ½ cup whole-wheat pastry flour or gluten-free flour mix
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 2 ears fresh corn on the cob, peeled and cut off the cob
- 2 eggs, scrambled
- 2 Tbsp chives, chopped
- 2 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- ½ cup water
- Olive oil or avocado oil for cooking

Combine the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, salt, pepper and cumin in a mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Fold corn kernels, eggs, chives and basil into the flour mixture. Slowly pour water into mixture and stir to combine. Do not over-mix.

Heat a cast iron or heavy-bottomed sauté pan over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of oil to the pan. Add more oil as needed during cooking.



Drop 1 tablespoon of mixture into the pan to form a pancake. Space out pancakes in the pan, allowing each to cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side until golden brown.

Serve the pancakes hot or at room temperature. These savory bites pair well with a spoonful of tomato salsa or another favorite condiment.

Recipe courtesy of chef Cathy Vogt.

ROASTED RED PEPPER HUMMUS WITH CRACKERS

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

- 3 red bell peppers, quartered
- 5 garlic cloves, skin left on
- Avocado oil spray
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 cups canned or home-cooked chickpeas
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- Seeded crackers

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

Place the red bell peppers and garlic on a baking sheet and spray with the avocado oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste and bake for 30 minutes.



Remove the baking sheet from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes. Once it is cool enough to handle, remove the garlic cloves from their peel. Place them in a food processor, along with the roasted red peppers, cooked chickpeas, lemon juice and smoked paprika. Process until the mixture is smooth and creamy.

Transfer the hummus to a bowl and serve with crackers.

Recipe courtesy of Julia Chebotar.

The Power of Gratitude

Changing Brain Chemistry and Opening the Heart

by Brendan Cournane



Teodor Lazarev/Shutterstock

We often hear that maintaining an attitude of gratitude will lessen our stress and make us happier. For many people, this kind of advice lands differently in the middle of hardship. Divorce, career upheaval, grief and the fog of early recovery, for example, are moments when gratitude can feel not just difficult, but impossible. Yet it is precisely in those moments that the practice matters most.

Gratitude is not merely a pleasant sentiment. It is a physiological event. When a person moves beyond mouthing the words and actually feels grateful, the brain responds in measurable ways. Research shows that genuine gratitude activates the brain region associated with dopamine, the neurotransmitter linked to reward and motivation. It also prompts the release of serotonin, which supports emotional stability, and oxytocin, often called the “love hormone”, which deepens social connection.

Perhaps more importantly, gratitude works against cortisol, which is the body’s

primary stress hormone. Cortisol triggers the fight-or-flight response, elevating heart rate and blood pressure and keeping the nervous system in a state of alertness. Consistent, intentional gratitude practice dials that response down, creating space for calm, clarity and resilience.

Psychologists Michael McCullough and Robert Emmons, whose research helped establish gratitude as a serious field of study, have found that grateful people show increased prosocial motivation, demonstrate a greater desire to connect and contribute, and experience lower rates of depression, anxiety and envy. Gratitude also engages the principle of reciprocal inhibition, meaning the brain cannot hold two opposing emotional states at once. When gratitude is genuinely present, resentment and fear are crowded out.

A Practice Rooted in Wisdom Traditions

Gratitude has been woven into the spiritual and philosophical frameworks of cultures across millennia, including Jewish,

Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Greek and Roman traditions. That such diverse worldviews have independently arrived at the same practice speaks to something fundamental about human nature: the recognition that what we have, and what we have been given, deserves acknowledgment.

Simple to understand does not mean easy to practice. Like any meaningful discipline, gratitude deepens with intention and repetition. Approaching it as three distinct but connected principles can help.

Gratitude for What Is Present

The first and most intuitive dimension of gratitude is appreciation for what we currently have, such as our relationships, health, shelter and opportunity. Research by psychologists Giacomo Bono, Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough adds nuance to this: Gratitude runs deeper when a gift comes through a personal relationship and when it involves genuine sacrifice on the part of the giver. A friend that shares a meal when they themselves have very little creates a different kind of gratitude than a routine workplace bonus.

Unexpected generosity also amplifies the effect. When a stranger anonymously pays



Monkey Business Images/CanvaPro

for someone’s coffee and slips away before being identified, the dopamine response is heightened. It’s a small but real neurological reward for having been seen and cared for without expectation.

Gratitude for What Has Been and What Is Yet To Come

The second dimension asks people to hold gratitude for what they once had but no longer do, and for what they hope to receive but have not yet. This may feel counterintuitive, yet memory is a powerful resource. Revisiting positive experiences—whether people, places or seasons of life—activates the hippocampus and amygdala, brain regions that can reduce pain, improve sleep quality, and ease anxiety and depression. The good that was real does not cease to matter simply because it has passed.

Gratitude Through Grief

Perhaps the most overlooked element of a gratitude practice is the role of grief. Every meaningful achievement carries a cost: the promotion that required time away from family, the award won at the expense of other pursuits, the relationship that ended to make room for something new. Acknowledging that cost, and allowing oneself to grieve it, is not the opposite of gratitude. It is part of it.

When something is lost, grief and gratitude can coexist. The sorrow of losing a person or a chapter of life is balanced by appreciation for the joy, effort and connection that were present. Grief, when honored rather than suppressed, creates

the conditions for renewal. It clears space for what comes next.

A Practice Worth Beginning

Gratitude does not require ideal circumstances. It does not demand that life be easy, loss be absent or struggle be resolved. It asks only for a willingness to look at what is present, at what has been, at what the hardest moments have cost and taught. That looking, practiced consistently, changes the

brain’s chemistry, softens the nervous system and opens the heart. The science and the wisdom traditions agree that genuine gratitude, felt rather than performed, is among the most powerful tools available for navigating a human life. 🌱

Brendan Cournane is a Chicago-based meditation coach and author of Seeking Serenity: Finding Happiness by Embracing Your Present Attitude. Learn more at CoachBrendan.com.



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Lotus of Life

Serving Families Holistically for 20 Years

by Diane Eaton

It's safe to say—in fact, research backs it up—that the most common reason people see a chiropractor is to address some sort of musculoskeletal pain, such as low back or neck pain, headaches, spinal issues or joint problems. But not so at Lotus of Life Wellness Center, a holistic, family-centered chiropractic office in Decatur founded by Liliana Warner 20 years ago.

Most of those who receive chiropractic care at Lotus of Life don't just want a single adjustment or two. They see it as their life-long holistic support resource and come in for treatment weekly, biweekly or monthly. "Whatever their system needs for however long they decide they want to benefit from that," says Warner. What keeps people coming back is the center's combination of methods, which, instead of just managing pain patterns, help them process and address underlying causes more fully than traditional chiropractic alone.



Dr. Liliana Warner

Photo: HUM Creative Co

At the heart of this holistic approach is Bio-Geometric Integration (BGI), which goes beyond working with the spine and nervous system, the typical focus of chiropractic care. It also helps improve communication between the spine, the nervous system and the body's other systems.

"As we experience things in life, if we can't integrate them in the moment, we store them in our physiology," explains Warner. To unravel those stored patterns and experiences, BGI practitioners first do "preparatory work," and when it's time for an adjustment, they guide the system to release them from all over the body, not just the nervous system and spine. This more comprehensive approach doesn't just help release issues more fully; it also enables patients to hold their adjustment longer, says Warner.

BGI has been around since the 1990s, but research shows that only a small fraction of chiropractors practice it. Atlanta happens to have more BGI practitioners than any other city in the world, according to Warner—and three of the ten or so in town are at Lotus of Life. Several of the others were trained by Warner.

Starting Young

While more men are coming in for treatment than ever, Lotus of Life's primary focus has always been on prenatal mothers, newborns and kids. All of its chiropractors use the Webster technique, which addresses the structures of the pelvis to support easy birth and to help the baby find the proper position. If needed, they adjust the mother during birth and adjust babies as

soon as possible after birth. Adjustments are extremely gentle.

"There's nothing more magical than getting a newborn adjusted," says Elizabeth Lucht-Jones, a geneticist and mother of two who has taken her family to Lotus of Life for almost 20 years. "[My newborns] were crying and colicky and all of a sudden she adjusts them, and they stop crying. They look her dead in the eye, and then they just give this sigh of relief."



Elizabeth Lucht-Jones

Lucht-Jones brings her whole family in regularly and expects to continue indefinitely. "We go regularly ... And we can really tell the difference." It was especially helpful recently when Lucht-Jones had some abdominal pain, but her general practitioner could not determine what was causing it and recommended she simply wait for it to go away on its own. Instead, Lucht-Jones booked an appointment with Warner, who was able to identify the combination of issues causing the pain. Within two days, the pain was gone. Lucht-Jones says that in the session, "I could just feel that energy go out the top of my head. And I have not had any symptoms since."

Her whole family is all in on seeing Warner. "Neither one of my kids has had a sick visit [with their pediatrician] other than my oldest. He had an ear infection. That's it."

Seven-year-old Draper adds his perspective: "It just feels really good to get adjusted."

Growing and Morphing Over the Years

With growth comes change, so while the company continues to focus on pregnancy, pediatrics and family care, it has expanded in methods and in size. "We've definitely morphed over the years," says Warner. For the first eight years or so, she only provided chiropractic services, but she also developed a large network of referral practitioners. She has since added two additional chiropractors, a nutrition specialist, a life coach, and, more recently, a holistic physical trainer, to the holistic family care practice.

Lisa Provost, a certified Clinical Master of Nutritional Response Testing (NRT), joined Lotus of Life ten years ago and, in addition to her NRT work, teaches classes and offers reiki sessions. NRT uses applied kinesiology to help determine the root cause of symptoms. "I'm having a conversation with their autonomic nervous system and finding out if there are organs or areas in the body that have some level of dysfunction—and why," says Provost. "What's putting stress on these organs that's creating this problem?" With that information, the team provides treatment options beginning with whole-food supplementation.

The company's growth has been consistent. It outgrew its first location after 12 years when it moved to its current space



Lisa Provost

Photo: HUM Creative Co

to accommodate more practitioners, and it made it through the lean years of the pandemic as well. Warner expects they'll relocate again in two more years. "The adventure continues!" she says.

Warner's passion for chiropractic and family care began early. As a child, she suffered from severe and debilitating asthmatic attacks that forced her to miss a lot of school. There were almost no medical treatments available at the time, so, as a last resort, her mother took her to a chiropractor for help. "There was nothing to lose," they figured.

In a little over a year, Warner was off almost all of her medications, was attending school regularly and "felt great" for the first time in a long time. "It changed my life," she says. She was impressed by the power of chiropractic—and recognized that it wasn't just about adjusting bones and it wasn't just for adults. "When I decided to become a chiropractor," she says, "I knew I was going to open my own practice and I knew I was going to focus on family care and kids."

Warner has seen a big change in the people that come to see her over the years. "The public is finally catching up on all the factors that contribute to good health," she says. Other practitioners, including MDs, PTs and OTs, look at the body differently now and are approaching it more holistically. "That wasn't a thing at all 20 years ago," she says. "There were only one or two holistic NDs in all of Atlanta. Now, there are many." But while people are more knowledgeable about their health, they "are way sicker than I saw 20 years ago," says Warner.

As for Lotus of Life's future, Warner is planning to move the wellness center into a bigger space to make room for more practitioners in the next couple of years. She intends to add a lactation consultant, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist for kids and perhaps a mental health therapist for both mom and baby. And a massage therapist for everyone. 🌱

Lotus of Life Family Wellness Center is located at 603 Church St, Decatur; 404-377-7743, LotusOfLifeChiropractic.com.

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Raising Healthy Humans

A Holistic Approach to Pediatric Care

by Marlaina Donato



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A 2025 comprehensive analysis of U.S. pediatric data published in *JAMA* reveals that the health of U.S. children worsened over a 17-year period. From 2011 to 2023, the prevalence of chronic health conditions among U.S. children aged 3 to 17 rose from nearly 40 percent to almost 46 percent. Rates of obesity, sleeping difficulties, limitations in activity, physical complaints, depressive symptoms and loneliness all increased during this study period.

The rise of holistic pediatric health care reflects a shift from solely treating symptoms to a more comprehensive approach that focuses on treating the “whole child” and building foundational well-being with evidence-based lifestyle choices.

Approximately 122.3 million adults and 17.7 percent of children use some form of alternative medicine, including whole-foods nutritional counseling, mindfulness practices, therapeutic bodywork, chiropractic, yoga, acupuncture, homeopathy, supplements and energy modalities. Apps such as Holistic Parenting Hub and Healthy Kids Happy Kids offer clickable resources and community support, enabling parents and caregivers to actively participate in their children’s health journey.

Core Nutrition and Digestive Health

Madiha Saeed, a board-certified integrative family physician in Naperville, Illinois, understands that a child’s potential starts with what is on the plate. “Diet is always

first and foremost. In our house, real food is fun food. You name it—everything from chips, cookies, ice cream, donuts, pizza or cereal—we have a healthier option for it,” says Saeed, the author of several books, including *The Holistic Rx for Kids: Parenting Healthy Children to Save Our Future*.

To prevent health issues like stunted growth, delayed puberty and menstrual irregularities, which can also impact mood, energy and performance, she stresses the importance of calories from nutrient-dense foods, plus extra fortification with supplements. Offering an attractive “rainbow plate” of fresh vegetables and fruits for kids to snack on after school is a great start. These fiber-rich treats promote healthy gut flora, optimizing childhood biological functions.

Saeed considers fiber one of the most important dietary allies for digestive balance, recommending 25 to 30 grams per day for teen girls and 30 to 38 grams for teen boys. She also champions prebiotic fiber powders for smoothies, lentil pasta, creamy chia pudding with berries, fresh guacamole, nuts and seeds.

Saeed explains that bone broth—ideally one cup daily—provides bioavailable minerals and amino acids like L-glutamine, which supports the gut’s mucosal lining, a key factor in reducing systemic inflammation. Healthy fats such as avocados; lean proteins like lean beef, poultry, eggs, sardines in olive oil and canned tuna in water; and nuts like cashews and almonds are essential for growth. Like adults, children’s cellular health requires adequate hydration. Everything in the body—from blood to bones to

the brain—is partially made from water, and Saeed notes that adequate hydration can reduce a child’s risk of becoming overweight.

As a busy physician managing work and family, she finds balance by prepping for the week ahead. “On the weekend, plan your meals for the upcoming week so that you can go shopping and have everything you need,” she explains. “I spend one day a week cooking all my veggies, proteins and healthy carbohydrates.”

Whole-Child Dentistry

Teaching young children about good oral hygiene at an early age is essential, but for Claire Stagg, a holistic dentist in Indian Harbour Beach, Florida, understanding the whole picture can affect a child’s foundational well-being. “A holistic pediatric dental physician can contribute a wider lens,” says the author of *Smile, It’s All Connected!* “We still care deeply about clean teeth, healthy gums, cavities, infections, trauma and all the basics, but the holistic approach asks more questions.”

Stagg believes in the value of early assessment to identify airway patterns that may cause future issues. She states, “Structurally, the mouth can give us important clues. A narrow jaw, crowded teeth, chronic mouth breathing, snoring, restless sleep, dark circles under the eyes, teeth grinding, bedwetting, poor focus or constant fatigue are not little, isolated quirks. They are signs that the child’s body may be working too hard to do something that should be beautifully automatic: breathe.”

She asserts that some seemingly hyperactive children may actually be exhausted due to structural issues, leading to behaviors like fidgeting, meltdowns, loss of focus or being “difficult”. Collaborative care from pediatricians; bodyworkers; ear, nose and throat specialists; and other professionals can sometimes address all factors.

Stagg stresses the importance of real food, hydration and being cautious about “healthy-looking” snacks that may be sticky, acidic or high in sugar. Ultimately, health transcends appearances. “Straight teeth are lovely, but the bigger question is whether the bite, jaws, airway, tongue position, joints, muscles and posture are working together,” she notes.

Neurologically Focused Chiropractic Care

Approximately 35 million Americans use chiropractic care each year, but the field has evolved to encompass much more than typical adjustments for pain management. “Modern chiropractic care isn’t really about the spine in the way most people picture it. It’s about the nervous system,” states pediatric chiropractor Tony Ebel, in Crystal Lake, Illinois.

The lead writer and educational guide for PX Docs, Ebel specializes in pediatric care aimed at correcting imbalances in the autonomic nervous system, which affects sleep, digestion, immune response, mood, focus and the ability to calm down. He emphasizes, “In

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childhood, this matters enormously because these are the years when the nervous system is developing fastest. What matters most in a growing child isn't whether their spine looks perfectly straight on an X-ray, but how well their spine and nervous system are communicating."

Ebel notes that pediatricians, therapists and specialists are vital, and chiropractors do not replace them, but instead assist in identifying patterns early and gently guiding the nervous system back to calm, balance and healthy development without drugs. He explains that chiropractic's traditional concept of subluxation, now understood as neuro-spinal dysfunction, involves "a pattern of tension, restriction and altered neurosensory input into the brainstem, often concentrated in the upper neck and transitional support regions that keeps the body locked in that stressed state." The goal at every stage is a nervous system that can adapt, regulate and grow, providing the child with the healthiest foundation for life's demands.

Ebel assures that pediatric adjustments are gentle, specific and light. "With infants, we're often using no more pressure than you'd use to test the ripeness of an avocado—a soft, sustained touch. There's no twisting, no popping, no force. Babies frequently relax, settle or even fall asleep on the table. Toddlers come running in for their turn. Older kids look forward to it."

Coping Skills for the Storms of Life

With 2.4 million American youth diagnosed with depression and 11 to 16 percent struggling with anxiety disorders, young people need reliable tools to thrive. Mindfulness, breathwork, yoga, expressive art therapies and other holistic tools offer valuable self-care strategies for kids to self-regulate emotions when they are feeling overwhelmed.



"Adverse childhood experiences and significant life stressors have many long-term effects on the body, especially for children, but creative expression and meaningful connection can have a lasting impact on a child's developing nervous system," says Claire Little, a master-level art therapist and licensed associate professional counselor at Northern Light Counseling, in Honesdale, Pennsylvania.

Simple mindfulness practices can be introduced at different ages and incorporated into daily routines. Grounding activities like the "5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique—naming five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell and one thing you taste—can be great and practiced almost anywhere," says Little. Families can also model mindfulness at the dinner table by encouraging kids to think about what their food tastes, smells or feels like, with everyone taking turns sharing their thoughts.

Engaging in creative activities and play helps to unlock the unconscious, and Little attests to the power of art to help kids process life and manage stress. Creating a mindfulness box is a fun way to engage a child's senses and regulate neural pathways. "Have your child decorate a box large enough to fit several small items—interesting things found around the house or the yard such as flowers, leaves and rocks," she counsels. "Encourage them to identify what their objects feel like such as weight and texture."

It is vital to provide children with structure and boundaries without added pressure. "Meet them where they're at," Little says, "If a child is expressing an emotion, hear them out. Validate their feelings by listening and demonstrating how you cope with a similar struggle or feeling."

Marlaina Donato is the author of several books, as well as a painter and composer. Connect at Wildflowers AndWoodSmoke.com.

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Yoga —————  —————

Yoga Forever

Starting a Practice After 60 Can Be Just the Beginning

by David Penn

Originally published in our June 2023 issue. — Ed.



RobertCharlesTaylor/Pixabay

Today's media gives the strong impression that yoga is meant for a particular person, one who is young, thin, vibrant and already flexible. Ads for big brands such as Lululemon and Under Armour showcase this concept. In promotions and commercials, it's rare to find a yoga practitioner that doesn't look like a 20-something athlete or model.

Fortunately, more people are recognizing how beneficial yoga can be for those well beyond their 20s. In an article published in *AARP Magazine*, Amy Wheeler, yoga professor at California State University at San Bernardino, writes, "It's important to start caring for your joints, to help maintain your independence and preserve your ability to perform daily activities as you get older—things like brushing your teeth, combing your hair, getting dressed."

Judi Bar, yoga program director at the Cleveland Clinic, a world-renowned multispecialty academic and medical center, explains, "Yoga can be accessible and attainable for anyone. Just remember to always listen to your body and find a class and an instructor that support you. I teach people who are 90 years old."

But where should golden-ager yogis start, and how can they start safely?

Many people find that a restorative yoga class fits the bill. Restorative yoga consists of a gentler practice with more time spent in each pose. It tends to be easier on the joints, and it allows passive stretching in poses for extended periods of time. Students find they can relax deeply into the poses, with more time on the ground in seated or lying positions than in other styles of yoga.

If restorative yoga doesn't resonate with the practitioner, many styles of yoga are taught throughout the metro Atlanta area. It's best to find a studio with a welcoming atmosphere and instructors that take the time to speak with students and address their concerns. Seniors can find a teacher who recognizes that the body is different at 60 than it is at 26. While it's not necessary to find a teacher who is a senior themselves, it's helpful to find one that respects the concept that the body ages. Speak with the yoga teacher before committing to a class. Let the instructor know if there are issues with arthritis, knee or back pain or any other ailment. Ask the instructor if there are other seniors in the class and if there are any modifications or precautions to avoid aggravating any existing injury. Doing so can help set the stage for guidance in the class.

The extra equipment found at yoga studios is there to help. Yoga blocks, straps, blankets and more—referred to as yoga props—are there for the benefit of the student. Keep in mind that props are not training wheels; they are there to help the practitioner get the most out of their yoga practice. The yoga instructor should be able to demonstrate how to use props. For example, if a practitioner is not comfortable reaching the floor, they might use blocks for more support.

Clarity, Inner Power and Freedom

Joanna Elkhoury, owner of Truth in Motion Yoga in Roswell, teaches classes daily at the studio. "They say yoga has a way of sneaking up on you, and becoming a yoga teacher has helped me commit to my daily practice while revealing a sense of clarity, inner power and freedom that I had never before experienced," she says. "Once I realized the profound impact that yoga has had on my life and the power that postures, breathing and meditation can have on our health, it was only natural that I wanted to share this knowledge with others and spread the benefits of yoga to the community and beyond."

Elkhoury has noticed an increase in the general public's awareness of the boon yoga can provide seniors. "In the past few years, there have been more adults over 60 walking into my yoga studio to try yoga for the first time. This is due to the growing interest and focus on self-care and healthy aging in the general population. It's also due to the increased recommendation of yoga by the medical community as part of preventative healthcare practices."



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CALENDAR

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Yoga in the Park – 10-11am. Enjoy a free, gentle, all-levels flow led by Atlanta yogis. Registration required. Bring mat, water and towel. Grant Park, greenspace near Sydney St SE and Cherokee Ave SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-Grant-Park-080826.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Yoga for Readers – 10-11am. Gentle, beginner-friendly yoga creates space in areas compressed while reading. Includes meditation, reflection and refreshments. Free; promo code: lisa. Kiss and Tale Romance Bookshop, 340 W Ponce de Leon Ave, Ste 202, Decatur. bit.ly/Yoga-For-Readers-Decatur-081526.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

Sunday Morning Yoga at The Interlock – 10-11am. Reset with a free, welcoming, all-levels yoga class focused on movement, accessibility and connection. Bring a mat, water and towel. Weather permitting. The Interlock, 1115 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sunday-Yoga-Interlock-081626.

Reynoldstown Community Yoga + Farmer's Market – 10-11am. Enjoy an all-levels vinyasa flow, then connect with neighbors and shop locally. Free; \$10 suggested donation. Bring mat and water. Lang Carson Recreation Center, 100 Flat Shoals Ave SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Reynoldstown-Yoga-Market-081626

Yoga & Sound Bath Experience – 4-5pm. Enjoy a beginner-friendly restorative yoga flow with singing bowls and guided meditation to support relaxation and emotional release. All levels; no experience necessary. \$15. Free parking. 1800 Jonesboro Rd SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-Sound-Bath-081626.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18

Atlanta Laughter Yoga Club – 5:30-6:15pm. Enjoy laughter exercises, deep breathing and playful activities in a joyful, supportive environment. Free. Bring water and optional mat. Free parking. Trolley Barn, 963 Edgewood Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Atlanta-Laughter-Yoga-081826

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19

Gentle Yoga with Joan – 11am-noon. Support balance, mobility and peace of mind in a welcoming class tailored for older adults. Ages 18+. Free; bring water and yoga mat. Autrey Mill Nature Preserve, 9770 Autrey Mill Rd, Johns Creek. bit.ly/Gentle-Yoga-Joan-081926.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

Yoga at the Darwin Hotel – 6:45-7:45pm. Enjoy a free community yoga flow Thursday evening. RSVP required; space is limited. The Darwin Hotel, 585 Parkway Dr NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Darwin-Hotel-Yoga-082026.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Free Downtown Yoga at Founder's Green – 10-11am. Enjoy an all-levels outdoor Vin-

yasa flow for all ages and abilities. Free; registration required. Bring mat and water. Founder's Green, 110 Broad St SW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Founders-Green-Yoga-082226.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

Gentle Stretching and Breath-Work – 10-11am. Experience gentle stretching, breathwork and meditation blending yoga, tai chi, tapping and qigong. Ages 16+. Free. Body & Brain Yoga Tai Chi, 4641 Roswell Rd, Ste C, Atlanta. 678-750-3246. bit.ly/Gentle-Stretching-Breath-Work-082326

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25

Yoga in the Park with Dancing Dogs Yoga – 6-7pm. Enjoy an outdoor, all-levels yoga flow at Piedmont Park. Ages 18+. Free; check-in at 5:45pm. Bring mat and water. The Promenade, Greensward Path, Atlanta. bit.ly/Dancing-Dogs-Yoga-082526.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

Chill Yoga with The Regulated Room – 7-8pm. Calm high-functioning stress through yoga, breathwork, mindfulness and stress-management education in a supportive small-group setting. \$15/session; free for Kindred Self-Care members. Kindred Healing Center, 1800 Jonesboro Rd SE, 4th floor, Atlanta. bit.ly/Chill-Yoga-Regulated-Room-082626

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Candlelight & Cords Yoga Experience – 7:30pm. Unwind with beginner-friendly candlelit yoga, breathwork and live guitar supporting relaxation and nervous system restoration. All levels. \$15. Free parking. 1800 Jonesboro Rd SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Candlelight-Cords-Yoga-082726

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

Sol-Rise Sundays: Free Yoga in the Park – 11am-noon. Enjoy a beginner-friendly yin yoga flow featuring R&B, relaxation, stretching and grounding. Free; bring mat, blanket, pillow and water. Yellow River Park, 3232 Juhan Rd SW, Stone Mountain. bit.ly/Sol-Rise-Yoga-083026

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Introduction to Yoga – 6-7:30pm. First of four Thursday classes. Join Alejandra Gomez to study and practice some of the main aspects of Yoga using natural elements for support and integration. Series: \$140. Vista Yoga, 2836 LaVista Road, bit.ly/Vista-Yoga.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Sunset Yoga in the Park – 6:30-7:30pm. Unwind with sunset yoga for all levels in the open air. Bring a mat and water. \$19.44; no refunds. Active Oval, South Ball Field 1, Piedmont Park, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sunset-Yoga-Piedmont-090426

Being Mindful and Staying Present

Sunisa Kim is a California transplant who has taught yoga in metro Atlanta since 2015. Teaching classes ranging from the relaxed yin and restorative classes to the often vigorous vinyasa flow, she sees heightened interest across all classes from the over-60 crowd. “I’ve been working with yoga practitioners that are around 60 and over on a daily basis. Often, they are so much more into yoga than the yoga students I see in their 30s and 40s. Some are so much stronger and have been practicing yoga for many years.”

When it comes to older populations dealing with arthritis and injuries, Kim says it’s important for the student to be aware of their limitations, and for the teacher to be able to assist the student when necessary. “Allow your yoga practice to be an inquiry of your body and with compassionate eyes. Be mindful, and stay

present with your body. Go at your own pace, modify postures and use props like blocks, blankets and straps as much as each body needs.”

Starting a Practice at 62

Sciatic nerve pain, or sciatica, is a common condition among seniors. According to Carefect Home Care Services, a Toronto-based company specializing in care for aged populations, people over the age of 50 have an increased risk due to their bones, nerves and muscles degenerating. The Mayo Clinic has stated that sciatica is caused by age-related changes in the spine. Six years ago, metro Atlanta yogi Donita Crockett, 68, began her yoga journey to combat the constant pain of the ailment.

“I was suffering badly from sciatic nerve pain. It was unbearable—from my long commute and sitting at a desk for eight to 10 hours per day. Two weeks into yoga

classes, and I stopped taking ibuprofen for sciatic pain. I could not believe it,” says Crockett.

“Yoga has so many positives for me, posture, balance, breathing, stretching, centering your thoughts, lowering your blood pressure, helping sleep and calming your mind and body.”

Beginning a yoga practice is an excellent way to pursue strength, balance, stability, flexibility and an improved sense of well-being. We can all be better for it, including those of us over 60. 🧘



David Penn, E-RYT 200, founded Sun Dragon Yoga Studio in 2015. He offers instruction throughout metro Atlanta, provides

classes online and directs
Oncology Yoga classes at Northside Hospital.
Contact him at 313-303-0096.



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ON HOMEOPATHY

What Our Stress Is Saying

Homeopathy's Individualized Approach to Burnout

by Laurell Matthews, ND

Burnout has become so common that it is often dismissed as a normal part of modern life, yet chronic stress can affect nearly every system in the body, contributing to fatigue, poor concentration, digestive complaints and emotional exhaustion. According to a 2021 article published in the Annual Review of Psychology, chronic stress has been associated with increased risks of anxiety, depression and cardiovascular disease. Sleep is often disrupted as well, further reducing the body's ability to recover and restore balance.

Unlike conventional approaches that often focus on a diagnosis, homeopathy looks at how stress uniquely affects an individual. Rather than offering one remedy for burnout, homeopaths select remedies based on a distinctive pattern of physical, mental and emotional symptoms.

"I can't shut my brain off." For the person that pushes through long workdays fueled by coffee, becomes irritable

and impatient, and lies awake replaying tomorrow's to-do list, Nux vomica is a frequently considered remedy.

"Even small tasks feel overwhelming." When mental fatigue outweighs physical exhaustion and concentration becomes difficult, Kali phosphoricum is often used to support those experiencing nervous exhaustion after prolonged stress.

"I have nothing left to give." When someone has spent months or years caring for others until emotional reserves are depleted, "Sepia is one of the best remedies for burnout, especially in women with a lot of caretaking responsibilities," says naturopathic physician and homeopath Dr. Ian Spohn. "I recall treating a woman with five children who wanted to sleep most of the day. Within a month of adding Sepia to her regimen, she had signed up for a gym membership."

A Targeted, Holistic Strategy

Because homeopathy is individualized, the best remedy depends on the whole person, not simply the label of "burnout". A 2025 observational study in the Sao Paulo Medical Journal reports that patients receiving homeopathic care found improvements in sleep quality, along with reductions in stress, anxiety and depression over six months.

Burnout affects both mind and body, and recovery rarely happens overnight. By listening to what stress is saying and recognizing the unique response to it, homeopathy offers a personalized approach that can complement restorative sleep, nourishing food, movement and healthy boundaries, helping individuals move beyond simply getting through the day and toward feeling like themselves again.

Grato Health, in operation since 1987, is dedicated to advancing health and wellness through natural, holistic solutions that support the body's ability to heal. GratoHealth.com.



Vera Prokhorova/Shutterstock



The Art & Science of Conversation

by Linda Minnick



Mike Jones/Pexels

The ability to communicate has always been essential to building successful relationships. Yet as electronic communication has become a larger part of our daily lives, meaningful conversation seems to be becoming a lost art. Many of us can go an entire day—or even several days—without having a genuine conversation with another human being. With the rapid growth of AI, it's likely that won't be changing anytime soon.

Not surprisingly, communication has become an increasingly common topic during my coaching sessions. After all, we all want the conversations we do have to be meaningful. Whether they are personal, professional, or casual, we want to feel heard, understood and accepted.

Unfortunately, many of us place the responsibility for successful communication on the other person. We expect them to understand us without considering our own responsibility to communicate clearly. More importantly, we need to communicate in a way that makes sense to the

person we're speaking with—not just to ourselves.

I know what you're thinking: "Wait... *I have to think about what I say and how I say it?*"

Yes... but only if you want your message to truly land.

If you'd like to become a better conversationalist, here are a few principles worth remembering:

Keep it brief.

Attention spans seem to be shrinking. Whether that's because of technology or simply the pace of modern life, people have less patience for lengthy explanations. Get to the point without unnecessary details that distract from your message.

Speak their language.

Choose words your audience will understand and relate to. Communication isn't about impressing people with your vocabulary; it's about helping them understand your message.

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Pay attention to your delivery.

The same words can have completely different meanings depending on how they're delivered. If you're discussing something important but sound half asleep, your urgency may be lost. On the other hand, if every conversation sounds like a crisis, people may stop listening altogether.

Be intentional.

Have a conversation *with* someone, not *at* them. Make eye contact. Listen as much as you speak. Ask thoughtful questions. Make sure they understand what you're saying and use their name naturally throughout the conversation. Most importantly, let them know they matter.

Choose your words carefully.

When we're comfortable, it's easy to let our guard down. That's often when we say things we later regret, use language that's inappropriate or share information that wasn't ours to share.

Manage your expectations. This might be the most important principle of all. Are there people in your life that make you feel heard, understood and accepted no matter what? And others who seem to challenge or dismiss everything you say?

Why do you think that is?

When I ask my clients that question, the answer is almost always the same: *"That's just the way they are,"* or *"They simply don't like me."*

But what if there was more to it than that?

We often respond to the expectations we bring into our conversations. When we expect someone to be open and receptive, we naturally approach them with openness ourselves. When we expect resistance or conflict, we unknowingly communicate tension before we ever say a word.

Why? Because we're energetic beings.

Whether you know it to be true through the lens of science, psychology or spirituality, people are remarkably good at sensing

the emotional state of those around them. When we enter a conversation feeling relaxed, confident and welcoming, others often mirror that energy. When we approach someone expecting conflict, our body language, facial expressions, tone and overall presence communicate defensiveness before the conversation even begins. The other person senses it and often responds in kind.

So what do you do when you need to have a difficult conversation—or a conversation with a difficult person?

Start by releasing the expectation that it has to be difficult. Instead, expect the conversation to be respectful, productive and even pleasant. You may be surprised by how often people change when you change your expectations of them.

There is nothing quite like connecting with another human being through conversation. Despite our increasing independence and reliance on technology, we are wired for connection. Meaningful conversations satisfy a deep human need to belong and enrich our lives in countless ways.

Life is simply too short to spend it in isolation. There are people who would love to know you, laugh with you, learn from you and share life's journey with you. Don't miss the opportunity to build relationships, enjoy genuine laughter or experience the simple joy of a meaningful conversation.

This week, challenge yourself to make one intentional connection. Call an old friend, introduce yourself to someone new, invite someone to lunch or accept an invitation you've been hesitating to accept. One conversation has the power to brighten your day, deepen a relationship or even change the course of your life. 🌱



Linda Minnick is a speaker, author, life coach and Preferred PSYCH-K facilitator. Her most recent book, *New Day, New Life*, is available here: bit.ly/naa-new-day-new-life.

The Tests of Compassion in Today's World

For our Everyday Spirituality column, we've recruited a panel of Atlanta's spiritual leaders representing a variety of spiritual and religious backgrounds, and each quarter, we ask them a question we think you might want to ask. Suggest a question or send feedback to: Diane@naAtlanta.com.

How Can I Stay Compassionate Without Being Overwhelmed by the Suffering in the World?



JEFF JONES

It is easy to be overwhelmed with all that is happening in our nation and the world. Natural disasters and climate change are devastating communities; tens of thousands are mercilessly dying in armed conflicts around the world; health crises are resulting from changed U.S. priorities; and raging political bitterness is showing no signs of relenting.

Here are three suggestions for keeping compassion centered in our lives.

First, I urge others to make their own emotional health a priority. I continually hear how individuals engage with social media in unhealthy ways. Doomscrolling is a real phenomenon. Many news sources are designed to capture our attention with increasingly heart-breaking and outrageous stories. Overwhelm does not leave room for compassion.

Healthy use of social media includes limiting the time we spend on it and changing how we use it. Social media is good for maintaining personal connections, but too often we engage in flame wars—even subtle jibes—that ultimately erode our sense of compassion. Each of us needs to establish our own clear guidelines about what we take in from social media and what we put out on it.

We must also reduce screen time and seek out a healthy balance between solitude and engagement with the world. It is important to choose activities that enhance our sense of well-being.

Second, while much in our nation and world needs repair, it is important not to try to do everything. That, too, is overwhelming. Pick an activity or two that feeds your spirit, and always leave time to rest and relax.

One strategy I have found helpful is to pick one activity that provides direct assistance to a person or a group and another activity that facilitates systemic change. It is both gratifying and compassion-building to assist someone in direct need. At the same time, working to address systemic issues brings us hope for the future. Both kinds of activities can be done with others, and being part of healthy communities is vital to our emotional health.

Finally, it is important to celebrate successes in compassion. Many acts of kindness and compassion surround us. I am a bus rider, and I witness many gestures of goodwill on the bus. This week, I witnessed one rider helping another. The rider who offered help is one I have greeted a few times, but that morning, I thanked her for helping another rider. I believe I turned an acquaintance into a new friend, and I look forward to seeing her again.

Compassion is in our hearts and in our hands. We must be intentional about how we use our time and engage with the world. It is through our choices that we can make a difference in the lives of others. And it is not completely up to us. Let us celebrate the compassion already in our midst.

Rev. Jeff Jones is a Unitarian Universalist Community Minister. After serving congregations for 20 years, he now ministers through activism rooted in mindfulness and compassion consciousness, advocating for animal justice, immigrant rights and democracy and decency in government. His veganism is a deep part of his spirituality. His spiritual memoir can be found at religion90.wordpress.com

My Coming brings peace.

Likewise, My Presence brings cleavage.

My Sword, that Love which I am, will separate all men, will show the true from the false, will clear the way for the New Light which I bring.

May it be that you can withstand this change and accept My Light.

Many times before have I told you that My Appearance is nigh.

Look then carefully, My friends, and miss Me not.

My Blessing goes with you all.

Maitreya, the World Teacher






GEN KELSANG DECHOK

My Teacher, Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche, wrote about compassion in his book *How to Transform Your Life*:

Pure compassion is a mind that finds the suffering of others unbearable, but it does not make us depressed. In fact, it gives us tremendous energy to work for others and to complete the spiritual path for their sake. It shatters our complacency and makes it impossible to rest content with

the superficial happiness of satisfying our worldly desires, yet in its place we will come to know a deep inner peace that cannot be disturbed by changing conditions.

Compassion is the very essence of a spiritual life and should be the main practice of anyone who wishes to be happy or to attain the ultimate goal of human life, enlightenment. Most people already have some degree of compassion, but it tends to be limited and biased toward family and friends. It is harder to extend compassion to strangers or those we dislike. Yet it is only through cultivating universal compassion that we can experience the lasting inner peace of nirvana.

How can we remain compassionate without becoming overwhelmed by the suffering we see in our world? While there is undeniably great suffering, it is also true that suffering can come to an end. If we understand where suffering ultimately comes from, we will understand how to overcome it and replace it with lasting happiness. We often blame others for our pain, but if we look carefully with wisdom, we come to see that both suffering and happiness are states of mind and cannot be found outside the mind. When our mind is peaceful, we are happy. It is only when the mind is disturbed that we suffer. Someone can face extremely difficult external circumstances yet remain inwardly peaceful and content, while another person with seemingly perfect conditions may be utterly miserable. When we learn to cultivate positive states of mind and overcome negative ones, lasting happiness becomes a possibility for everyone.

It also helps to understand that all actions have consequences. Positive actions bring positive results; negative actions bring suffering. This is the essence of karma. While no one deserves to suffer, through ignorance we continue to think and act in ways that perpetuate our pain. Recognizing this, we can make an effort to avoid negativity ourselves, and hold deep compassion for those who are unknowingly creating the causes of future suffering.

When we witness the suffering in our world, rather than becoming overwhelmed or depressed, we can turn that feeling into aspiration —I want to become someone capable of helping free others from suffering. Through practices like meditation, we can learn to master our mind, experience genuine inner peace, and eventually guide others to do the same.

Compassion is a mind that cherishes all living beings and wishes to free them from suffering. We cultivate it by keeping our heart open, letting the suffering we encounter move us, and using that feeling as fuel for our spiritual practice.

Kelsang Dechok, a senior ordained teacher of modern Buddhism, is the resident teacher at Kadampa Meditation Center, Georgia. She studied and taught in the U.S. and U.K. for many years and has served as Director of Tharpa Publications US.



KIMBERLY BROERMAN

Staying awake to the pain of the world right now is heartbreaking and, at times, overwhelming. The dark powers of cruelty and violence are so thoroughly entrenched and unleashed in the world, it can feel next to impossible to try to process the daily news, our social media feeds, and the rage, grief, fear and more that arise when we take in the truth of what is happening. How can we stay grounded rather than be seduced into the chaos of fear and despair?

As much as we may feel called to give ourselves to every good cause and project, we also know we have limited time and energy. How do we discern our part in the healing of the world and give ourselves to it without spreading ourselves thin or burning out?

I keep coming back to this question that I believe each of us must prayerfully ask ourselves: “What is mine to do?”

Not just “What is wrong” or “What is needed?” Not just, “What do I have to offer in terms of time, resources, skills, gifts and experience?” But where is that place where the world’s needs and my gifts intersect?

Where does my compassion arise and challenge me to take action—where I am most fully alive, fully human and fully myself in service to the great needs of our times?

I reflect often on the words of mystic theologian Howard Thurman: “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

We are not all called to do everything. But we are each called and gifted to do *something*. We must prayerfully discern what is ours to do, and do that, knowing that we are a small but vital part of a vast ecosystem of care working to tend to the suffering and create more just and equitable ways to live together.

It is so hard to be human these days. To stay awake and see both the immense beauty and immense suffering without numbing or distracting ourselves. To allow reality to tender our own hearts rather than harden them. To find safe spaces and outlets for lament, grief and holy rage so that we do not do further violence to ourselves or others. To reflect and discern what is ours to do and to do it rather than be seduced by nihilism and overwhelmed into paralysis.

We are not alone. We have one another. We have wise guides who have gone before us and are still with us. And we have Love, who is always at work to heal and restore this beloved world even when the forces of darkness appear to be winning the day.

May we not lose heart. Let us keep showing up and doing what is ours to do. We are in this together, and we shall all be free and live in peace someday.

Creator and spiritual director of Deep Waters Center for Prayer & Exploration, Kimberly Broerman offers sacred space to share authentically, connect with self, one another and God, and practice contemplative living. She hosts conversations, groups, retreats and workshops to help spiritual seekers explore their inner lives. 🙏

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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 \$40 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$1/word, \$40 minimum, and enhanced listings are \$75. Submit free listings to matsakis99@gmail.com and paid listings to paul@naatlanta.com.

Wednesday, July 29
Introduction to Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. Online through Eventbrite. Free. Sponsored by Share International USA. Info: 770-302-2208 or Info-se@share-international.us. Register: tinyurl.com/3v7tsu27.

Saturdays, August 1 & September 5
Healing Sound Bath with Raye Andrews – 11am-12pm. Join Certified Vibrational Sound Therapist, Raye Andrews, for a beautiful symphony of sound. This immersive, full-body listening experience can bring relaxation to your mind, body and spirit. No registration required. Suggested love offering \$20-\$40. Held in the Chapel. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Friday, August 7
Sunset Reset – 6-7pm. Release the week with stretching, breathwork, scripture meditation and community reflection at this outdoor wellness gathering. Free. AMLI Ponce Park, 641 North Avenue NE, Atlanta. Register: bit.ly/Sunset-Reset-080726.

Karaoke & Open Mic Night – 7-9 pm. All are invited to this family-friendly evening of entertainment and fellowship. Karaoke music is provided, or bring your instruments, poetry or any form of artistic expression. Potluck meal. Love offering. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Saturday, August 8
Summer of Stillness – 10-11am. Enjoy mindful movement, breathwork and restorative stillness in a complimentary luxury well-

ness class. Arrive 15 minutes early. \$10 validated self-parking. Grand Hyatt Buckhead, 3300 Peachtree Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sabi-Haus-Wellness-080826.

Seniors Chair Tai Chi – 10-10:30am. Join a gentle seated session designed for seniors to support balance, flexibility, stress reduction and well-being. Free; resource bag included. Austell Market, 2780 Jefferson St, Austell. bit.ly/Seniors-Chair-Tai-Chi-080826.

Sunday, August 9

H.I.P. Walk-A-Thon – 11am-2pm. Join a community wellness walk focused on healing, unity, health, peace and purpose. Free smoothies afterward. Free. Westside BeltLine Trail, Atlanta. Sponsored by His Innocence Project. Register: bit.ly/Hip-Walkathon-Atlanta-080926.

Wednesday, August 12

Wellness Wednesdays – 8-8:30am. Energize your morning with a 30-minute virtual fitness class, followed by complimentary 4-ounce fresh-pressed juice. Free. Kimp-ton Shane Hotel, 1340 West Peachtree St NW, Atlanta. Register: bit.ly/Wellness-Wednesdays-081226.

EARTHSTRONG Vol 4: A KHōNA Yoga Series – 6:30pm. Experience yoga, meditation, breathwork and sound healing with Shelby Adina. Ages 18+. Free; arrive 15 minutes early. Bring mat and water. Ponce City Market, 675 Ponce de Leon Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Earthstrong-Yoga-Series-081226.

Walk It Out Challenge – 6:30-7:30pm. Join a community walking group to increase movement, build healthier habits, connect with others and support mental and physical wellness. Free; registration required. 2859 N Deshong Rd, Stone Mountain. bit.ly/Walk-It-Out-Challenge-081226

Thursday, August 13

The Amethyst Healing Circle – 6pm. Join Vicki and six energy healers for a group healing experience. Selected attendees receive focused energy work, and everyone receives personalized healing. Free. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Sandy Springs. Register: bit.ly/Amethyst-Healing-Circle-081326.

Saturday, August 15

JTM Fitness Free Abs Class – 10-11am. Strengthen and tone your core with a high-energy workout for all fitness levels, followed by a self-care conversation and meditation. Free. Jamie The Motivator, 3365 West Hospital Ave, Ste G, Chamblee. Register: bit.ly/Jtm-Fitness-Abs-Class-081526.

Walk With Us: Summer Sipsterhood Hike Series – 11am-2pm. Enjoy a beginner-friendly community hike for women featuring movement, nature and meaningful conversation. Free; advance registration re-

quired. Bring comfortable shoes and water. Atlanta Beltline Eastside Trail, Atlanta. bit.ly/Summer-Sipsterhood-Hike-081526.

Sunday, August 16

Feng Shui for Your Home and Life – 1:30-3pm. Explore feng shui principles, Bagua Map, Five Elements, ch'i energy, enhancements and clutter clearing with Roberta Grant. Printouts and giveaways. \$10. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Sandy Springs. RobertaFengShui.com.

Wednesday, August 19

The Crest Walkers – 9-10am. Walk toward better health, increased energy and stronger community while enjoying good company. Free; free parking. Browns Mill Recreation Center, 5101 Browns Mill Rd, Stonecrest. bit.ly/Crest-Walkers-Event-081226.

Thursday, August 20

Healing Sound Bath with Raye Andrews - 7-8 pm.Join Certified Vibrational Sound Therapist, Raye Andrews, for a beautiful symphony of sound. This immersive, full-body listening experience can bring relaxation to your mind, body and spirit. No registration required. Suggested love offering \$20-\$40. Held in the Chapel. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Friday, August 21

Therapeutic Massages – 10:30-11:30am. Medical massage for pain relief, injury recovery and chronic conditions. Call to schedule and confirm pricing; registration does not reserve time. Ideal Therapy, 290 Hwy 314, Ste B, Fayetteville. 404-994-7727. bit.ly/Ideal-Therapy-Fayetteville-082126.

Saturday, August 22

The Self Care Lab Walk Club – 8:30-11:30am. Recharge with a free Saturday wellness walk along Atlanta's Beltline. All ages. Wear comfortable shoes and sunscreen; bring water. Meet at tables outside Krog Street Market. bit.ly/Selfcare-Lab-Walk-Club-082226.

CAC Bethel Fellowship Health & Wellness Fair – 10am-2pm. Free health screenings, CPR training, eye screenings, health talks, cooking demonstration, kids zone and live music. Free. 3283 West Panola Rd, Ellenwood. Register: bit.ly/Bethel-Wellness-Fair-082226.

Pyramid Wellness Expo – 12-5pm. All ages, all levels. Free Entry, All types of Pyramids - Copper, Crystal & Tensor pyramids for meditation and healing. Ayurveda products, Nature products, Vegan Food, natural healing practices, Free spiritual consultation. Atlanta, 2655 Nuckolls Rd, Cumming, GA 30041. www.atlpma.org

Sunday, August 23

Girls Who Walk Dunwoody: Weekly Walks – 10am-noon. Enjoy a relaxed Sunday social walk for women ages 18+, followed by optional coffee at Lucky Goat Coffee Co. Free; RSVP required. Free parking. Brook Run Park, 4770 N Peachtree Rd, Dunwoody. bit.ly/Girls-Who-Walk-Dunwoody-082326.

Gentle Stretching and Breath-Work – 10-11am. Experience gentle stretching, breath-work and meditation blending yoga, tai chi, tapping and qigong. Ages 16+. Free. Body & Brain Yoga Tai Chi, 4641 Roswell Rd, Ste C, Atlanta. 678-750-3246. bit.ly/Gentle-Stretching-Atlanta-082326.

Called to Care: Supporting Caregivers, Families, & People Living with Dementia – 1-3pm. Learn about dementia, legal and financial planning, caregiver wellness and community resources. Free; doors open 12:30pm. Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, 471 Mount Vernon Hwy NE, Sandy Springs. bit.ly/Dementia-Support-Workshop-082326.

Ram Dass Legacy Retreat 2026.

Thursday - Sunday, August 27-31

A weekend of insight and renewal. An invitation to retreat, reconnect, and reset through meditation, movement, and music. Discover the confluence of Bhakti and Buddhist traditions, offering a path toward clarity and freedom.

Art of Living Retreat Center, Boone, NC. bit.ly/ram-dass-2026.

Saturday, August 29

Women's Wellness Recharge – 9am-12:30pm. Empowering women of all ages with practical health knowledge and tools for whole-person care. Free; doors open 8:45am. 191 Fairview Rd, Ellenwood. bit.ly/Womens-Wellness-Recharge-082926.

Sunday, August 30

Vegan Life Festival – 12-5pm. Enjoy plant-based food, cruelty-free products, workshops and activities while learning about clean living and connecting with like-minded people. Free; paid parking. 294 Hamilton E Holmes Dr NW, Atlanta. Register: bit.ly/Atlanta-Vegan-Festival-083026.

Spiritual Keys to Aging Well – 12:30-1:30 pm.This monthly discussion group meets the last Sunday of the month to focus on topics of interest to aging adults. All are welcome. No registration required. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Sunday, September 20

Feng Shui for Your Home and Life – 1:30-3pm. Explore history, principles, Bagua

Map, Five Elements, ch'i energy, enhancements and clutter clearing with Roberta Grant. Printouts and giveaways. \$10. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Sandy Springs. RobertaFengShui.com

ONGOING SUNDAYS

Practicing the Presence - A Course in Miracles – 8:45-10:30 am.This weekly Zoom study group aims at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. Facilitator: Michael Wilkinson. An open and ongoing class. All are welcome. For more info and to receive the Zoom link, email: MWilkinson@leadstrat.com. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta Sunday Experience. Starting at 3 pm music and Science of Mind message; 4 pm Food and fellowship; 5 pm New Thought workshops. 2650 N. Druid Hills Rd. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30329. More Info: slc-atlanta.org

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, Sitting/Walking Meditation; 10:30, Morning Service;10:45am, Dharma Discussion;11:30am, Close and Brunch. Via Zoom or in person. 3420 W Hospital Ave, Ste 102, Chamblee. More info: RedClaySangha.org.

Grant Park Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. The Beacon ATL, 1030 Grant St SE, Atlanta. cfmatl.org/markets.

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.

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

Unity Atlanta Church Sunday Services – 11am-12pm.The uplifting Sunday services include prayer, message, and guided meditation. Special music is provided by Unity Atlanta Church's Soulful Harmonics Band and Celebration Choir. Attend in-person or watch via livestream. Youth Sunday School is held in-person 11am-12pm for ages 5-18. Nursery service is available 10:30am-12:30pm. 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Twin Hearts Meditation – 11.00 am – 12.00 pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. With

Atlanta Pranic Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranicHealing.com.

TUESDAYS

The Art of Preserving Balance and Vitality Through Movement – 6-7pm. Discover the ancient art of cultivating Chi to enhance well-being. Learn to manage stress, channel emotions, and deepen your connection with life. \$18/class; packages available. Zoom. Efraín Brady, 470-281-8645. PathsToIntegration.com.

Online Meditation Open House – 7-8pm meditation, 8-8:30pm discussion, followed by tea and cookies.To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

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.

“Divine Connection” (Conexión Divina) Zoom Gathering – 8-9pm.The Spanish-speaking community is invited to this Zoom prayer and study group, led by Rev. Xiomara Malagon. August sessions feature the Unity Booklet, “Change Your Thinking Change Your Life.” For more info and to receive the Zoom link, email: xioma735@gmail.com. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

WEDNESDAYS

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7-8.15 pm. With Resident Teacher, Gen Kelsang Dechok. Talks, guided meditation, discussion and Q&A. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.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.

Meditation Healing & Wellness Course – 10:30am-12:30pm. Six-week course meets once weekly, Sundays or Wednesdays. Deepen your meditation or explore healing paths. Transform your life and connect spiritually. Andrea, 404-557-4306. Norcross.

THURSDAYS

Beyond Limits Weekly Conscious Dance – Between 8pm in Smyrna and 7 pm in Roswell, GA at Awareness Studios. With Marisa Skolky. An intentional dance activated by vocal toning and singing during an hour and a half dance through our emotions, lifecycle, archetypes and levels of consciousness. Followed by a singing bowl meditation, a closing circle and community tea time. \$20. Beyond Limits Expressive

Arts Therapy LLC, 4528 King Springs Rd SE, Smyrna. 770-235-3183. MarisaSkolky.com.

Inside Flow Yoga - 10-11am, Lift Yoga Dunwoody, \$20.Vinyasa style yoga that merges breath, movement and music. With Inside Flow, awareness draws inward, expression comes outward, and the practice becomes a shared experience. www.emilyflows.com to resister and for more info

Tea & Tarot – 11am-2pm. 1st Sat. A tea party and tarot mixer for people of all ages and experience levels. Hosted by Amy Cathryn. \$25. Forever And A Day, 7830 Hwy 92, Woodstock. 770-516-6969. ForeverAndADay.as.me/TeaandTarot.

SATURDAYS

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.

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. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630 E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst.

Free Reiki-Infused Yoga & Meditation – 3:30-5:30pm. 1st & 2nd Sat. Vinyasa flow classes enable you to move slowly, while focusing on strength, flexibility, concentration, breath work and meditation. Free. Healing Hands Reiki & Spiritual Development Inc, 27 Waddell St NE, Atlanta. Registration required: 313-671-5804 or Tinyurl.com/4mnww3t4.



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The Bug, the Dog and the Chicken

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

It was my last year in college, and I was sitting at a restaurant in Hong Kong with a group of students from my International Studies class. I ordered the Peking Duck.

“Ducks are my friends,” my professor said, visibly upset.

I shrugged my shoulders. Was she serious? *What was the difference between eating a duck and eating a chicken?* I ignored her and enjoyed my meal. I recognized hypocrisy when I saw it.

The next year, I visited my parents at their home in Brooklyn. I sang, “I like to eat, all de meat. No rice for me. No gravy!” I danced in the backyard to “All De Meat,” by Bahamian Soca music artist K.B., surrounded by my mother’s beautiful flowers and hanging plants.

My dad looked at me suspiciously. “What is he talking about?” Dad knew that many Caribbean artists used metaphors to sing about off-color topics.

“Nothing, Dad. He just likes eating meat.”

Dad raised his eyebrows.

I laughed. I liked meat, too. As far as I was concerned, it wasn’t a meal without meat. And I didn’t care about the rice and gravy either. J.B. and I were kindred spirits.

By my late 20s, I was an adventurous eater and had tasted caviar, oysters, escargot, calamari, sweetbread, frog and even alligator, along with the usual beef, chicken, goat and lamb in Caribbean households. I was an equal-opportunity meat-eater. I thought of vegetarian restaurants the same way I thought of Chinese or Italian cuisine. It was interesting, but not particularly meaningful.



It wasn’t until I opened a ladies’ fitness center in Brooklyn in 2003 that I found myself teaching about diet. I jumped on the low-carb bandwagon recommended by our franchise management and recommended steak and eggs for

breakfast with just a fistful of whole grains per day. It wasn’t easy, but people lost weight, myself included.

Then stress and bad habits took over as the fitness center struggled to become profitable, and any weight I lost snuck back. When the dust settled, I closed the business, packed up my house, dropped nearly 40 pounds and moved to Atlanta.

Not long after that fresh start, I watched an episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, featuring the 2008 documentary, *Food Inc.* It was the first time I thought about where my chicken came from. I imagined happy farm life, but what I saw was horrific. It was filthy and cruel. It was the first time I seriously thought

about giving up meat. I had already stopped eating veal and came to understand I would never touch foie gras.

My curiosity led me to more books and information: Freedman and Barnouin’s *Skinny Bitch*, Russell Simmons’ *Super Rich*, and Tracey McQuirter’s *By Any Greens Necessary* got my attention. I was thirsty to learn more. I tried to quit eating meat so many times but always went back to it. Meat was everywhere, and I didn’t know any vegetarians.

Then, in 2012, after a half-day meditation retreat, my daughter and I set the table for dinner. A little bug had wandered into our home. My daughter carefully got a plastic cup to cover it, slid a piece of notebook paper underneath and took the bug to freedom on our terrace. We sat down with our sweet little dog beside us and ate a chicken dinner.

Something shifted in me. I knew I was out of alignment.

How could I save a bug, love a dog and eat a chicken?

When I woke up the next morning, I made the commitment to stop eating meat for good this time. I knew I needed support, so I joined a local vegetarian meet-up group and eventually started my own. I came to understand the profoundly positive impact that a plant-based lifestyle can have, not only on animals, but on my own physical and mental health and the survival of the planet.

The bug, the dog and the chicken were my teachers—they were a metaphor for misalignment. I went from someone who couldn’t imagine a meal without meat to a certified teacher in plant-based lifestyle medicine. It reminds me that every day is a new opportunity to bring my choices into closer alignment with the person I want to become. 🌱



Trish Ahjel Roberts is a transformational coach, keynote speaker, retreat leader, and author of four books, including her latest, *The Anger Myth:*

Understanding and Overcoming the Mental Habits That Steal Your Joy. Learn more at TrishAhjelRoberts.com.



Natural Awakenings Launches New Homeopathy Department With Support From Grato Health

Natural Awakenings is expanding its commitment to natural wellness with the launch of a new Homeopathy department—a dedicated editorial section designed to educate readers about one of the world’s most established approaches to health and healing.

The new department will feature practical, evidence-informed articles explaining homeopathy, how it works, when it may be appropriate and the role it can play alongside a healthy lifestyle. Readers can expect insights from experienced practitioners and trusted resources to help them make informed decisions.

This new addition to the magazine’s editorial lineup is underwritten by Grato Health, an employee-owned company that has been manufacturing and advancing homeopathic and natural wellness products for nearly four decades.

“Homeopathy has helped millions of people around the world, yet many still don’t fully understand what it is or how it is used,” says Mike Evans, CEO of Grato Health. “We saw an opportunity to help change that by supporting education that is balanced, accessible and rooted in experience.”

According to Evans, the company’s efforts extend well beyond their own family of brands. “For years, we have believed that strengthening the homeopathic community benefits everyone,” he explains. “We have invested in education, practitioner resources, manufacturing excellence, advocacy and organizations that help preserve and advance

homeopathy. Our goal has never been simply to grow our brands. It has been to help grow confidence in homeopathy itself. Partnering with *Natural Awakenings* and its parent company, KnoWEwell, was a natural fit because both organizations share a commitment to empowering people with credible wellness information.”

Kimberly B. Whittle, CEO of KnoWEwell, P.B.C. and Natural Awakenings Publishing Corporation, states, “We are deeply grateful to the entire Grato Health team for their longstanding commitment to the advancement of homeopathy and for recognizing the vital role of trusted health journalism in educating and empowering individuals.”

In celebrating Grato Health’s commitment to KnoWEwell, Whittle notes, “We are honored that this industry leader has chosen to become a KnoWEwell Lifetime Founding Patron Partner and will be launching and cultivating their own communities in our Regenerative Whole Health Hub (the Hub), reflecting a shared commitment to advancing homeopathy and the collaborative movement for WELLthier Living. I am certain that our partnership with Grato Health will demonstrate what is possible when mission-driven organizations collaborate to strengthen an entire field.”



Be sure to visit the new Homeopathy department in this month’s *Natural Awakenings* on page 24. To learn more, scan the QR Code for an online introduction to homeopathy. Readers are invited to join the Hub for free, save articles for future reference, engage in communities and make meaningful connections with members of like interest and vetted practitioners, organizations and brands.

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