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HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

natural awakenings

**Elizabeth
Gilbert**
on Fear & the
Creative Life

**What is
*Self Love?***

**SEASONS
EATINGS**
Fab Food for
Wintertime

KID-APPROVED
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a charity benefit
in support of



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Flying Mystics
Narayani



Saturday Afternoon:
Douglas Johnson
Flavia Krishna & Gershone



Saturday Night:
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Ian Boccio & the Spirit Messengers



Sunday Afternoon:
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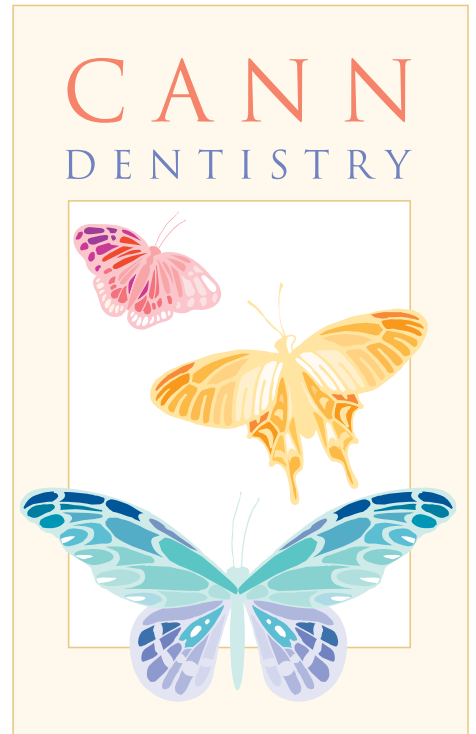
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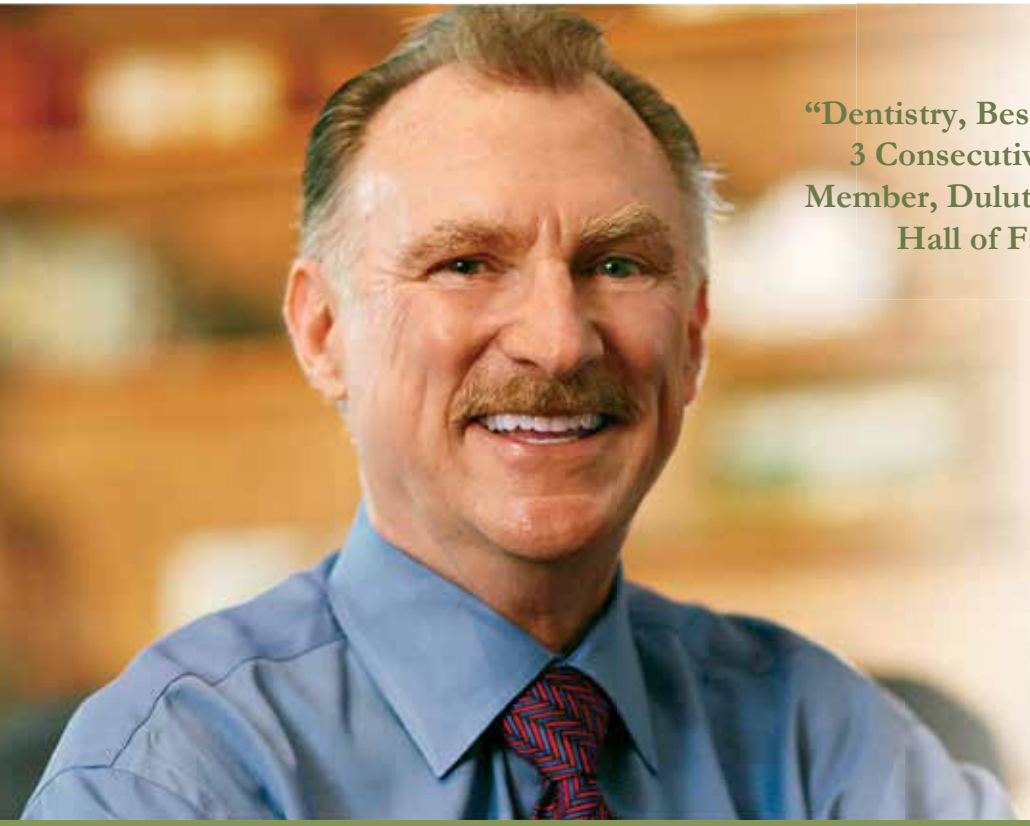
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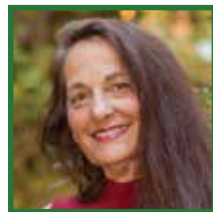


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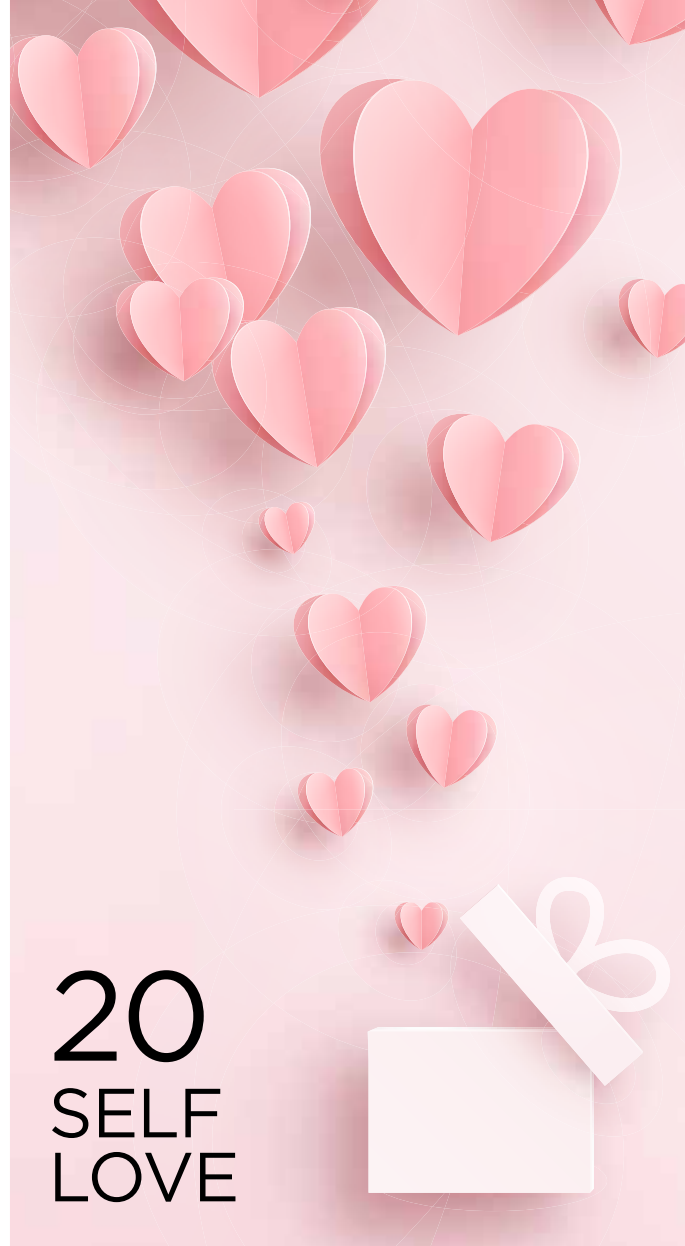
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SELF
LOVE

OUR WEBSITE'S NEW LOOK!

We're excited—and just a little nervous—to announce our new website! Our address remains the same, of course: naAtlanta.com, but we're migrating to the Locable platform.

Nervous because we've not migrated the website before, and it contains over 2,000 articles! As of this writing, we're hoping to get 'er done just a few days before February and we're keeping our fingers crossed.

The Locable platform was developed with print publications specifically in mind, and although these two features will not be available at first release, we are particularly excited about the site's calendar and directory functions. Both should lead to robust databases of events and vendors that will serve you, our reader, with many more resources at your fingertips!



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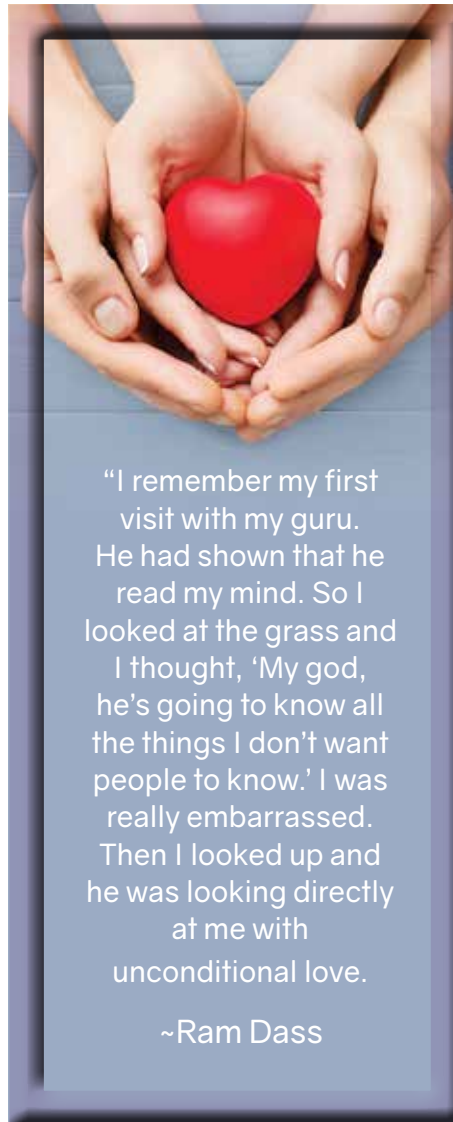
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Promises Made & Promises Grappled With

Last August, as we produced our feature story for the month, *Black & Vegan in Atlanta*, I promised to diversify the perspectives and voices in these pages.

I'm happy to announce that we're fulfilling that promise. Starting in March, we welcome Ifini Sheppard as a consulting editor to examine the subjects of our feature packages and advise if there are African American perspectives that could be explored or served. She will also develop a couple of story ideas driven by concerns of the black community around our core editorial topics of natural healing, conscious eating, fit body and personal evolution.

We also welcome Kim Green and Trish Roberts as regular contributors to our Walking Each Other Home (WEOH) column. And then it just so happened that the article that Kim submitted for WEOH this month caused us to look even more closely at the issues of divisiveness, culture and labels.

Our aim for that column is to provide a space for people in our community to describe insights and awakenings that are ultimately universal; perspectives that can

resonate with so many because of the very fact that we are all so very similar at our deepest core.

And then we came upon the word "whiteness" in Kim's piece. At first, it sounded divisive, and therefore not universal, to us. Full disclosure, although I am Chinese, I consider myself "culturally white," and Diane Eaton, our managing editor, is Caucasian. The two of us spent quite some time grappling with where the universality lies and whether or not it would be recognized by our readers. We also tried to look honestly at whether our challenge might be a function of a certain amount of white fragility.

White fragility is real and probably has a lot to do with why talking about race can be so difficult. But I am also convinced that our limitation of language has a lot to do with it. Eskimos have 50 words for snow, yet English has just one explosive word—racism, and its person-referring noun, racist—to describe a very wide range of negative attitudes. *What?*

After more discussion and soul-searching, we concluded that Kim's experience is universal, since we have to admit that practically all of us have fallen under what author Tara Brach calls the "trance of unworthiness." While Kim's sense of inferiority is derived from the explicitly racist messages that are transmitted constantly and consistently through our common culture, others are sourced elsewhere. Yet we share a similar disconnect with our inner worthiness.

To Kim's point, I remember being saddened many, many years ago when I read about research that found that black girls consider white dolls prettier than black dolls, and black students performed worse on tests when they were required to identify their race prior to taking a test. Words matter. Like water to fish, our culture is ever present and helps to define who we are.

I know these things for sure: Everyone wants to be happy; love is expansive; being inclusive can sometimes slow things down and makes matters messier; and to truly love others means to meet them where they are, to listen to truly hear and understand, not to formulate your response to what they are saying.

The title of our WEOH column originally came from my favorite quote by the recently passed author and spiritual teacher, Ram Dass, who said, "When all is said and done, we're all just walking each other home."

Sisters Ifini, Kim and Trish, welcome. We are listening. Would you please walk beside us on our way home?



Paul Chen has been owner/publisher of Natural Awakenings Atlanta franchise since January 2017. He is a practicing Buddhist and a founding member of East Lake Commons, a cohousing community.



Owners Michael and Sherry Davis. (Photo: Amy Cathryn)

Woodstock's New Age Emporium CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Forever and a Day New Age Emporium in Woodstock is inviting the public to help them celebrate their 10-year anniversary on February 29, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"We are so happy to have reached such a huge milestone!" says Sherry Davis, who owns the store with husband Michael. "We love our store and our patrons, and we are so happy we have been able to grow—even under less-than-favorable economic conditions—during the past 10 years."

There is no cost to attend the festivities, which will include prizes, discounts and refreshments.

Forever and a Day opened for business in February 2010, offering metaphysical supplies, crystals, books and tools as well as psychic readings, classes and regular public events. In December 2018, the Davises opened the Woodstock Salt Cave, located next door to the store, to provide salt therapy sessions, which have been shown to be helpful for a variety of health concerns.

Forever and a Day is located at 7830 Highway 92 in Woodstock. For more information about the celebration, visit ForeverAndADay.biz/calendar.

Marietta's Life Grocery Closes AFTER NEARLY HALF A CENTURY OF SERVICE

After 43 years serving patrons throughout the Atlanta area, Life Grocery Store at 1453 Roswell Road in Marietta closed its doors for the final time in January.

Life Grocery, a pioneer in the organic and natural food market through the years, was founded in 1976 by a group of Life College students to promote and support healthy eating and lifestyles.

Due to declining sales, increased competition and rising costs, the cooperative has been unable to update its aging refrigeration units and computers and its POS, phone system and physical facility.

"It has become clear to us that, with these dynamics, along with changing market conditions and shopping culture, we can't continue to operate our business profitably," says general manager Ronnie Hudson. "It is with deep regret and a heavy heart that we announce the closing of the store."

"We are so very grateful to the thousands of members who have patronized and supported Life Grocery through the years. We also want to acknowledge our dedicated employees, especially our long-term managers, who have been with us for up to 25 years. It has been a pleasure being of service to the community," says Hudson.

For further information, contact LifeGroceryAndCafe@gmail.com.



John Stringer. (Photo: Annie Marie)

Award-winning Musicians TO HEADLINE CHANTLANTA 2020

ChantLanta's 11th annual Sacred Music Festival will provide a full weekend of music, chanting and performance with national and local favorites March 13, 14 and 15.

Flying Mystics and Narayani will kick off the music on Friday night. Saturday's lineup features Ian Boccio leading a Sea of Oms experience, kirtan with Douglas Johnson, a 12-person sound bath led by practitioners from the International Sound Therapy Association and more kirtan with Flavia Krishna and Gershone.

Billboard-charting singer-songwriter John Stringer headlines with a full band behind him for the Saturday evening concert. Opening for Stringer will be Shonali Banerjee, and Ian Boccio and the Spirit Messengers will close out the evening.

Award-winning singer-songwriter Bob Sima will perform on Sunday afternoon along with Phil McWilliams, and Native American elder Tom Blue Wolf will lead a chanting and storytelling journey. An all-star jam session will conclude the festival.

"There is so much incredible, deep, beautiful music happening in and around Atlanta all the time," says creative director Ian Boccio. "ChantLanta hopes to provide an opportunity for folks to discover some of the fantastic offerings in our city."

All music on the Sanctuary Stage is free to attend throughout the weekend.

ChantLanta's 2020 charity partner is The Learning Tea, an organization that helps lift at-risk young women in Darjeeling, India, out of poverty by providing college educations that transform lives and communities.

ChantLanta will take place at The Church at Ponce & Highland, 1085 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE, Atlanta. For more info, visit ChantLanta.org or [Facebook.com/ChantLanta](https://www.facebook.com/ChantLanta).

Doraville's Advanced Medical & Chiropractic Adds Naturopath

Advanced Medical and Chiropractic Services, a wellness center that recently opened in Doraville, has added naturopath and integrative medicine consultant Paul A. Dabney, NMD, MPH, to their roster of professional health practitioners.

With an expertise in biological toxins, antimicrobial resistance of foodborne pathogens, and disease and injury prevention, Dr. Dabney has worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and East Tennessee State School of Medicine.

Other providers at the facility include holistic chiropractor Mike Greenberg, DC, certified homeopath Nadya Dhanani, CCH, and physician's assistant Amber Looper. The facility's services include chiropractic treatment, Prolozone treatment, plasma-rich platelet injections, steroid injections, IV therapy, myofascial trigger-point injections, ozone insufflation, food allergy elimination treatment and more.

The extensive list of conditions that Dr. Dabney addresses include adrenal fatigue, thyroid disorders, digestive disorders, psoriasis, memory impairment and dementia, immune support, anxiety, anemia, seasonal and food allergies, migraines, chronic fatigue and osteoporosis.

Advanced Medical and Chiropractic is located in Doraville at 6035 Peachtree Road, Suite C209, in the Super H Mart complex next to BrandsMart USA. For more information, visit AMNCS.com or call 470-799-2384.



Dr. Paul Dabney

MOON Organics

ANNOUNCES NEW HYDRATION PRODUCT

MOON Organics has added a new product, Drop In Soothing Hydration, to its all-organic, botanical product line. It is designed to be added to moisturizers, facial oils or serums to boost hydration and help with a variety of skin conditions.

The new formula includes hyaluronic acid and ceramides, which help to pull water into the skin for deep hydration. It works with all skin types and won't clog pores.

"This is a new type of product," says owner Susan Gonzalez, "because you can stay with your own moisturizer if you want to and just add two drops to each application for a hydrating boost."

"I am a nurse and esthetician, and the formulations I make are those I use in my studio with my clients," says Gonzalez. "My formulations have been tested on the most challenging skin conditions and work amazingly well. I use organic ingredients whenever possible and never use any harmful chemical preservatives."

Other products arriving soon include Drop In Wrinkle Repair with orchid stem cells and peptide complex and Drop In Lightening Complex with Vitamin C and Alpha arbutin. A 2.5oz bottle of Drop In Soothing Hydration costs \$19 and, like all MOON Organic products, is backed by a 100% money-back guarantee for safety and effectiveness.

For more information, visit MOONOrganics.com or stop by Gonzalez's studio at 934 Ponce DeLeon Avenue in Atlanta.



Clear Thinking

UNESCO Adopts Resolution on Earth Charter

The 40th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held last November, adopted a resolution that reaffirms the importance of the Earth Charter (EarthCharter.org) as an ethical framework for sustainable development.

The Charter's four pillars—respect and care for the community of life; ecology integrity; social and economic justice; and democracy, non-violence and peace—have guided and underpinned UNESCO's sustainable development work. Taking into account the current world situation and environmental crises, delegates felt it was time to act and that the Earth Charter provides the needed principles and values. Although it has no binding force, like previous UNESCO resolutions, its ethical foundation may surface in future battles in

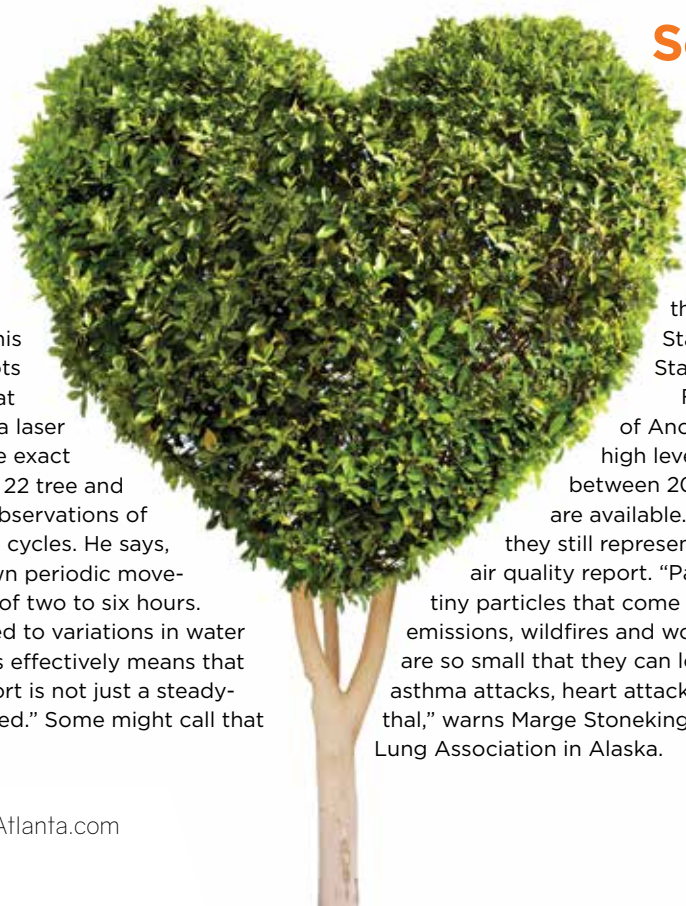
international courts.



Thump Thump

Trees Exhibit 'Heartbeat'

Scientists have discovered that some trees raise and lower their branches several times in the course of the night, indicating a cycle of water and sugar transportation, but they didn't know why. Plants need water to photosynthesize glucose, the basic building block from which their more complex molecules are formed. For trees, this entails drawing water from the roots to the leaves. Dr. András Zlinszky, at Aarhus University, Denmark, used a laser scanning technique to measure the exact location of branches and leaves of 22 tree and shrub species, and published his observations of substantial unexpected movement cycles. He says, "We detected a previously unknown periodic movement of up to 0.4 inches in cycles of two to six hours. The movement has to be connected to variations in water pressure within the plants, and this effectively means that the tree is pumping. Water transport is not just a steady-state flow, as we previously assumed." Some might call that pumping action a heartbeat.



Seal Deal

Fishermen Protect Endangered Sea Mammals



In 1969, there were only 100 South American fur seals and sea lions along the coastline of Lima, the capitol of Peru, but that has increased to more than 8,000 today, thanks to local fishermen that have realized over the intervening years that a balanced ecosystem benefits all. Once hunted almost to the point of no

return for their pelts and because they ate so many fish, the sea mammals have slowly rebounded since Peru established its first marine protection area there in 1979, the Paracas Marine Reserve. Today, the Fishermen's Union has defined these areas, in which each local fishing collective is dependent economically, and has assigned responsibility to that group for protecting those marine resources. Impetus for species protection is also being driven by the rise of tourism and artisanal fisheries.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, which maintains a "Red List" database of species and the degree to which they are threatened with extinction, has also been involved. It also compiles a "Green List" to recognize global best practices for area-based conservation, a program working with marine reserves along the Pacific coast.

Soot Cities

Alaska Battles Air Pollution

Alaska, which has some of the most pristine environments in the U.S., also has some of the worst air quality in its cities. According to the American Lung Association 2019 State of the Air report (Tinyurl.com/StateOfTheAirPDF),

Fairbanks ranked third and a section of Anchorage ranked 21st in cities with high levels of short-term particle pollution between 2015-2017, the latest years that figures are available. Although the numbers are poor, they still represent an improvement from the last air quality report. "Particle pollution is made of soot, or tiny particles that come from coal-fired power plants, diesel emissions, wildfires and wood-burning devices. These particles are so small that they can lodge deep in the lungs and trigger asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes, and can even be lethal," warns Marge Stoneking, executive director at the American Lung Association in Alaska.

Cann Dentistry

A Legacy of Care Continues

by Noah Chen

At the offices of Cann Dentistry, one finds a history of top-tier dental work and a warm team of dentists who take pride in the individualized care of their patients. Dr. Roberta Cann took over the dentistry, originally founded by her father, James Cann, in the early 1990s.

"From the time I was 12, I'd spend time at the dental office, file charts or X-rays, or do whatever could be helpful," she recalls. "And it was very exciting for me when they decided I was old enough to enter the treatment room and learn to be a dental assistant—I could be where the fun was."

Just as important to her as inheriting her father's passion for dentistry was inheriting his warmth. She describes him as having been "the kindest, most gentle person ever." Kindness has remained a hallmark of Cann Dentistry, as made evident by many long-term patients who have sought dental services there since it was founded.

That legacy of customer care continues, now in the hands of Dr. Cale Jackson, who assumed ownership of the dentistry last October. Cann wanted to take a step back and spend more time with her family, and she was convinced Dr. Jackson would continue the practice's patient-centered mission after their first meeting.

"It makes me super-grateful that my philosophies of taking care of patients will continue on after me," she says. Cann's approach includes a dedication to biological dentistry and dental care's impact on holistic health. Examples include educating clients about the connection between gum disease and heart problems and taking extreme care when handling toxic materials, such as removing mercury fillings from patients.

Like Cann, Jackson has a history of dentistry reaching back to his youth when he worked in an orthodontic lab all through high school. Dr. Jackson is excited to own a dentistry practice that has a reputation for taking top-notch care of its clients.

"A lot of our patients have a very long history with our practice. They've been seeing us for so long that their chart is 30 pages thick," says Jackson. "We take notes every single visit, and we make sure we know what's important to the patient."

Their approach contrasts with those of practices where Dr. Jackson has worked previously: "Corporate dental practices want you to do as much as you can, produce as much money as you can. Here it's all



Dr. Roberta Cann and Dr. Cale Jackson. (Photo: Emily Jackson)

about taking care of your patient and having enough time during the day to speak to your patients and get to know them as people."

This familiarity not only makes the patients more comfortable; it helps the doctors tailor their services to each client by avoiding obscure allergies and products with which the patients are uncomfortable.

As part of the purchase agreement, Cann is staying on to help Jackson get acquainted with their patients and learn more about her philosophy and practice of biological dentistry. He also enjoys working with her. "In a word," says Jackson, "she's wonderful." She'll remain with the practice for years to come, albeit in a way that affords her more free time.

Jackson brings with him a wide skill set that enables Cann Dentistry to offer new services such as veneers and full mouth rehabilitation. And while the office has provided surgeries and aesthetic procedures in the past, Jackson will "bring new energy and focus" to them and do them more frequently, according to Dr. Cann.

A self-proclaimed science nerd, Jackson also brings with him a deep understanding of the science behind dentistry. Still, despite his love of science, his favorite moments as Cann Dentistry's new owner have been getting to know all the staff and patients. This, more than anything, seems to indicate that the legacy of quality service and individualized care remains a priority at Cann Dentistry, even as it changes its name to Atlanta Dental Wellness.

Food always tastes better
in the season it was
intended to be eaten in.

~Brigit Binns

Season's Eatings Fab Food for Wintertime

by April Thompson

No matter where we live, eating seasonally in winter doesn't have to be boring or limiting; a culinary adventure awaits the home chef that's willing to leave avocados and asparagus to their rightful seasons and embrace the winter rainbow of bitter greens, sweet potatoes, sunny citrus and fuchsia beets, among other timely delicacies.

"Sometimes people think of winter foods as brown and soft and boring, and it's absolutely not the case. Winter brings bright things like pomegranates, beets and citrus, which offer color and acidity," says Brigit Binns, the Paso Robles, California author of 30 cookbooks, including *Cooking in Season: 100 Recipes for Eating Fresh*.

Eating seasonally is especially important in winter, says Shannon Stonger of Texas, author of *Simple Food for Winter: 30 Grain-Free Recipes to Get You Through the Dark Days*. "Winter foods like fermented vegetables, root vegetables, squashes and hardy greens are especially helpful in the colder, darker months, when our bodies are in need of comfort foods as well as pre- and probiotic foods," says Stonger, a homesteader and founder of the blog *NourishingDays.com*.

There are plenty of other reasons to stick to a seasonal diet in winter, adds Binns. "Food always tastes better in the season

it was intended to be eaten in. Seasonal foods are naturally ripened, rather than harvested early and trucked in. In addition to enhanced flavor, eating seasonally helps minimize use of fossil fuels to bring our food to us, and is likely to be less expensive."

Winterizing the Kitchen

Much of the fall harvest, particularly root vegetables, stores well through the winter (hence the idea of a root cellar), extending produce across seasons, according to Steven Satterfield, chef and author of *Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons*. There are lots of root vegetables beyond just carrots and potatoes to be enjoyed in winter, including sunchokes, parsnips and turnips, which can be used creatively rather than "boiled to death," says Satterfield. For example, the Atlanta restaurateur incorporates parsnips into an upside-down cake with winter spices like nutmeg, black pepper and ginger.

Binns likes to add texture to winter dishes with nuts, color with herbs, and crunch with a winter vegetable like fennel. Warming soups are always comforting during the coldest season, but she also likes warm salads, like a beet and escarole salad drizzled with a warm sherry vinaigrette.

Satterfield suggests that specialty citrus like blood oranges, Meyer lemons

and cross-hybridized varieties such as tangelos and pomelos are fun to intersperse with winter vegetables to maximize brightness and freshness. A lot of winter produce can be great in raw form as well, he adds, including Brussels sprouts, rutabaga or daikon radish, shaved thinly or julienned into a salad.

Winter squash is a favorite staple of the Stonger family in the cooler months. "It is easy to grow, easy to store and so deliciously sweet and rich. We roast it as a side dish, mash it as a sort of breakfast porridge or make soups and curries from it," says Stonger.

Satterfield suggests using all the parts of winter vegetables to maximize the harvest and minimize food waste. For example, the seeds of winter squashes can be roasted with herbs and spices and eaten as is, churned into other dishes such as a squash seed granola or blended and strained into a homemade broth to add some texture, fat and flavor. After roasting carrots with Moroccan spices, Satterfield suggests taking the leafy carrot tops and chopping them with cilantro and garlic to make a green sauce to crown the carrots. Swiss chard stems can also be chopped and cooked into Portuguese bread soup, with leftover stale bread made into olive oil croutons and egg whites stirred in at the end.

Winter Health Boosters

Beyond selecting seasonal produce, chefs recommend a few key dietary tweaks in winter, such as stepping up vitamin D consumption. "Since you're not seeing a lot of sun this time of year, it's more important to get it through colorful vegetables like carrots, cabbage or radicchio. Watermelon radishes are another winter vegetable full of vitamins," says Binns.

"You can grow your own sprouts throughout the winter as a great microgreen option. Sprouts are incredibly high in enzymes, something often lacking in other winter dishes," suggests Stonger. "Fermented vegetables and other fermented foods can make up the difference in winter."

April Thompson is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C. Connect at AprilWrites.com.

Winter Salad Wonders



Mixed Citrus Salad With Mâche, Fennel and Celery

Winter is the height of citrus season, with an appealing display of oranges, mandarins, tangerines, tangelos, pomelos and more in the best-stocked markets. Use a varied mixture of sweet-tart types for the prettiest, tastiest salad.

Yields: 4 servings

2 ribs celery
2 bunches mâche
2 lb mixed citrus fruits, such as navel oranges, blood oranges, tangerines, mandarins and pomelos
½ fennel bulb, trimmed
8 kumquats
¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted

For the vinaigrette:

Fresh orange juice or as needed
1 Tbsp champagne vinegar
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Cut the celery in half lengthwise. Using a serrated vegetable peeler or a mandoline, shave the celery into thin strips lengthwise down the ribs. Cut the strips in half crosswise and place in a bowl of water. Set aside.

Natural Awakenings recommends using organic, non-GMO (genetically modified) and non-bromated ingredients whenever possible.

Separate the mâche leaves and transfer to a shallow serving bowl. Working on a plate to capture all the juices, use a serrated knife to cut a thick slice off the top and bottom of each citrus fruit. Working with one fruit at a time, stand it upright and, following the contour of the fruit, carefully slice downward to remove the peel, pith and membrane. Set the fruit on its side and cut crosswise into slices about ⅜-inch thick, discarding any seeds. Transfer the slices to the bowl with the mâche, reserving the juices for the vinaigrette.

Cut the fennel lengthwise in half. Using a mandoline or a sharp knife, cut the fennel crosswise into very thin slices and tuck among the citrus slices. Drain the celery and distribute evenly over the salad. Using the serrated knife, cut each kumquat crosswise into very thin slices, discarding any seeds. Scatter the kumquat slices evenly over the salad, then sprinkle the almonds over the top.

To make the vinaigrette, pour the reserved citrus juices into a measuring cup. Add enough additional orange juice to measure ½ cup then add the vinegar. Whisking constantly, slowly add the olive oil and whisk until well combined. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle the vinaigrette over the salad, toss gently to coat, and serve.

From *Cooking in Season: 100 Recipes for Eating Fresh*, by Brigit Binns



Chard and Squash Salad

1 small winter squash, such as sweet dumpling, acorn or golden
2 small beets, trimmed
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 bunch Swiss chard, tough ribs removed and leaves torn
Red wine vinaigrette or vinaigrette of choice
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Cut the winter squash into wedges and remove the seeds, if desired. Transfer the wedges to a baking dish. Halve the beets and add to the dish. Drizzle with the oil and toss to coat. Bake in a preheated 450° F oven, stirring once, until tender and lightly browned, 20 to 40 minutes. Let cool. Peel and slice the beets. Place the chard in a bowl, drizzle with some of the vinaigrette. Toss to coat. Add the squash and beets, drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

From *Cooking in Season: 100 Recipes for Eating Fresh*, by Brigit Binns

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AYURVEDIC PRACTICES for Oral Health

by Dr. Zahra Punjani

Originating in India thousands of years ago, Ayurvedic medicine is considered the world's oldest medical protocol; it seeks to establish and maintain a balance of body, mind and spirit.

Oral hygiene is considered a crucial factor in promoting this balance. If any oral function is impaired, digestive strength can suffer, as well as the health of the whole body. For example, problems with the teeth and gums can compromise one's ability to chew, which may impair some of the chemical interactions that are fundamental to digestion.

For optimal health, Ayurveda stresses the removal of *ama*, or toxins, from the body

to improve oral hygiene. The National Institute for Health published 22 studies demonstrating the effectiveness of Ayurvedic methods of detoxification. Below are recommendations that have proven safe and effective.

Oil Pulling

Recent studies have supported the value of oil pulling for oral health. It is known to reduce plaque and lower the bacterial count and so helps with detoxification and purification of the mouth. The technique, comprised of swishing oil around the mouth, can be both preventive and curative for several dental ailments, and it has proven to reduce gingival index scores, plaque index scores, and total colony count of aerobic microorganisms, including Streptococcus and Lactobacillus. The practice also has been shown to greatly reduce gingival inflammation and even help whiten teeth. For best results, organic, unrefined, cold-pressed sesame oil and organic virgin coconut oil are recommended.

Curcumin

Extracted from turmeric, curcumin is a potent anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial herb that supports mouth health. In dentistry, curcumin acts as a therapeutic agent by:

- Protecting against free radical damage through strong antioxidant properties

- Reducing histamine levels and balancing natural cortisone
- Improving blood circulation

Aloe Vera

This fresh plant gel is widely used for its therapeutic properties, including moisturizing, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral, wound healing, and pain relief. Applying aloe vera on sites of periodontal surgery or tooth extractions aids healing. Direct application can help to heal viral lesions, ulcers and cracked lips. Aloe also has shown to help in other chronic diseases.

Amla

The fruit of the *amla*, or gooseberry, is known to support periodontal health and to strengthen the gingival tissue around the teeth. The fruit has cumulative benefits and long-lasting effects in fighting bacteria and preventing tooth decay and bad breath. In its native India, the fresh fruit is chewed, but amla capsules and powder are easily available via online retailers.

One way to use amla is in tea. Place two green tea bags in boiling water. Once cooled, add one tablespoon of amla powder. Refrigerate and shake well before using.

Additionally, to improve gum health, use amla powder mixed in water to form a paste, and massage the paste onto the gums.

Neem

Neem is an herb from the tree of the same name. Several studies have revealed the herb's antibacterial properties against common pathogens of the oral cavity. A study compared the antimicrobial activity of commercially available herbal dental cream that contained neem with conventional fluoride-containing toothpaste in school children; both toothpastes showed a positive antimicrobial effect on cavity-producing bacteria. Another study showed that a neem-based mouth rinse demonstrated anti-plaque and anti-gingivitis activity. Brushing with a neem toothpaste after every meal and using a mouthwash with neem extract is a recommended treatment for preventing gingivitis.

Tongue Cleaning

By cleaning the surface of the tongue, its ability to detect the six tastes is optimized. The simple action of tongue scraping reduces toxins and dead bacteria from the tongue, prevents bad breath and helps with digestive system function. Ideally, scrape your tongue before eating and after oil pulling.



Zahra Punjani, DMD, IAOMT, is a SMART-certified holistic dentist specializing in family dentistry with interests in complementary and

holistic care for total body wellness. Contact her at DrPunjani.com or 762-499-3479.



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Fear & THE Creative Life

*Liz Gilbert Speaks at
Attune Conference*

by Diane Eaton

Elizabeth Gilbert, world-renowned speaker and bestselling author of *Eat, Pray, Love* and *Big Magic*, has been speaking, writing and posting about the topics of genius and creativity for more than 10 years. She was a keynote speaker at the Attune conference in Serenbe in November 2019. Here are the highlights of her talk.

Twenty-five years ago, Elizabeth Gilbert was a young unpublished writer in New York City working several jobs just to survive. New York was “intimidatingly expensive and challenging,” she says, and she bemoaned the fact that she couldn’t find the time to do what she came to New York to do—write. Quoting author Melville, she longed for those “slow green grass-growing summer days” to dig into some creative work. But life was pressing in on her.

At a block party in the neighborhood, Gilbert met a woman she had admired for a long time. “She wasn’t brilliantly-hugely-famously-well-known, but she was well-known enough” that creativity was her life, says Gilbert. Intrigued, Gilbert cornered her at the party and shared her creative frustration with her. After some discussion, the woman asked what Gilbert describes as “the single most important question that anybody has ever asked me in my life.”

That question was: *What are you willing to give up so you can have the life that you keep pretending that you want?*

The question caused Gilbert to reassess many of her assumptions about her choices in life. Even though her life was demanding, she had to admit that she could find ways to carve out time to be with her muse. She stopped watching TV, broke up with her boyfriend, turned down an offer to go to the beach with friends for several days, stayed at her small apartment and started to write what became her first book.

“You need to choose—like triage—where that energy is going,” says Gilbert, “and that means saying ‘No’ to a lot of really boring, exciting and fun things. At some point, you are invited to decide what it is that you actually care about—what and who.”

Giving Up Fear?

“What if one of the things you’re willing to give up is to stop being afraid of your fear—not to stop being *afraid*—but to stop being *afraid of your fear*?” asks Gilbert. Admitting to being affected by an ever-present, low-level anxiety herself, she describes fear as “not necessarily endemic to our time period,” but as a part of our human software. “Ancient evolutionary wiring,” she explains.

Where does fear come from, after all? And how does it interact with our creative impulses? Gilbert provides a quick dive into the

development of the human brain over the last 250 million years or so. Our earliest brain—often referred to as the *reptilian brain* because we share it with reptiles and other species—is all about survival, compelling us to seek food and engage in fight, flight or sex, fulfilling our most primitive human needs. It provides an automatic response to any outside threats and anything unknown.

Then came “Brain 2.0,” as Gilbert calls it, which wraps around that first brain. “It’s a mammalian brain, but it still keeps all the reptile instincts underneath it. It is the brain of attachment. It’s the brain that says, ‘I belong to you. You belong to me.’”

Finally, humans get more, well, *human*, through the addition of the next-level brain, the neocortex. “Brain 3.0 wraps around the whole shebang,” Gilbert relates. It is “unlike anything this planet has ever seen before. It is a very, very recent software update.” It is the part that has deep memory, that wants to make art, that cries at music, and that has an irrational empathy for people it doesn’t belong to, according to Gilbert. It’s the part that wants to connect with God. “This is a massively beautiful, complex brain and it is the seat of creativity—but it’s wrapped around the reptilian brain.” One might say we are inherently conflicted.

Fearlessness Is Not the Goal

Precisely because fear is wired into our brains, demonizing fear and making fearlessness the goal is doomed to failure. “I am not a fearless person, and I will never be a fearless person. I wake up scared every single day of my life,” says Gilbert.

Besides, fearlessness isn’t all that we romanticize it to be. “I have met genuinely fearless people in my life, and I can tell you that they were sociopaths! . . . Fearlessness has no attraction to me. I’m interested in courage, which is something very different. Courage is about having fear and still proceeding [in the direction you want] anyway.”

“If you don’t get anything else, I want you to take this home: *expect the fear response. Respect the fear response*,” implores Gilbert. “Here’s how it works: This beautiful, newly-evolved, subtle, complex, beauty-loving, rapture-seeking, connectivity-wanting human brain will come up with a creative idea. An idea will land in there, and your very first response to it, before anything else kicks in, is going to be a sense of warm, beautiful excitement, something amazing.

“That’s always how it starts. And then—and you can set your clocks to this—the very next thing you are going to feel is fear. Your very next impulse is going to be terror and panic.” After that first expression of a creative idea or urge, she says, the reptilian brain’s auto-responder survival mechanism kicks in to protect us from uncertainty and the unknown, which creativity thrives on. One can sit down to do something as harmless as write a poem, and then be overwhelmed with terror because the reptilian brain, doing its job, screams, “This is going to kill us!”

“And so, there’s a conversation I have to have with my reptile brain, whenever I do anything creative, that basically says that my poetry might not be great, but, so far, the death rate is zero. So far, I have not killed myself or anybody else that I know of due to writing substandard poetry.” Every day of our lives, says Gilbert, we get to choose to follow the path of our creativity—to say “Yes” to the

invitation of a creative urge to make something out of nothing—or to listen to the reptilian brain, which tries to get us to shut it down.

Choose Curiosity Over Fear

We’re not alone in the endeavor.

“Creativity is happening at every single moment,” says Gilbert. Some believe that the universe itself is a constant creative response, that it is “a story of there being nothing, and then for some reason, it wants to turn into something.” Creativity is happening everywhere. Even on a planetary level, there are star nurseries in the far corners of the galaxy where new stars are being born. “When you live your life in constant creative response, you’re entering into nothing less than 15 billion years of creative energy that you are participating in in a tiny, small way,” says Gilbert.

Fear, she says, is the only thing that stands in the way of creativity. “Fear that I’m not going to matter; that I don’t belong here; that I’m not invited; that it won’t be successful; that my best work is behind me . . .

“Every single other excuse is [just] an excuse,” she asserts. “Every single other reason people give me about why they can’t create—all I see is fear.” Is money a stumbling block? Hip hop is an art form that was born out of absolute poverty, Gilbert reminds us. Perfectionism getting in the way? “That’s just fear in a fancy coat pretending to be important,” says Gilbert.

“To me, a creative life is constantly choosing the path of curiosity over the path of fear.” By doing so, your very life becomes the work of art. “You are the work of art that’s being made and foraged through the act of creativity . . .

“And that is why we do it. That’s why it’s worth doing because it’s going to be interesting who you become—not what you make—but who you become. So anytime you want to create something but you’re not, and your mind gives you a reason for it, I just ask you to unmask it.” The point isn’t to hate fear. “It’s to be able to have the real conversation, talking as gently and lovingly as you can.”



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self LOVE stories

WISDOM FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Since this is Valentine's month, we thought it might be meaningful to consider the nature of self-love. What is it? Is it important? How can we cultivate it?

We asked a few members of the Atlanta community to share their insights about the topic, and they were very generous in their responses! So thick is our stack of submissions that space prevents us from sharing all of them. Fortunately, the web has no such limits. Please find more self-love contributions from Gen Mondrub, Kim Green, Jade Crosby, Lisa Watson, Priya Lahki and Tammy Billups at naatlanta.com/2020/02/01/294742/self-love-stories.

Self-love Crept In

Loving myself wasn't always something that I experienced. A lot of my life was filled with more self-loathing than self-appreciation. The love part happened as a natural extension of my healing and growth process and from a tenacity within me to overcome trauma and pain from my past.

Self-love crept up on me as I worked through my past. It was so subtle that I probably wasn't even aware of it at first. The gentleness is also its expansiveness. Now that I am more aware of myself, I listen more to what is within me—and not just for making big decisions—but in the moment-to-moment experiences of life. I honor what

is coming up in me and whether or not the sensation is a "Yes" or a "No."

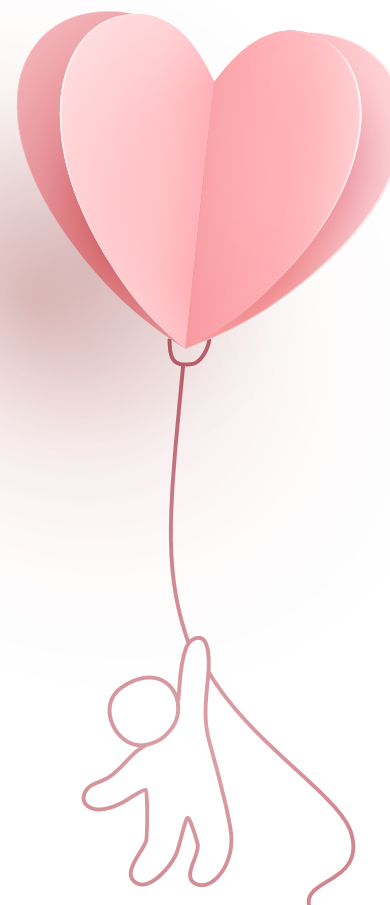
Self-love has shown me how to speak up for myself, even when it's uncomfortable. It's taught me that I matter and that my movements here on this planet and within the context of the Universe as a whole matter. Self-love has shown me how to

be accountable to myself in the most compassionate way, so not only am I able to set intentions for my life, I'm also able to go after them, and, when it's for my best and highest good, fulfill them.

The idea of loving myself used to feel outside of me, like some sort of wand that I needed to wave over myself in order to take all of the pain and problems away. But self-love hasn't done that. It does take me on a ride through the pain, and it shows me that I am resilient. It shows me that, if I continue to tune in and care for myself, this too shall pass. It guides me, time and again, back to myself, and it shows me, each and every time, that I have value. It has allowed me to know myself as the whole and complete person that I am.

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~ **Janet Raftis**
master energy healer



The Energy of Love

In the Unity movement, we believe in the oneness of all creation. There is no person, situation or living thing on the planet that is not a part of a multi-layered and multi-expressed singularity. This singularity is often called "God," but I prefer the name "Love." Though this love is known by many labels and experienced in many forms, we believe it is the life-giving and sustaining energy that we all share. The breath you just took in and released is an expression of love, and one that you give yourself as many as 30,000 times a day. It is necessary for your individual existence—so one might label it as an act of self-love.

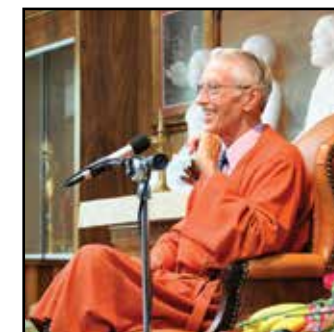
Everyone on the planet is engaged in that same act of self-love. Through this universal yet simple and often unconscious act, energy is being exchanged within the singularity of life. Thoughts and acts of kindness, generosity and compassion—whether directed inwardly or outwardly—are carried on the breath and deposited into the one field. It is a universally shared bank account of love called collective consciousness. Therefore, every expression of love becomes an act of self-love, and every moment of self-care is benefiting the whole of creation.

When kindness is offered, kindness is received. When compassion is expressed to another, there is an increase of compassion available to the one expressing it. Through implementation of this spiritual law, we believe that if we want more love in our lives, it is our job to consciously offer more love to others and ourselves—perhaps as much as 30,000 times a day.

By consciously living as the energy of love itself, each breath we take is depositing ourselves into a great cosmological bank account, where each of us can make regular withdrawals because each of us is making regular deposits!

~ **Rev. Richard Burdick**
spiritual leader
Unity North Atlanta

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~Ram Dass

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Love Others as You First Love Yourself

The master teacher Jesus told his disciples that there were only two great commandments or rules they would love by: to love God, the creative intelligence of the universe, with all of our heart, mind and body and to love our neighbor (each other) as we first love ourselves. These were what he considered to be the keys to the kingdom.

My spiritual path has taught me that our consciousness creates our experience. When I look at the world of effects today, I think to myself, we must be doing something wrong! To me, this does not look like a world that works for all!

But both the problem and the solution are found in those simple words from Jesus. We are loving each other as we first love ourselves—and that is the problem. We don't really love ourselves, and if we don't love ourselves, we can't possibly begin to treat others well and we certainly can't love the world.

Here is the good news: you hold the key to changing all that. You are the only person responsible for the quality of relationships in your life. Now you may want to counter with a list of toxic behaviors from other people. However, when your level of self-love rises, toxic people and toxic relationships will disappear from your life. Not because they have changed, and not because you have changed them. Rather, self-love changes you. The highest forms of self-love will no longer tolerate or allow toxic behavior in our midst. Practicing self-love, it turns out, is the most effective way to heal the planet.

So, where do we begin?

Step 1: Start by opening yourself up to the vibration of love that is at the heart of the universe. Ask yourself, “Am I open and receptive to the unconditional love of the universe?”

Step 2: Take a radically honest self-assessment of where you are in your life. Everything from eating habits, relationships, money, career and levels of self-satisfaction. Be vulnerable and honest; love yourself enough to tell the truth.

Step 3: Acceptance. Whatever emerged out of Step 2, accept it. Don't seek to change it, hide it or deny it. Just love it and accept it the way it is.

Step 4: From this place of acceptance, you can begin to build a bridge to where you want to go. This bridge is built on affirmations. Affirm with positive, present-tense language what you want in all areas of your life.

Repeat these steps daily and frequently and you will change the frequency of your entire life—a life worth loving.

~ **David Alexander, D.D.**
spiritual leader, *Spiritual Living*
Center of Atlanta

Time for Self

Because self-love means putting yourself first and dealing with your own wants and needs ahead of anyone else's, self-love is a challenge for those that don't want to be selfish. This becomes an issue due to the fact that usually relationships and the business of life takes you away from your own personal wants and needs. The question then becomes, “How do you balance self-love with service to family, friends and the community?”

I like to designate a couple of days a week when I can devote myself to *me*—solely for loving! It is a day to do whatever I need to do to make myself happy and satisfied. It could be as simple as lying in bed and not having to get up until I feel like it or going to a spa and getting pampered by a professional. I also take moments in each day to self-love by taking care of myself mentally with positive affirmations and educational videos, physically with yoga, walking and eating healthy, and spiritually with meditation, prayer and aromatherapy.

I *self-love* the most by maintaining a positive attitude and surrounding myself

with progressive, conscious people doing good works. We all become one and self-love ourselves and each other. It becomes a way of life—to self-love and to give love. It's a delightful balance that benefits all.

~ **Ifni Sheppard**
writer, photographer and poet

Self-discovery is Self-love

From a metaphysical perspective, in order to truly love anything, we must own the ability to love ourselves. To cultivate self-love, we must first cultivate self-knowing. When you clearly see who you are as a unique and powerful child of God, you will live in the energy of pure love. To begin the journey, ask a few guiding questions:

1. What helps me relax?

Knowing what helps you relax allows you to comfort the inner being no matter what is happening around you. When you know how to comfort yourself, you are no longer subject to the unfulfilling search for validation from the love of another.

2. What excites me?

Knowing what excites you allows you to “turn on” the motivation. Your passions hold the key that leads to the deeper truth of you. Allowing them to express allows you to grow.

3. What were the dreams I had for my life when I was eight years old?

When you were a child, your awareness of self and the world flowed more freely than it does as an adult. You could see yourself doing and being things that you would now say are not possible. Yet, the energies held within those dreams are still seeking fulfillment—they are the calling of your soul. Acknowledgement and action allow the adult to express the desires of the soul.

You will love yourself for it.

~ **Rev. Cindy Fuller**
spiritual leader,
InnerQuest Metaphysical
Christian Church

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How to Love Ourselves

*Look at unconditional love: a tree,
a grandchild, the ocean*

*The tree is strong, life-giving, bends in storms,
rises toward the sun*

*The grandchild, innocent yet knowing, imbued with
knowledge the world makes us forget she is gold.*

*The ocean, powerful, pulled by the moon,
lit by stars, full of shifting sand.*

*All are full of stories you love.
Breathe them in, let them wash over you.*

*Now, face your own sand. Pick up your little shovel,
your sifter, your bucket.*

*Look for your innocence, knowledge, strength,
your sun, your moon, your power.*

Bend when you need to; there is no hurry here.

You are also lit by stars, use them to find your way.

*Keep sifting. Mine for gold, it is what will be left when
ego has filled the bottom of the bucket.*

This is how we learn to love ourselves.

Slowly, slowly.

~ **Debbie Walker-Lass**
writer and certified health and wellness coach



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Sharing Hot Chocolate

A Meditation with Children

by Nicole Hale Bettis

A pleasant sting of steam fills your nose with the aroma of sweet chocolate as you bring a warm ceramic mug to your face. You enjoy the moment. Just then, the air is filled with excitement, as laughter and squeals break your reverie, and your hot beverage cools too quickly as you leave it to try to quiet the stampede of children. If only the gleeful noisemakers could join you in attending inward to themselves through hot chocolate.

But they can!

Turns out that the simple act of drinking hot chocolate is an excellent way to introduce the practice of meditation to young children. Providing a ritual that's associated with something familiar—and fun—creates both a teaching moment and a medium through which to focus. As lead Montessori educator for three- to six-year-olds, I use the following guided meditation regularly.

Breathe & Feel

After gathering everyone in a circle, let them know that today you will be drinking hot chocolate together. This invites them to notice the day's weather and to become aware of their present surroundings.

Say to them, "It's cold outside! Wouldn't you like something warm?"

Then, with a "Brrrrr," bid them to mimic you as you put your arms around yourself. Ask them to think of something warm to settle the cold, and then offer them hot chocolate. It's likely they will begin getting excited just at the thought of participating.

Continue. "As we sit tall and strong, we extend our hands in front of our bodies, cupping our palms upward as though we were holding a mug.

"Feel the warmth in your hands. Do you feel how your hands are starting to move from cold to warm as you hold your hot chocolate tightly?"

Invite the children to relax into imagining a cup of hot chocolate in their hands. Suggest that they imagine a sensation of warmth that's concentrated in their palms. This brings their focus to a singular point—one they can relate to.

"I bet it smells as good as it feels! Let's all bring our cups to our noses and take a deep breath." Invite the children to breathe in deeply through their noses and out through their mouths. It may take a little practice—on your part and on theirs. The important thing is to sit patiently with these young breathers!

If you choose to, extend the breathing exercise by asking the group if they think the hot chocolate is cool enough to drink yet. Prompt them to remark that the hot chocolate is too hot, and that it might be necessary to find a way to cool it down.

Breathe & Cool

"Let's taste it. Oh! It's too hot. Maybe we should blow on it to cool it down. Let's all take a deep breath in through our noses and out through our mouths." Repeat this guided breathing two more times. The imagery will help the children concentrate on their breathing.

"Good. Now, let's bring the cup to our mouths. Does it taste good? Mmmm.

Can we all say, 'Mmmm?'" By directing a sound so similar to the sacred 'Om,' under the guise of being pleased with the smell of hot chocolate, you successfully introduce the children to their first experience of mindfulness.

Exercises like this help bring meditation and mindfulness to the youngsters. Research has shown the tremendous benefits of such practices; some even suggest that they give new focus and clarity to children with attention deficit disorders. Anyone who lives and works with children has access to these simple, fun and appealing techniques. Anyone can start with a cup of hot chocolate and nudge a child down the wonderful road to mindfulness and meditation.

Nicole Bettis is a therapist, researcher, consultant and visual artist turned Montessori teacher. She has two children and teaches art and English lessons in her spare time. She has been a practicing Buddhist for many years.



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— Paramahansa Yogananda



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yoga for an open heart

by Sheila Ewers

“There is a place in the heart where everything meets. Go there if you want to find me. Mind, senses, soul, eternity, all are there. Are you there?”
— RADIANCE SUTRAS —
Lorin Roche, Ph.D.

Has your yoga teacher ever asked you to “open your heart”? If you take yoga classes long enough, the phrase will find its way to you. But what does it mean?

Yoga teachings view the body as a vehicle for deepening awareness and spiritual energy with the heart at the center. Located in the middle of the seven chakras, the heart chakra, *anahata*, bridges all that is physical with all that is spiritual. When we open the terrain of the heart through yoga, we open spiritually and energetically, inviting compassion, empathy and love to grow ever more expansive. We increase our capacity to give and receive love without condition.

The word “anahata” means “unstruck,” and, like many Sanskrit words, its definition relates to sound. *Anahata nad* refers to the sound of the celestial realm, the unstruck sound, or the beat of a drum that needs no drummer. The ancients taught that a healthy

heart chakra carries its own beat and conveys the pure vibration of consciousness itself to those who attune the body and mind. Like the unstruck sound, the heart has no need for an external impulse.

While sages and saints have understood the powerful energy of the heart for thousands of years, modern science has only recently begun to understand its impact on overall wellness. The Institute of HeartMath in Boulder Colorado has studied the influence of the heart on the brain and body since 1991. According to their findings, the human heart is thousands of times more powerful and influential than the brain in sending signals to the rest of the body. It communicates using hormones, the nervous system, and an electromagnetic field that can radiate up to 15 feet beyond the body. Coherence in the heart, indicated by measurable factors such as heart rate variability, is correlated with increases in satisfaction, appreciation, gratitude and empathy.

As modern medicine learns to measure a healthy physical and emotional heart, Buddhism has long identified four spiritual aspects of a loving heart. The *Brahma Viharas* include lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. When these qualities are strong, it is easier to keep love at the forefront of one’s experience, no matter how challenging it is. With lovingkindness in the heart, we learn how to maintain goodwill

for those who are hostile, to have compassion for those who are suffering, to experience unselfish joy when celebrating others and to feel an equanimous love for those we cannot help.

Tools to Cultivate an Open Heart

The *Brahma Viharas* become more stable when one commits to opening the heart through the yoga tools of pranayama, asana, chanting and meditation.

PRANAYAMA | Pranayama, or conscious breathwork, can improve mobility in the rib cage, stretch the soft tissues and muscles that mobilize the thoracic cavity and open the heart space from the inside out. When one is stressed or frightened, the body activates the sympathetic nervous system and creates shallow, erratic breathing patterns in the body that constrict the muscles of the ribs and abdomen and limit the mobility of the diaphragm. The deep, diaphragmatic breath of *Dirgha Pranayama* can reverse these holding patterns and create a more open and receptive landscape in the heart center.

Practicing *Dirgha Pranayama*

Sit with your spine erect or lie down on your back. Begin taking long, slow, deep breaths through your nose.

As you inhale, breathe deeply into your lower lungs expanding the belly, broaden through the rib cage as you encourage the breath into the mid-chest, then draw the breath into the upper chest and collar bones. As you exhale, feel a descending energy, and allow your belly to deflate, drawing the naval gently toward the spine. Repeat several times, keeping your breath smooth and relaxed, without strain.

ASANA | Any pose in yoga that creates greater space and mobility in the chest and ribs can fortify the terrain for an open heart and balance *anahata*. Our modern lifestyles keep us hunching over computers, steering wheels and desks most of the day, collapsing the chest and hardening the space between the shoulder blades behind the heart. This keeps the heart barricaded and physically withdrawn from the world around us. Add to that the inevitable heartbreak, betrayal and grief that most of us experience, and



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the heart can become habitually guarded. Heart-opening poses can teach us how to balance vulnerability with equanimity, soften physical tension in the muscles around the heart and release blocked emotions.

Practicing Camel Pose

Begin on your knees with your legs hip-width apart. Place your palms on your sacrum. Without compressing your lower back, lean into the support of your hands. If you have the mobility, move into the full pose by reaching your hands to your heels. Reach the center of your chest toward the sky. Bring the hips forward to line up over the knees and reach the tailbone down. Keep length through the front and back of the neck to avoid compression in the cervical spine.

Remain in the pose for a few deep breaths. Release by engaging through your abdominals to bring your body gently back to a kneeling position, then sit back on the heels for a few breaths until the sensation dissolves.

CHANTING | The vocal cords are connected to the vagus nerve and the muscles at the back of the throat. Singing, humming, and chanting can activate these muscles and stimulate one’s vagus nerve, which in turn activates the relaxation response in the body and increases optimal heart-rate variability. Ancient yoga texts teach that each chakra has a “seed sound” that encapsulates the entire essence of the chakra. The sound for *anahata* is “yam.” Chanting “yam” works like a tuning fork resonating the heart to its optimal vibration.

To practice, sit tall with a long, straight spine and broad collar bones. Bring awareness to the heart center and close or soften the eyes. Chant the sound “yam” to

vibrate awareness through the chest and throat. Traditionally, practitioners repeat the chant for 108 rounds, but even a few moments can create a powerful shift in sensation and awareness.

MEDITATION | Imbalances in the emotional energy of the heart often stem from attachment to past grievances, old stories and fractured relationships. Meditation can strengthen the witnessing faculty of the mind to see beneath the surface and into the inner realm that remains intact and “unstruck” no matter our experience. *Metta Meditation* is a lovingkindness meditation that can create a boundless feeling of infinite lovingkindness directed towards oneself and others.

Practicing *Metta Meditation*

Sit comfortably and bring awareness to the breath, allowing it to find a natural, easy rhythm. Call to mind all that you know and understand about yourself, physically, emotionally and spiritually and say the following words to yourself, taking time to feel an outpouring of warmth and goodwill:

*May you be happy and free from suffering.
May you be healthy in mind and body.
May your path unfold with ease and grace.*

Next, imagine someone you care about and call to mind all that you know and understand about them. Repeat the words above. Continue to broaden your awareness, offering *Metta* to each person or group of people as they come to mind. Challenge yourself to extend that awareness even to those with whom you have conflict or difficulty. Notice any feelings that arise through the practice without rejecting or judging any of them. Over time, feelings of warmth and compassion will begin to overcome any resistance that appears.



Founder of *Johns Creek Yoga and Duluth Yoga Center*, Sheila Ewers leads yoga and yoga teacher training classes and hosts retreats locally and internationally. She has been published online in *Elephant Journal* and *Writers Resist*. Reach her at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.



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YOGA ROUNDUP

Three Yoga Studios

Go Beyond the Mat

by Sheila Ewers

Over the last couple of years, a new trend in yoga studios has emerged. Rather than limiting themselves to traditional mat classes—which have served as the lifeblood of the yoga industry for decades—several centers around metro Atlanta have built a portfolio of services to serve a broader spectrum of wellness needs for their clients. Three studios in particular—A Mindful Movement, Meraki Mama Collective and Grey Owl Mind Body—go beyond traditional yoga classes to help build wholeness in body, mind and spirit, offering a more unified journey to complete wellness.

A Mindful Movement

In April, A Mindful Movement, located in Roswell's Sweet Apple Village, opened under the leadership of owner Michele Colburn. Trained in Ayurveda, Kundalini yoga, meditation and more, Michele's personal journey took her all over the world and acquainted her with a broad variety of healing modalities that she now offers at the studio.

Within 3,700 square feet, A Mindful Movement houses two yoga studios, two healing treatment rooms, space for cryotherapy, a float tank and a hyperbaric chamber. Colburn's vision is to be a space for anyone to begin a journey of healing, free of judgement.

Monthly memberships cover an array of yoga classes from traditional hatha to world-dance-infused Buti. Other services include Ayurvedic and nutritional counseling, bodywork treatments, meditation, breathwork and family yoga events. A chiropractor, holistic psychologist and functional medicine practitioner also offer services on site. For more information about the studio, visit AMindfulMovement.yoga or email Connect@AMindfulMovement.yoga.



(Photo: Kevin Smith)



(Photo: Prime Phocus Photography)

Meraki Mama Collective

In June 2018, studio owner Lauren Shields debuted an innovative concept. Her new studio, Meraki Mama Collective, located at 408 Atlanta Street, Suite 155, in Roswell, offers a space to support and empower women as they transition through pregnancy to birth and into the first few postpartum months. Inspired by her own pregnancies, Lauren saw a need for safe and effective fitness training during the childbearing period as well as the value of a supportive, nurturing community for new mothers. Meraki Mama provides a vehicle for both.

The studio offers classes in pre- and postnatal flow, foundations and restorative yoga as well as classes in the Meraki Method, which fuses Pilates, yoga, aerobics and dance to build overall fitness and health.

Shields is dedicated to creating a radical shift in the way women are cared for in the fitness and wellness community. Beyond group classes, Meraki Mama offers pregnancy coaching, birth preparation classes, doula services, lactation coaching, massage therapy, Reiki and more. Babies are welcome in all classes, and postpartum women are encouraged to take breaks to breastfeed or tend to their children's needs. Women support and encourage each other, establishing bonds to carry them through the transition to parenting, and teachers and service providers are trained to cherish the sacred



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and changing terrain of women's bodies as they adapt to carrying new life. For more information about the studio, visit MerakiMamaCollective.com or email MerakiMamaCollective@gmail.com.

Grey Owl Mind Body

Grey Owl Mind Body Studio opened in June 2017 in Johns Creek. Owner Ariella Dominguez conceived the space as a place for practice, education, healing and community. Grey Owl offers a full schedule of traditional yoga classes like vinyasa, yin and restorative but goes beyond the tradition with aerial yoga, meditation, dance, sound journeys and Qi Gong classes. Its wellness offerings include Thai yoga bodywork and energy healing.

But what sets Grey Owl apart is its emphasis on community. The studio offers a few free events, including its ongoing 10-week book club, and active members can book time in the Zen Meditation room. The studio's website features healthy recipes from instructors and "Teacher Tuesday" video interviews of the Grey Owl instructors. The studio aims to cultivate connection and encourages all students to feel welcomed and valued. For more information, visit GreyOwlMB.com or email info@GreyOwlMB.com.



(Photo: Sass & Frass Photography)

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Linda Carroll on Skills That Make Love Last

by Kajsa Nickels

Psychotherapist Linda Carroll was drawn into the dynamics of couples' counseling three decades ago when she saw how in her own marriage, petty disagreements could turn into full-blown arguments with the potential for deep wounds. She and her husband Tim worked on their issues by attending workshops across the country, including Imago



photo by Le Studio NYC

therapy and PAIRS (Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills), which were so effective that she developed a curriculum called Love Skills by combining those tools, her experience as a married person and counselor, personal training from consciousness pioneers and resources from ancient mythology and spiritual/religious traditions.

She has co-taught the course with her husband for more than 25 years. Her first book, *Love Cycles: The Five Essential Stages of Everlasting Love*, has been translated into several languages and details stages in romantic relationships. Her new book, *Love Skills: The Key to Unlocking Lasting, Wholehearted Love*, is a guide to developing a relationship toolkit.

What is the Love Cycles model?

It is based on the fact that feelings of love are seasonal. Like the seasons of the year, they are a natural progression of a relationship. If you understand the seasons, you can pass through them. All relationships are teachers. If we allow

them to teach us, we become free to love deeper and better.

What is the most difficult Love Cycles stage, and why?

Each stage has its own unique challenges. For example, the first stage, the Merge, has a magic to it due to the chemical cocktail that floods your body when in the presence of your significant

other. But this stage can be treacherous in that you can mistake your feelings for evidence that this is the "right" person for you. In the Power Struggle stage, feelings will have worn off and power struggles will start to show up. The third stage is Disillusionment. Differences between both of you really start to show up at this time. The fourth stage is the Decision stage. At this point, many couples find themselves wanting out. The key to making it through this stage is to remember that this, too, shall pass and to commit to working it out. It's important to realize that life is not about getting an A+ at all times. Sometimes, we need to accept that a C- is okay; and if you do need to leave a relationship, it is possible to do it in a wholehearted way at best—at the least, to minimize damage. The fifth stage I call Wholehearted Love, a stage reached only through mindfulness and unconditional love. Because love has changing seasons, a couple will not stop at the fifth stage forever, but getting back to this state will become easier and easier as time goes on.

What was your impetus for writing Love Skills?

I have been teaching the program for 25 years and drew from my almost 40 years as a couples therapist, many trainings all over the country and own life experiences in my relationship with my husband to compile the program. Most couples lack the skills to manage the troubles of life. There is a skill to every aspect of a relationship, especially in communication: listening, speaking, knowing when to speak and when to be silent.

Who is most likely to benefit?

The relationship you have with yourself is a core part of the Love Cycles model. If you do not have a good relationship with yourself, you cannot have a solid and meaningful relationship with another person. This is a couples' book, although it can also be gone through by a single person if the partner is not interested in it. What I tell people is that you can only work on your part. If the other person doesn't want to buy in or isn't wholeheartedly on board—or at least partially willing—there is nothing that you can do about it. You need to be able to be okay and confident in yourself. You cannot change another person, but you can always change yourself.

What is one of the most important pieces of advice you have for couples?

I hope that couples come to realize that feelings of love are like clouds, always changing. A good relationship requires a skill set, which we practice whatever the feelings are. We are not born knowing how to love skillfully, but this skill set can be learned by anyone and will make you able to listen better and appreciate each other more.

Kajsa Nickels is a freelance author who resides in northeastern Pennsylvania. Connect at FidelEterna45@gmail.com.

YOGA EVENTS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Kundalini Yoga: Chant & Numerology – 12:30-3:30pm. Will work with the numerological energies to connect deeply with the Naad (sacred sound current). With Hari Bhavan Kaur. Santosha Studio, 896 Davis Dr, Atlanta. To register: 404-964-4858 or Santosha-Studio.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Yoga for Beginners – 4-6pm. Dekalb County Public Library, 215 Sycamore St, Decatur, GA 30030.

SUNDAY

Feelfloww Yoga & Sound Healing in Nature – 11:33am. Also Mon. 7:07pm. A great way to release any stress that you had to intake during your week. Bring own mat. Plant-based fruit snacks provided. \$7/class. Winn Park, 32 Lafayette Dr NE, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/y6csqjibv.

Family Yoga – 2pm. Introduce your children to the pleasures of fitness with a weekly restorative yoga session. Designed for children 12 and under. Reiki With Love, LLC Healing Sanctuary, 420 McDonough Blvd SE, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/y6qcu40j.

MONDAY

Chair Yoga for Seniors – 11:30am-12:30pm. A gentle form of yoga that improves mental and physical health through an amazing form of adaptive exercise. Whether standing or sitting, postures are supported by a chair. All levels welcome. Donation appreciated. Heron House, 102 Russell Rd, Mountain Park. 404-434-4030. TheHeronHouse.org.

Hatha Yoga – 6-8pm. With Raj Mehta. Gentle stretching and health education. Each week Raj presents information about different herbs. Free. Sevananda Community Room, 467 Moreland Ave NE, Atlanta. 404-681-2831. Sevananda.coop.

Hip Hop Yoga – 6:30-7:30pm. Led by certified yoga teacher Jaimee Ratliff. An inspiring flow for all levels, set to your favorite Hip Hop + R&B tunes. Free. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta. JaimeeRatliff.com.

TUESDAY

Gentle Kemetic Yoga – 10:30am. This all-level yoga class focuses on the breathe and simple stretching and toning techniques to help with relaxation and mobility. 1st class free. Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St, Decatur. Tinyurl.com/r6o7868.

Yoga for Runners and Athletes – 6:30-7:30pm. Not held 1st Tues. With Morgan Bettini. Class gives you specific cross training that creates more strength, flexibility, mobility and mental stamina. All levels welcome. \$6/class. The Center for Love and Light, 1145 Zonolite Rd, Ste 10, Atlanta. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

WEDNESDAY

Free Yoga & Mindfulness Class – 12-1pm. Introduction to mindfulness and how to apply it to daily life in order to live with greater freedom and happiness. Includes discussion, a gentle yoga practice and a formal mindfulness practice. 5575 New Northside Dr, Ste 100, Atlanta. SatiYogaAtl@gmail.com. SatiYoga.net.

FRIDAY

The {SAMA} Class – 9-9:45am. Also held, Sat, 10am. Community class with yoga, breathwork and meditation. {SAMA} Food for Balance, 56 E Andrews Dr, Ste 17, Atlanta. 404-500-3550. SamaFoodForBalance.com.

Community Class – 4:30-5:30pm. Enjoy a vinyasa flow or power class. Format determined by the teacher. Benefits Holbrook Farms Retreat for Survivors of Heros. \$5 donation. LiveURYoga, 408 S Atlanta St, Ste 157, Roswell. 770-299-1639. LiveURYoga.com.

Community Kirtan – 8-10pm. Last Fri. Open mic/informal format, where you take turns in sharing

songs and chants. Free; donations accepted. Form Yoga, 533 W Howard Ave, Unit C2, Decatur. Pre-register: FormYoga.com.

SATURDAY

Sunrise Yoga Meditation – 7-8am. Simple mantras, gentle asanas, pranayama and guided meditation. Love offering. Unity North Atlanta, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. 678-819-9100. UnityNorth.org.

Free Yoga – 8:30-10am. Yoga and pranayama (breathing) for all levels and ages. Greater Atlanta Vedic Temple, 492 Harmony Grove Rd, Lilburn. 770-381-3662. VedicTemple.org.

West End Community Yoga – 11am-12pm. The views from the Garden room are dreamy and set the stage for a great practice. Free. Wild Heaven West End Brewery & Gardens, 1010 White St SW, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/squpgru.

Aerial Yoga: All Levels – 1:45-2:45pm. No experience needed. Stretch, swing, invert, build strength, learn about yourself while supported or suspended in a hammock. \$19/1st-time drop-in. Truth In Motion Yoga, 9950 Jones Bridge Rd, Ste 1000, Johns Creek. 404-789-9526. TruthInMotionYoga@gmail.com. TruthInMotionYoga.com.

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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 \$10 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.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A dynamic process that serves the world and is a hothouse of spiritual growth for participants. Sponsored by Share International USA Southeast Region. Free. Phoenix & Dragon Annex, Clifford Steele Building, 5505 Roswell Rd, Atlanta. 404-680-7423. Info-se@share-international.us. Share-International.us/se/upcoming_events.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Rhythm of Love: Couples Meditation – 6:30-8:30pm. Couples meditation to help strengthen the relationship and release negative energy. \$10/person. Your CBD Store, 5975 Roswell Rd, Ste 355, Sandy Springs. 404-583-0330. YourCBDStoreAtl@gmail.com. YourCBDStore.com.

Introduction to Inner Engineering – 6:30-7:30pm. Inner Engineering is a course that provides tools and solutions to empower yourself to create the life you want. This free introduction is part of a 4-day program. Hilton Garden Inn, 4025 Windward Plaza Drive, Alpharetta, GA 30005.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Integrated Restoration Technique: A Cervical, Cranial & Sacral Mobilization Workshop – Feb 15-16. 9am-5pm. Learn how to assess and apply specific corrective techniques for both the sacrum and cervical spine. Also, learn cranial vault mobilization techniques that help normalize the tone of the intracranial fascia. Heal Center Atlanta, 270 Carpenter Dr, Ste 500, Sandy Springs. 404-307-0004. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Habitat Hike – Feb 17-21. 11am-12pm. CNC docents will lead a bonus hike each day during Winter Break. These habitat hikes will challenge your preconceived ideas of what a habitat is. Included with General Admission, free/member. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Register: 770-992-2055 or ChattNatureCenter.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

2020 Flower Show: Expressions – Feb 21-23. Highlights the beauty of floral design, photography, landscaping and Ikebana. Atlanta Botanical Garden, 1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta. Atlantabg.org.

Traditional Thai Reflexology – Feb 21-23. 9am-5pm. Thai foot reflexology is a marriage between the ancient healing arts of reflexology, Chinese tuina, Japanese shiatsu and Indian ayurvedic yoga. Heal Center Atlanta, 270 Carpenter Dr, Ste 500, Sandy Springs. 404-307-0004. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

TRANSMISSION MEDITATION

7:30pm. A dynamic process that serves the world and is a hothouse of spiritual growth for participants. Sponsored by Share International USA Southeast Region. Free.

Friends House
701 W Howard Ave, Decatur.
404-680-7423.
Info-se@share-international.us.
Share-International.us/se/upcoming_events.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

GOAL Getters Health & Wealth Network – 5-10pm. Kick Start 2020 saying yes to new opportunities and a fresh outlook on your health and finances. Free. Ted Strickland Community Center, 130 MLK Senior Heritage Trail, Stockbridge. Elizabeth Sanders: 470-332-9942. Tinyurl.com/tu6xzp2.

The Nature Club Dine and Discover – 7-9pm. Paddle Georgia with Joe Cook. \$10/general public, \$5/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. 770-992-2055. More info: ChattNatureCenter.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Blood Mountain Day Hike – 9:30am-3pm. Georgia Conservancy will rally up at the Mountain Crossing at Neel's Gap at 9:30am for last minute provisions before parking a few yards away at the Byron Reece Trailhead. From there we will begin the 5-mile out-and-back morning hike along the Byron Reece Trail and Appalachian Trail to the summit of Blood Mountain. \$15 donation. Meet at Mountain Crossing at Neels Gap, 12471 Gainesville Hwy, Blairsville. More info: GeorgiaConservancy.org.

Message of Hope – 2pm. If you believe in justice, equality and peace, we invite you to join us for a “Message of Hope,” an engaging DVD featuring the late Benjamin Creme as he discusses the brilliant future just ahead. We can do so much more together. Kirkwood Library, 11 Kirkwood Rd NE, Atlanta. 404-680-7423. Info-se@share-international.us. Share-International.us/se/upcoming_events.

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Scott Hall Channels AV: The Loving Extraterrestrial – Feb 1. 7:30-9pm. AV: (sounds like “save”) is a loving extraterrestrial who speaks through Scott imparting his wisdom about our connection with love. AV: will give opening remarks before answering your personal questions. \$25.

Reiki Level 2 – Feb 22. 9am-4pm. With Jamie Butler. Prerequisite: Reiki Level 1. Reiki level 2 focuses on distance healing. Receive an individual Reiki Level 2 attunement as well as a certificate of completion. \$275.

Recovery and Reconciliation – Feb 26. 6:30-8:30pm. With Corey Dobyns,

LMT. Group experience held within a trauma-informed awareness. Through a series of reflection, practice and dialogue explore ways to work through the feelings of isolation and into an expanded connection with ourselves and the people around us. A closed group for people in addiction/alcoholism recovery with 1 yr or more of sobriety. \$450.

ONGOING EVENTS

sundays

R.A.W (Ready, Able, Willing) Life Yoga - 9-10:45am. With Basu Amir. Tassili's Raw Reality at I Am Ascension Temple of Love (upstairs), 1059 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd, Atlanta. 678-683-2513. Instagram. com/r.a.w.life?igshid=srxft2ttztrrh.

Sunday Experience - 9:30am, Adult Study; 10:10am, Meditation; 10:30am, Service. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Ste A, Atlanta. 404-417-0008. slc-atlanta.org.

A Course in Miracles - 9:30-11am. This informal class consists of prayer, text reading, discussion, an ACIM daily lesson and mutual support. With Nina Vance. Love offering. Unity North Atlanta, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. 678-819-9100. UnityNorth.org.

Meditation Service - 10am. See website for complete list of services and events. Atlanta Meditation Center of Self-Realization Fellowship, 4000 King Springs Rd SE, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. SRFAtlanta.org.

Meditation Instruction - 10-11:30am. Free instruction for newcomers and practitioners at our Open House. Free childcare. Shambhala Meditation Center of Atlanta, 1447 Church St, Decatur. 404-370-9650. Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Sunday Meditation, Talk and Fellowship - 10:30-11am, personal, silent meditation. All are welcome to meditate or sit quietly. 11am-12pm, talks followed by Q&A and discussion. 12-1:30pm, tea, coffee, snacks, fellowship. Vedanta Center of Atlanta, 2331 Brockett Rd, Tucker. 770-938-6673. VedantaAtlanta.org.

Meditation Class: Sandy Springs - 10:30-11:45am. We begin each class with a short meditation, followed by a practical teaching, and end with a brief meditation based on the teaching to help integrate it into our daily lives. \$12. Loving Hut Vegan Cuisine, 220 Hammond Dr NE, Ste 302, Sandy Springs. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Circle of Sacred Earth - 11-12 noon. Every Sunday except the first. A sacred gathering of sharing from the heart. The experience begins with a leader speaking on a spiritual topic then opening the floor for response. Heron House, 102 Russell Rd, Mountain Park, GA 30075.

One World Spiritual Center: Celebrating One World, One Heart Sunday Service - 11am. Held at the Open Mind Center, 1575 Old Alabama Rd, Ste 213, Roswell. 678-214-6938. OneWorldSpiritualCenter.net.

Reading Service - 11am. See website for a complete list of services and events. Atlanta Meditation Center of Self-Realization Fellowship, 4000 King Springs Rd SE, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. SRFAtlanta.org.

Shamanic Journey Meditation - 11am-12:30pm. First Sunday of every month. Experience Shamanic Journey as pathway to inner peace, healing and wisdom. Drums and rattles welcomed. Hosted by Gailie Spirit Weaver. Love donation. The Heron House, 102 Russell Rd, Mountain Park. For more info, RSVP & check schedule: Meetup.com/ShamanicJourney.

Free Meditation & Self-Reflection Workshop - 11:30am-12:30pm. Experience bliss and tranquility, and learn about the essence of meditation, basic posture, breathing meditation and the basics of self-reflection. Free. Happy Science Meditation Center. 1874 Piedmont Ave, Ste 360-C, Atlanta. 404-892-7770. Atlanta.HappyScience-NA.org.

Health & Success Seminars - 1:30-2:45pm. Check website for most current times, dates and topics and other weekly programs. Happy Science Atlanta, 1874 Piedmont Ave NE, Ste 360-C, Atlanta. Atlanta.HappyScience-NA.org.

Healing Circle - 2-4pm. 1st Sun. With Vicki Evans. A demonstration of energy healing will be done with a couple of lucky volunteers. Everyone who attends will receive a few minutes of healing and maybe even a word of encouragement and guidance. Antlers and Wings, 245 E Trinity Pl, Ste 1210, Decatur. 404-861-6216. AntlersNWings.com.

Monthly Feminine Energy Empowerment Seminars - 2:15-3:30pm. 4th Sun. Topic changes monthly. Designed with the particular needs of the transformative

woman, these workshops deal with topics pertinent to spiritual empowerment, health and wellness, and living your authentic self. \$15. Hidayah Reiki, 4282 Stone Mountain Hwy, Ste K, Lilburn. 678-438-6442. HidayahReiki.com.

Free Community Meditation Class - 7:30-8pm. A guided mindfulness meditation class led by Namrata. Includes some instruction on mindfulness and concentration techniques, as well as time to practice in silence. Sati Yoga, 5575 New Northside Dr, Ste 100, Sandy Springs. Tinyurl.com/y4uhrYrr.

mondays

Monday Night Ride: Larry's Winter Edition - 6:30pm. 17 miles; 15-17 mph (no drop). A good ride for a Monday, not too slow but isn't a strenuous ride either. No ride if raining. Roswell Bicycles, 670 Houze Way, Roswell. BikeRoswell.com/events.

Monday Night Meditation - 7-8pm. An instructor-led meditation and discussion as we develop our meditation practice by maintaining a moment-to-moment relaxed awareness of our surrounding environment, bodily sensations, thoughts and emotions. All levels. \$10. Open Mind Center, 1575 Old Alabama Rd, Ste 213, Roswell. 678-243-5074. TheOpenMindCenter.com.

One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the 12 Steps - 8-9:30pm. Also Thurs, 7:30-9pm. Meetings start with 10 mins of shamatha meditation. Reading from One Breath at a Time followed by open discussion. Shambhala Meditation Center of Atlanta, 1447 Church St, Decatur. 404-370-9650. Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

tuesdays

Gentle Kemeti Yoga - 10:30am. All-level class focuses on the breathe and simple stretching and toning techniques to help with relaxation and mobility. Class borrows hatha and kemeti style postures and meditations. First class free; \$10/drop-in. Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St, Decatur. Tinyurl.com/r6o7868.

Let's Meditate Atlanta - 12-1pm. Sahaja Yoga meditation sessions are always free. East Roswell Library, 2301 Holcomb Bridge Rd, Roswell. Facebook.com/groups/WeMeditateGroup.

Meditation and Internally Focused Qigong Practice - 6:30-7:30pm. Focus on Taoist meditation practices and qigong (energy practices) to support higher quality meditation and stillness. Decatur Healing Arts, 619 E College Ave, Ste B, Decatur. DecaturHealingArts.com.

Sierra Club Meeting - 7pm, refreshments; 7:30pm, program. 2nd Tues. Georgia Chapter Office, 743 E College Ave, Ste B, Decatur. More info: Georgia.SierraClub.org/Atlanta.

Introductory Presentation on Meditation and Positive Living - 7-9pm. Come and enjoy this most inspiring of topics to reach your highest potential as soul. Free. Life Enrichment Center, 1340 McConnell Dr, Decatur. To register, Dhana: 404-273-5704. Santmat.net.

Let's Meditate Atlanta - 7-8pm. Sahaja Yoga meditation sessions are always free. Mountain View Regional Library Study Room, 3320 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. Facebook.com/groups/WeMeditateGroup.

Meditation on Twin Hearts - 7-8pm. This meditation works on the physical, mental and spiritual levels to open the heart chakra and the crown chakra, thereby enabling you to draw down a great amount of high-quality divine energy into the crown. Donations of \$10 & up accepted. The Center for Love and Light, 1145 Zonolite Rd, Ste 7, Atlanta. WithLoveAndLight.com.

wednesdays

Noon Time Four Stage Meditation - 12:15-12:45pm. With Minister Bob Imai. Check website for most current times, dates and topics and other weekly programs. Happy Science Atlanta, 1874 Piedmont Ave NE, Ste 360-C, Atlanta. Atlanta.HappyScience-na.org.

An Introduction to the Happiness Program - 6:30-7:30pm. We all want happiness but how do we get there? Come find out how in a fun-filled, interactive and informative session. Includes: guided relaxation through the breath; light yoga & stretching; insights into the nature of mind; guided meditation; Q&A session. Free. Art of Living Atlanta Center, 7730 Roswell Rd, Ste 400, Atlanta. ArtOfLiving.org/us-en/atlanta.

Weekly Wednesday Meditation Class - 7-8:30pm. Open to all levels. Experience true inner peace. With the Venerable Nicholas Thannissaro Georgia Meditation Center, 4522 Tilly Mill Rd, Atlanta. MeditationCircle.org.

Spiritual Women Entrepreneurs Network - 7-9pm. Meets the 2nd Wed each month for a Cookies + Connection networking and mastermind event. Soul, Mind, Body, 3115 Piedmont Rd, Ste D102, Atlanta. RSVP: Meetup.com/SpiritualWomenEntrepreneursAtlanta.

Medicine Circle: Healing Chants from the Buddha Dharma - 7:30pm. A community offering for anyone who is in need of healing, or anyone who knows someone who is in need of healing. Free; donations accepted. Candler Park Yoga, 1630-D Dekalb Ave, Atlanta. MantraChant.com/medicine_circle.

Wednesday Night Meditation Service - 7:45-8:30pm. Features guided meditation, chanting, silence and prayer. Unity North Atlanta, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. 678-819-9100. UnityNorth.org.

thursdays

Monthly Park Meeting - 7:30-9am. 2nd Thurs. Park Pride brings together community leaders and park advocates from throughout Atlanta for education, networking and strategy. More info: ParkPride.org.

Light Workers Support Group - 11am-1pm. A support group for beginning and current Light-Workers, Star Seeds, Earth Angels. All practices welcome. Commune with others, share experiences and connect with a conscious community of individuals dedicated to rising the vibration of others. Lake Claire Community Land Trust, 270 Arizona Ave NE, Atlanta. 708-320-942. Thetxlp.com.

Midday Meditation - 12-12:45pm. With Kisha Lee Crawford. Meditation practitioners of all levels welcome. \$10. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. 404-255-5207. PhoenixAndDragon.com.

Orientation to Energywork - 7pm. 1st Thurs. Introduction to channeling and energywork. Bill will explain concepts of channeling, energywork, remote healing, transfer process, and potential benefits of energywork. Free. One block from Midtown Marta Station. To reserve a seat: 404-423-5747. inmatehealingbill@gmail.com. EnergyworkATL.com.

Meditation Practice Group - 7-8pm. 2nd & 4th Thurs. A free program for new and experienced meditators who wish to learn how to meditate or deepen their practice of meditation on the inner light. No experience necessary. All welcome. Sevananda Community Room, 467 Moreland Ave NE, Atlanta. Cindy: 770-363-8935 or Infose@sos.org.

Twin Hearts Meditation - 7:30-8:30pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. Atlanta Pranic Healing Center, 1955 Cliff Valley Way NE, Ste 215, Atlanta. 470-333-2742. AtlPranicHealing.com.

One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the 12 Steps - 7:30-9pm. See Mon listing. Shambhala Meditation Center of Atlanta, 1447 Church St, Decatur. 404-370-9650. Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

fridays

Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting - 8-10am. Decatur City Hall, Conference Rm, 509 N McDonough St, Decatur. Lena Stevens: 404-370-4102 or Lena.Stevens@DecaturGA.com.

saturdays

Bike Roswell Saturday Morning Ride - 9am. Informal, year-round group ride that rolls along 25 miles of the beautiful Roswell Mayors Ride route through Roswell. Riders of all abilities. Roswell Area Park (Front Lot), 10519 Woodstock Rd, Roswell. More info: BikeRoswell.com/events.

Glow of Love Saturdays - 10am. Volunteers wanted. Come rain or shine we will be in attendance gaining knowledge, volunteering our times, and tending to the most precious herb garden. Refreshments and a mini-herb lesson. Free. Grow2Glo Herb Garden, 2215 Browns Mill Rd SE, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/yxtc8g8w.

Free Community Meditation Class - 12:30-1pm. A guided mindfulness meditation class led by Namrata. Includes some instruction on mindfulness and concentration techniques, as well as time to practice in silence. All welcome. Sati Yoga, 5575 New Northside Dr, Ste 100, Sandy Springs. Tinyurl.com/y4uhrYrr.

Serenbe Farms Tour - 2-3pm. Learn how Serenbe Farms uses sustainable practices to grow and harvest more than 300 varieties of heirloom and hybrid vegetables, herbs and flowers. \$10. Serenbe Farms, 8715 Atlanta Newnan Rd, Chattahoochee Hills. Tinyurl.com/y6hm9x1q.



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Free Introduction to Awakening the Illuminated Heart - Feb 8. 4-5pm. With Jason Hunt. Come for an Introduction to the ATIH (Awakening the Illuminated Heart) principles and concepts. Will share information about what the workshop includes, answer questions and experience this work with a short meditation. Free.

Book Signing: The Dragon Mother and the Azure Dragon Rising - Feb 9. 4-6pm. David Hansford, author and illustrator, will bring his intriguing tales of dragons and his remarkable art. Free.

Angelic Heart Meditation - Feb 11. 7-8:30pm. With Philippa Kingsley. The Archangels guide you to receive their Divine Love for all humanity with this special Angelic Heart Meditation which will open your spiritual heart and enable you to experience great healing. \$15.

Share the love not the cold

New device stops cold and flu

Scientists recently discovered a way to kill viruses and bacteria.

Now thousands of people are using it to stop colds and flu.

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

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

That's why ancient Greeks and Egyptians used copper to purify water and heal wounds. They didn't know about microbes, but now we do.

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

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

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

"It worked!" he exclaimed. "The cold never got going." It worked again every

time. He hasn't had a single cold for 7 years since.

He asked relatives and friends to try it. They said it worked for them, too, so he patented CopperZap™ and put it on

the market.

Soon hundreds of people had tried it and given feedback. Nearly 100% said the copper stops colds if used within 3 hours after the first sign. Even up to 2 days, if they

still get the cold it is milder than usual and they feel better.

Users wrote things like, "It stopped my cold right away," and "Is it supposed to work that fast?"

"What a wonderful thing," wrote Physician's Assistant Julie. "No more colds for me!"

Pat McAllister, 70, received one for Christmas and called it "one of the best presents ever. This little jewel really works."

Now thousands of users have simply stopped getting colds.

People often use CopperZap preventively. Frequent flier Karen Gaucci used to get colds after crowded flights. Though skeptical, she tried it several times a day on travel days for 2 months. "Sixteen flights and not a sniffle!" she exclaimed.

Businesswoman Rosaleen says when people are sick around her she uses CopperZap morning and night. "It saved me last holidays," she said. "The kids

had colds going round and round, but not me."

Some users say it also helps with sinuses. Attorney Donna Blight had a 2-day sinus headache. When her CopperZap arrived, she tried it. "I am shocked!" she said. "My head cleared, no more headache, no more congestion."

Some users say copper stops nighttime stuffiness if used just before bed. One man said, "Best sleep I've had in years."

Copper can also stop flu if used early and for several days. Lab technicians placed 25 million live flu viruses on a CopperZap. No viruses were found alive soon after.

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

People have even used copper on cold sores and say it can completely prevent outbreaks.



Dr. Bill Keevil: Copper quickly kills cold viruses. Copper even kills deadly germs that have become resistant to antibiotics. If you are near sick people, a moment of handling it may keep serious infection away. It may even save a life.

The EPA says copper still works even when tarnished. It kills hundreds of different disease germs so it can prevent serious or even fatal illness.

CopperZap is made in America of pure copper. It has a 90-day full money back guarantee. It is \$69.95.

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New research: Copper stops colds if used early.

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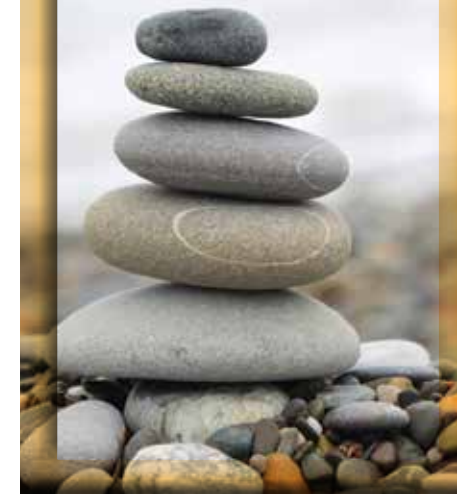
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Among the first few sentences of Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, she writes, "...Mother, Father, Dick and Jane live in the green and white house. They are very happy..."

The book centers around a little black girl's desire to wake up with blue eyes. And with repetition of those simple opening words, Morrison drives it home, that is, *whiteness*, and its implications for the rest of us. Each time I read this childlike verse, my heart reacts to the inescapable truth that whiteness is what all of us should aspire to.

"Should"—but won't.

Just five years before Morrison's book was published, *this* little black girl came into the world. A squealing newborn, my parents oohed and ahed over me. But those first few inhalations and exhalations of fresh air would be the last ones I would take so freely. From that day forward, they would be forever labored, dragged down by the weight of my history, as my parents feared giving me too much hope in the white world that Morrison wrote about.

My father wasted no time telling me about the intrinsic inferiority that would come with my skin. With a twisted grin, he said endlessly, "Remember, you'll have to work twice as hard as white people to be seen as half as good!" Every chance they got, they reminded me of the inevitable doom that comes with this skin. I soon learned that the weight of history drags us *all* down, one way or another. Bearing shame, regret and pain is not for the weak. It is the human condition.

My father's words seeped into my cells and shifted the way I see myself and the world. I grew to overwork, overdo and overcompensate *just* to overcome. Just to earn my keep. Proving that I am "just as good as" became an exhausting and never-ending charge. I now spend a lot of time in the mirror—coming to terms with *myself*.

While the world refuses to let me claim my own beauty, I am grateful for my dark eyes that never aspired to lighten. I adore my proud protruding cheekbones and bountiful lips from which my words tumble. I applaud my resilient curls, twisted and locked into

emancipated tendrils. These same embattled locks that are at the same time admired, appropriated and made unlawful in the workplace.

Until now. There's been a seismic shift in the "white" earth. My sisters will no longer be forced to wear someone else's hair just to feed their children. The right to wear one's natural African American hair in the workplace is now legally protected in some states. The Universe finally gets it: *authenticity is a right, not a privilege.*

People of color live with the existential struggle to dwell comfortably within their own skin. Our features, hair textures, dialects, religiosity, humor and cultural dynamics are not always able or willing to blend. And, for that, we remain indicted. It is my hope that people not "of color" see that our deep yearning to change ourselves remains a universal conundrum. Our relentless unhappiness with ourselves continues to wrap us in fakery.

Regardless of what our parents may have told us about who we might become, without knowing, the message sank in, and the results are an angry world. Feeling inferior is a human trait. For people of color, people on the fringes, the disabled, the non-binary—anyone "less-than-white"—feeling inferior is the air we breathe.

As a mother of a 17-year-old black male, I bear the weight of fearful and ferocious love. My son says I fight him; if he only knew how I fight *for* him. My heart is plump with the hurts, love and expectation that define sacred otherness.

As an offspring of pain, I am endowed with Herculean strength, wisdom and grit to fight for what my heart desires, amidst a quiet roar of non-agreement. My humbled parents anointed my life with blessings and truth. My true beauty is the strength it takes to see it.



Author and coach Kim Green created Blank Page Consulting to work with clients who are ready for transformation in their writing or their lives. Reach her at

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AYURVEDA TIP OF THE MONTH

How To Balance Augmenting and Extractive Foods

Ayurveda brings balance, which is why the concept of augmenting and extractive foods is a powerful guide to preparing meals.

Augmenting foods nourish and ground. They build tissue and replenish what is lost. They are generally sweeter, e.g. rice, carrots, pumpkin and avocado. Augmenting foods gives us vitality and energy.

Extractive foods cleanse. They help digestion and are essential in breaking down healthy fats. They are often bitter or astringent, e.g. kale, collards, legumes and nuts.

Here's a template that helps your body maintain proper, balanced function. Include four items in each meal and use the 60:40 ratio as follows.

- Grain (augmenting): 30%
- Sweet vegetable (augmenting): 30%
- Legume (extractive): 20%
- Bitter or astringent vegetable (extractive): 20%

Don't get caught up with exact percentages; use your intuition. Your body, mind and creative energies will flourish when you do!

- Contributed by Smita Daya, Ayurvedic Chef & Consultant, The Swag Monk

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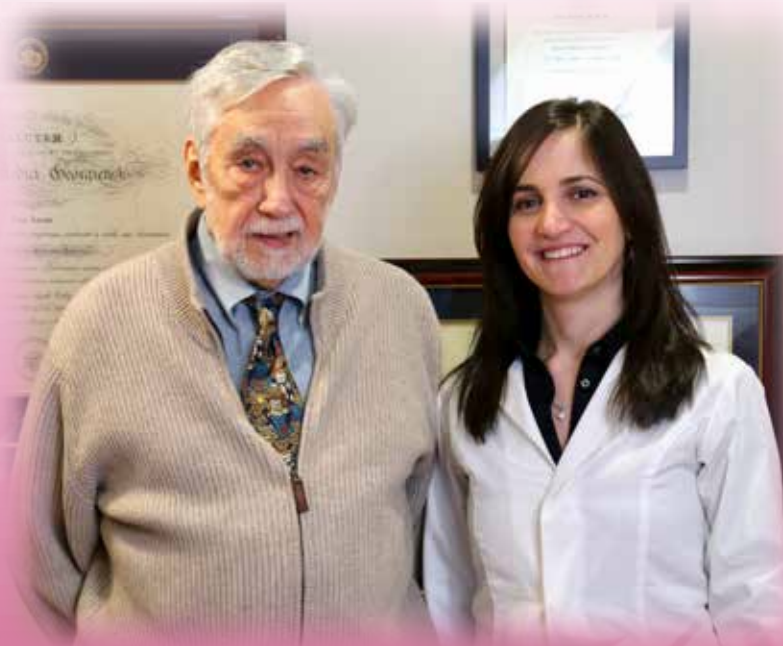
The Six Taste Food Philosophy of Ayurveda – 1-4pm. While most diets focus upon good vs. bad, Ayurveda understands the six tastes we can perceive and the role each plays in our whole being. Come explore in a fun and informative workshop! {SAMA} Food for Balance, 56 E Andrews Dr NW Suite 17, Atlanta, GA 30305.

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