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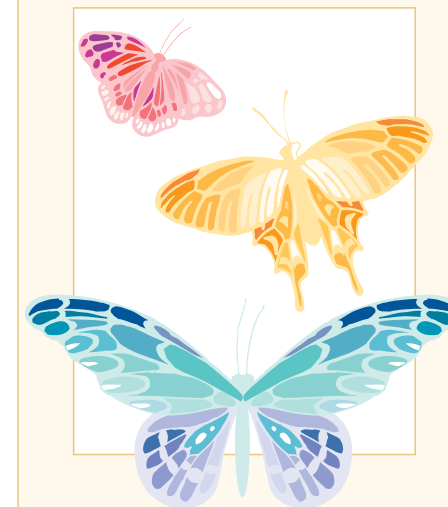
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# Contents



12

NUTS 'N BERRIES  
AT 40



14

NATURAL  
ANTIVIRALS



SPECIAL SECTION | YOGA

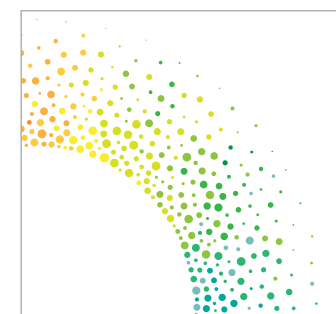
20

OUT OF THE  
STUDIO AND INTO  
THE WORLD



24

ACTIVATE YOUR  
INNER WARRIOR



32

THE HEALING  
POWER OF WRITING  
OUR STORIES

## 18 EMOTIONAL WELL BEING IN THE PANDEMIC AGE

### DEPARTMENTS

- 10 ATLANTA BRIEFS
- 12 BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT
- 14 HEALING WAYS
- 20 YOGA
- 32 WISE WORDS
- 34 CALENDAR
- 36 COMMUNITY DIRECTORY
- 38 WALKING EACH OTHER HOME



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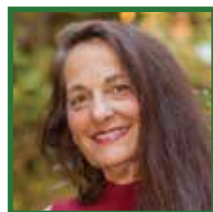
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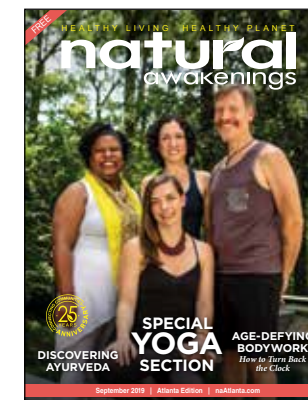
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Following on the heels of our three-part series on the Enneagram, reporter Noah Chen speaks with three women on the impact of the Enneagram on their lives.

It has had such a positive impact on two of the three that they now consult and teach on the Enneagram.

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INDEX OF DISPLAY ADVERTISERS

Abundant Living Wellness Center .....28

Bella Moda Yoga .....26

Be True Studios .....26

Blank Page Consulting.....06

Cann Dentistry .....03

Center for Spiritual Awareness .....28

Elizabeth Yates Yoga.....26

Elohee Center.....17

Flip Your Dog Yoga .....26

Heal Center.....29

Healworks.....02

KnowWEwell .....31

LifeWave .....04

MOON Organics.....38

Naturally Healthy.....06

Nature's Rite.....30

Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore .....16

Rose Dental .....40

{SAMA} Food for Balance .....29

Seeds of Wellness .....17

Self Realization Fellowship.....06

Sevananda.....15

Shannon O'Flaherty.....33

Share International, Southeast .....39

SocioMindful Wellness .....26

Woodstock Salt Cave .....06

Writing Doctor .....14

**CORRECTION:** The email of Priya Verma was incorrect in the August article Healing Trauma Through Yoga. The correct address is: [vermaps@sandalwoodyoga.com](mailto:vermaps@sandalwoodyoga.com).

Natural Awakenings is a family of more than 70 healthy living magazines celebrating 25 years of providing the communities we serve with the tools and resources we all need to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

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The Cover Photo

Our cover subjects are from our lead article *Out of the Studio and Into The World*: Amelia Reiser of Centering Youth, Rutu Chaudhary of The Dharma Project and Treneisha Patton of Little Brown Yogis and Ladybug for Girls Foundation.

Location: Tanyard Creek Park at 73 28th St NW, Atlanta, GA 30309.

Lending his creative talent to his fourth cover for us is Jason Dennard, above, who also took the individual photos of each of the women that appear elsewhere in this issue. Check him out at [jasondennard.com](http://jasondennard.com) and [@jasondennardphoto](https://www.instagram.com/jasondennardphoto).

In addition, special thanks to Loyall Hart for his generous support of this publication.

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yoga studios

WHAT WE STAND TO LOSE

This month's special section about yoga is the fourth time we've dedicated a section to the topic, and, in fact, marks three complete years of yoga content in every single issue. I always relish the coming of the yoga special section, including the planning, the execution and the fun of featuring local yogis on our cover.

But, as with all else 2020, this year's edition comes under dark and ominous clouds.

Yesterday, I received one studio's newsletter. This paragraph was a punch in the gut:

"Time to get real REAL. We need you. In fact, we need you now more than ever. Have we mentioned that whole 'needing you' thing? Good. We want no surprises if/when we have to shut our doors for good."

It was particularly painful because this studio is owned by a friend. "Our monthly revenue waivers between 20 to 30% of our pre-COVID numbers," she wrote. "We will not make it through without additional support from our community. That is a hard fact."

Atlanta has already lost a number of studios, including Duluth Yoga, one of the two studios owned by Sheila Ewers, our yoga editor. I spoke with her today to gain a sense of mood in the community of

studio owners. The first word out of her mouth: "Despair."

"It's really hard," says Sheila. "Most of us make almost nothing anyway. We do it out of love because we adore our communities and believe in the practice. It's virtually impossible to make it at 25% capacity. And there's no end in sight."

Readers of our yoga section know that our articles are more about the practice of yoga off the mat than on. When I tell people that *Natural Awakenings* is Atlanta's premiere publication focused on natural health and personal evolution, what is unspoken is that our yoga section is the foundation of our personal evolution content.

When a yoga studio closes, we don't just lose another beloved neighborhood business, we lose a center for light, love and service. We don't just lose a place where community gathers, we lose the incalculable support of a peopled environment that is a reflection of our higher selves. Where yoga practitioners gather, the yogic impulse is intensified, so, when a yoga studio closes, we don't just simply move on to the next one as we might look for the next gas station. Finding a *simpatico* yoga studio is more like finding the right church.

"The beauty of most yoga studios is that they show up authentically, pursuing

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

something nourishing, something spiritual," says Sheila. In that way, studio communities are more like *sanghas*, the Buddhist spiritual communities of ordained persons and laypeople.

Sangha is one of Buddhism's "Three Jewels," which Buddhists are exhorted to take refuge in—meaning, spiritual safety can be found within them. Part of my personal version of going for refuge is: "I go for refuge to sangha, my traveling companions, whose virtuous intentions and actions inspire, enable and support me on my own road to liberation."

I am sure that Atlanta's thousands of yoga practitioners are concerned about the future of their favorite studios and that many are attending classes, in person or remotely, maintaining monthly memberships and buying class cards or gift certificates well in advance of use. I am sure that many of you are supporting studios in other ways; Sheila says that some students are making very generous donations. And I am sure that given the extraordinary times we find ourselves in, many of you are maxed out on what you're able to do.

My purpose here is to simply point out that when a yoga studio closes, what we really lose is sangha, a mirror of our higher selves, a group of spiritual friends who help you grow, advance, evolve. If yoga changes lives, and it most certainly does, then sangha is your inspiration and your accountability partner.

There is little in this world that is more precious and sacred than sangha. If you're able to do just a little more for your home studio, please consider doing so. And, at Sheila's suggestion, perhaps reach out to your studio's owner or manager. You never know how helpful you can be. 🙏



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.



# ADVANCED MEDICAL

## Adds Shock Wave Therapy to Services Lineup

Advanced Medical and Chiropractic Services, in Doraville, has added Extra Corporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) to its service offerings to treat a wide range of skeletal and muscular issues. ESWT uses the power generated from acoustic sound waves and radial shockwaves to stimulate the growth of new blood vessels. The process helps to form new blood capillaries, which can increase much-needed blood flow to damaged regions of the body. “Research shows the system provides significant improvement for those suffering from arthritis, low back pain,

tennis elbow, shoulder pain, and the like,” says Dr. Hubert Pare, M.D., the clinic’s medical director. “The technology is sound, treatments are short and results are remarkable. I am thrilled with this non-drug, non-invasive solution.” For a limited time, Advanced Medical is offering a complimentary ESWT treatment to anyone who qualifies. “Blood flow to the damaged area is crucial for healthy joints, muscles and tendons,” says Pare. “People with poor blood flow have a difficult time getting their body to heal itself. By increasing vascularity to the damaged area, and

thereby blood flow, healing processes prove to be quicker and longer-lasting.” Advanced Medical and Chiropractic offers a range of healing modalities, including chiropractic services, naturopathic services, homeopathic treatment, Prolozone therapy, ozone therapy and others and creates customized treatment programs to best suit its patients’ needs. *AMCS is located at 6035 Peachtree Road, Suite C209, in Doraville. For more information, visit [amncs.com](http://amncs.com), call 470-799-2384 or email [ndhanani@amncs.com](mailto:ndhanani@amncs.com).*



Left Photo: Dr. Hubert Pare, MD, Dr. Mike Greenberg, Nadya Dhanani, CCH, and Dr. Paul Dabney, NMD of Advanced Medical. Middle Photo: Dr. Greenberg. Right Photo: Dr. Pare administering Shock Wave Therapy. (Photos: Mehak Khimani)

# MOON ORGANICS

## Goes with Zero-Waste Packaging

Moon Organics, an Atlanta-based company offering organic, botanical skincare products and related services, is now delivering its popular natural deodorant product in 100% compostable and biodegradable packaging. All of the packaging—including the label—will completely break down into its natural elements, leaving no toxicity in the soil and zero waste. In addition, the volume of the product remains the same as conventional plastic deodorants; it appears smaller only because plastic tubes typically take up 40% more empty space. “As a breast cancer survivor, I want to make sure that the packaging that contains my products is as safe and healthy for the planet as they are for your body,” says Susan Gonzalez, MOON’s owner and creator. “I still offer a 100% money-back guarantee on every product I sell.” Plastic deodorant packaging can be wasteful and damaging to the environment because it is made with several types of plastic. “No one takes the time to dismantle the deodorant tube to recycle properly,” says Gonzalez, “and plastic recycling requires energy.” The deodorant is made with organic ingredients and essential oils, contains no parabens or aluminum, and comes in “clean scent” and “earth scent” varieties. It sells for \$12 each. For more information, visit [MoonOrganics.com](http://MoonOrganics.com).



Hanni Berger, CEO (Photos: Michelle Rose)

# JOYVIAL

## Hosts Online Joy Day

JOYVIAL, an online network of professional health coaches, is inviting the Atlanta community to spread joy in others for Joy Day, an online, virtual event on Friday, October 2. On that day, the organization is asking people to make a special effort to focus on how they can uplift others and help them feel appreciated, seen, heard, valued and loved. “We know many people are in a slump right now, and their negative thought patterns can create a downward spiral of emotions and habits,” says Hanni Berger, JOYVIAL founder and CEO. “Our goal with Joy Day is to help people refocus and realize that where their attention goes is also where their energy flows. If we can focus on being joyful, we can begin to create new habits and patterns to reinforce and create more joy in our lives.”

JOYVIAL suggests several ways to boost joy in others on Joy Day, including telling, texting or writing someone that they matter, giving a compliment to a coworker, speaking highly of someone when they’re not there and telling someone three things you couldn’t do without them. “Joy is something that can be created,” says Berger. “Most people wait for someone or something to bring them joy. We’re hosting Joy Day to showcase that we can either find joy in things that already exist or create joy on our own.”

For more information, visit [JOYVIAL.com/JoyDay](http://JOYVIAL.com/JoyDay) or call 1-866-JOYVIAL.

# Butterflies, Bees and Birds

## Converge on Dunwoody Green Roof

This spring, Dunwoody Nature Center completed construction of its Crean Eco classroom, which is literally topped off with a garden holding a variety of native plants that are beneficial to local pollinators. Thousands of butterflies, moths, bees and hummingbirds are attracted to the blooming native flowers on the building’s green roof year-round. Green roofs have several economic and ecological advantages. They control a building’s climate and aid natural irrigation and rainwater absorption, which reduces the degradation caused by excessive stormwater runoff. Flat roofs and terraces make ideal homes for green roofs. “The building was designed to educate by itself with the added benefit of allowing us to teach within it,” says Nature Center Executive Director Michael Cowan, who also serves as the chairman of the Dunwoody Sustainability Committee. “The building

allows us to continue our efforts to foster pollinator protection initiatives and will serve as a catalyst for the installation of more native plant pollinator gardens and other sustainable building elements.” The classroom is used for a variety of educational purposes. The building’s other sustainable claim to fame is that it was built from two repurposed shipping containers. It was built and funded jointly by the City of Dunwoody and the Dunwoody Nature Center and dedicated in honor of the Dennis and Marie B. Crean family, longstanding supporters of the Nature Center. *The Dunwoody Nature Center is located at 5343 Roberts Drive in Dunwoody. For more information, see [DunwoodyNature.org](http://DunwoodyNature.org).*

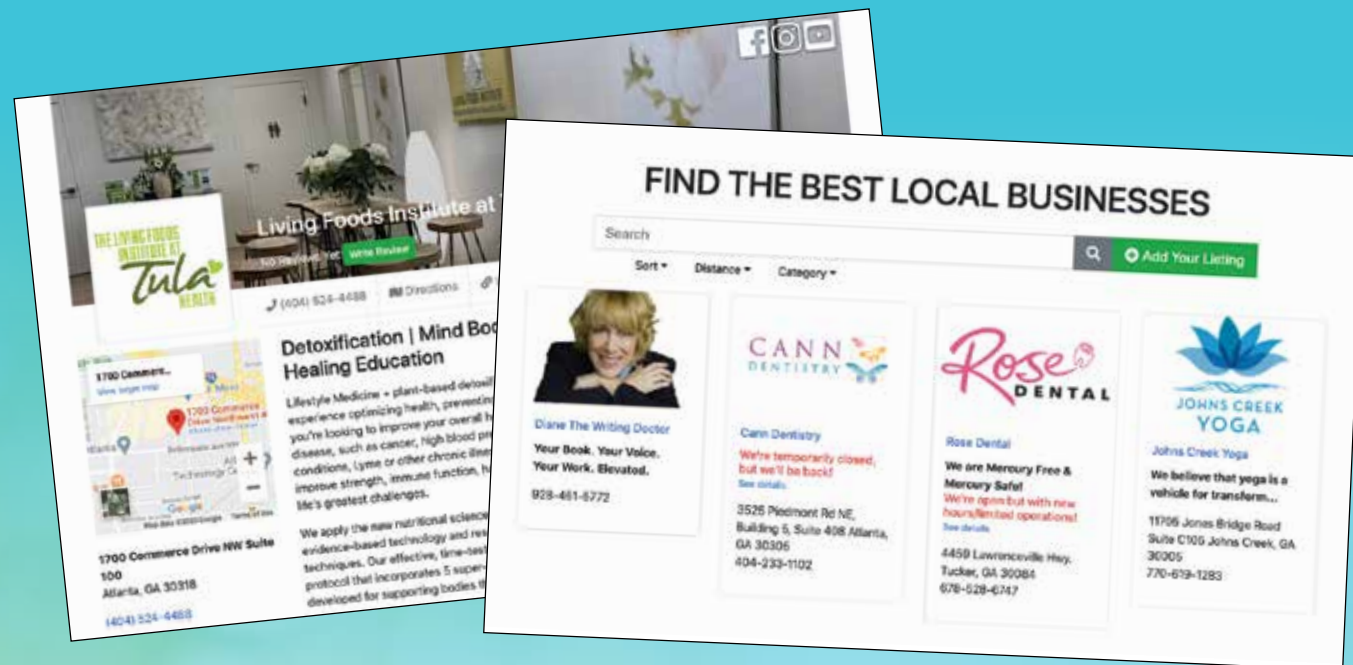


Eco Classroom



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## Nuts 'n Berries at 40

### Mari and Kevin's Excellent Adventure

by Paul B. Chen

**"I'd go to jail for a million dollars! Would you?"** Mari Geier asked that of her partner, Kevin Parker, upon learning that the owners of a health food store in Tennessee were jailed for selling CBD products.

Geier and Parker own Nuts 'n Berries Healthy Market, the Atlanta health food store that is celebrating its 40th birthday this year. The two bought the business in 2015 from founders Mark and Soodi Kick. The original Brookhaven store was joined by a second one in Decatur in June. The new store occupies the same space as Rainbow Natural Foods, which closed in 2019 after 42 years of operation.

The Tennessee jailing occurred a few years ago when CBD, short for cannabidiol, a non-psychoactive extract of the cannabis plant, was just emerging, and the laws surrounding it were unclear. As it turned out, the owners were awarded \$1 million when they sued the state.

The Nuts 'n Berries owners got their million dollars, but they had to earn it the old-fashioned way. CBD, as it turned out, saved their store.

Their fortunes declined precipitously in 2016 when a new building went up across the street from their store and blocked

their sign from those traveling north on Peachtree Road. According to Parker, their revenues immediately dropped by 20% to 25%. Things got so bad that they had to let everyone go except for a manager.

But with the emergence of CBD, the partners decided to go all in. Geier felt uniquely qualified to lead the charge. At the birth of many industries, market education is critical, and Geier holds a degree in horticulture and spent years in the athletic bootcamp industry teaching people fitness. As a result, Nuts 'n Berries went from earning \$700,000 a year to \$2 million. "We sold a million dollars of CBD last year," says Geier.

Of course, food makes up the vast majority of Nuts 'n Berries' floor space, and the owners are proud and vigorous supporters of local vendors. Parker estimates that 1,000 of the store's 7,500 products are locally produced.

Geier, the outspoken evangelist of the pair, is not only a crusader for local enterprises but for what she calls the "new organic revolution."

"We are going beyond the label to really analyze everything that local vendors put in and on your body." For example, prospective vendors are asked about how and where ingredients are grown, how soil is managed, how workers are treated, how

packaging materials are sourced, total carbon footprint, and more.

Pointing out that the margins on local vendor products are relatively small, Geier says, "This one thing differentiates us from every other big company because Whole Foods, Publix, Kroger, Lidl,

Sprouts—all of them—their bottom lines are all they care about."

Given so many local products, what are customer favorites? Both immediately answer: Trust Yo Gut yogurt by Lisa Newman of Nolik Foods. Made from almonds, the product comes in two flavors and only one size: 32 ounces. "People buy them two, three, four, five at a time," says Parker. "They're absolutely addicted to it."

Considering how deep Geier's knowledge is about organic and natural foods, it is almost curious that the owners say that they aren't focused on hardcore organic foodies. "Our goal is to reach the beginner and be a bridge into the scary, overwhelming place that is a health food store," says Geier.



Co-owners Kevin Parker and Mari Geier. (Photos: Paul Chen)

Good thing, too. As it turns out, opening their Decatur store at the former location of Rainbow Natural Foods wasn't the answer to the pent-up customer demand that they expected. After 42 years in business, Rainbow customers had a strong perspective on what a natural food store should be.

"Everybody said [the Decatur store] was beautiful, but then we got to the point where it's 'too clean, it's too nice,'" says Geier. "They equated 'clean' and 'nice' with expensive."

"Customers of Rainbow knew Rainbow for 20 to 40 years," says Parker. "It's almost like they're family." Chimed in Geier: "Our ask of them is to help build the history for the next 40 years."

*Nuts 'n Berries Healthy Market is located at 4274 Peachtree Road NE and 2118 N. Decatur Road. Visit [NutsnBerries.com](http://NutsnBerries.com).*



Inside the new Nuts 'n Berries in Decatur. (Photo: Nuts 'n Berries)



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HEALING WAYS

## Natural Antivirals Help in Staying Strong and Healthy

by Ronica O'Hara



In these sobering times, we must use every weapon in our arsenal against invasive viruses, including often-overlooked natural remedies with antiviral properties. As is also the case with pharmaceutical agents, natural approaches have not been shown to stop an aggressive virus in its tracks, but they may ameliorate symptoms. "Nutrition and supplementation are unlikely to prevent an infection, but they may help prevent the infection from becoming symptomatic or severe," explains Leo Galland, M.D., a global leader in functional medicine and author of *Power Healing: Use the New Integrated Medicine to Heal Yourself*.

Eating healthy foods, sleeping seven to nine hours a night and exercising at least 150 minutes a week are also key in fortifying our natural defenses against viruses. Steps still necessary for COVID-19 protection include hand-washing, mask-wearing, social distancing and sterilizing objects and surfaces.

### Baseline Protectors

Scientists report that some vitamin and mineral deficiencies appear to be linked

to poor COVID-19 outcomes, while adequate levels help combat other viruses. *ConsumerLab.com*, which provides comprehensive research overviews and information on nutritional products, lists these natural supplements as potential aids against COVID-19, although at this early stage, none have been proven to work:

**Vitamin D:** According to Galland, vitamin D "stimulates your immune system to produce factors called defensins and cathelicidins that kill viruses." People with levels below 30 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) were 45 percent more likely to test positive for the coronavirus and 95 percent more likely to be hospitalized, Israeli researchers found. Getting three 30-minute sessions of sun exposure a week and eating D-fortified foods raise levels, and supplementing with up to 2,000 international units daily is generally considered safe.

**Zinc:** "Zinc throws a wrench in the viral replication machine and helps fight infections by boosting the production of antibodies," says Nicole DeMasi, an integrative dietitian nutritionist in Los Angeles. Zinc lozenges may ward off the

coronavirus in the upper respiratory tract. The recommended dosage is 15 to 30 milligrams (mg) a day for up to two weeks.

**Vitamin C:** A cup of orange juice, tomato juice or a kiwi supplies most of the minimum recommended intake of vitamin C, a vital supplement for white blood cells that fight viral infections. Supplementing with 1,000 mg daily is also safe. Intravenous megadoses are being studied for critically ill COVID-19 patients, but no evidence exists so far that higher levels prevent infections, reports *ConsumerLab.com*.

**Potassium:** A critical antiviral mineral and electrolyte, low levels of potassium were found in 61 percent of 175 Chinese patients hospitalized with COVID-19, making them more prone to heart damage, reports the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Foods that boost levels include potatoes, squash, lentils, spinach, avocados, bananas and raisins.

### Supplemental Supporters

When choosing supplements proven to be effective, "Much of what we know and can apply is based on our previous research on viruses of the past," says Monisha Bhanote, M.D., an integrative physician in Jacksonville Beach, Florida. Here are some good choices.

**Melatonin:** Known best as the hormone that regulates sleep, melatonin also supports antiviral immunity and helps control inflammation in viral infections. A study of 11,672 people tested for COVID-19 found that those taking supplemental melatonin were less likely to test positive, and a clinical study is underway to see if 2 mg a day helps protect healthcare workers. Typical dosages range from 0.3 to 3 mg.

**Licorice Root Extract:** This herb contains a substance called glycyrrhizin that makes it hard for a virus to attach to and invade a cell and hinders its ability to replicate, slowing the spread from one cell to another. Chinese doctors used it with other traditional herbs to combat COVID-19, and studies have shown it effective against an earlier coronavirus, as well as against HIV, herpes, viral hepatitis and respiratory infections. For dosage, follow package directions. People with high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, kidney disease or low potassium levels are advised against its use.

**Astragalus:** Known as *huang qi*, astragalus "is one of the most powerful herbs used in Chinese medicine for people with weakened immune systems," says Tsao-Lin Moy, a New York City acupuncturist and herbalist. It's best taken as a hot or cold tea using tea bags or the root itself.

**Andrographis:** This herb has long been used for colds and throat infections in China and India, and may prevent flu viruses from binding to cells. In a Swedish study, flu patients that took an andrographis extract along with Siberian ginseng recovered more quickly with fewer complications than those given a U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved flu

medication. Because of its potency, it's best to consult a health practitioner to avoid interactions. The recommended dosage is 400 mg twice a day.

### Fightin' Foods

To lower the inflammation linked to poor viral outcomes, integrative physician Monisha Bhanote, M.D., recommends a predominantly whole foods diet with at least five to seven servings of vegetables and two to three servings of fruit a day.

Quercetin-rich foods, such as apples, onions, broccoli, raspberries, parsley and celery are especially important, she says, because the bioflavonoid enhances zinc's antiviral actions: "It functions as a zinc ionophore, chelating zinc and transporting it into the cell cytoplasm." Quercetin can also be taken as a supplement in doses ranging between 500 and 1,000 mg daily.

Garlic has potent antiviral and antibacterial properties, and can be cooked into food, eaten raw in salads and dressings or obtained from capsules of allicin, the active component.

Green tea has epigallocatechin gallate, a compound with "a wide range of antiviral activity, especially in the early stages of infection, by preventing viral attachment and entry into the cell," says Bhanote. Aim for three to five cups a day.

Ronica O'Hara is a Denver-based health writer. Connect at [OHaraRonica@gmail.com](mailto:OHaraRonica@gmail.com).

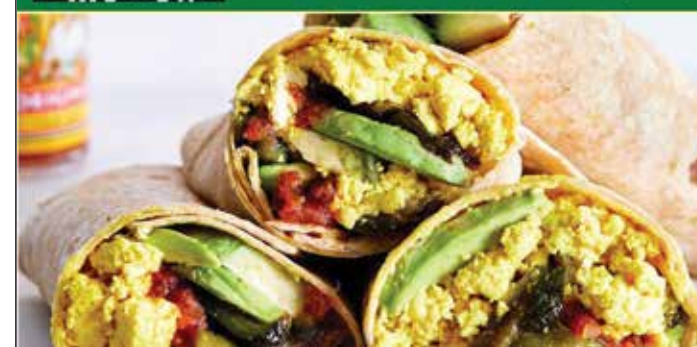


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# Emotional Well-Being in the Pandemic Age

## Self-Care Strategies for Tough Times

by Sandra Yeyati

As the pandemic ravages our country, we are engulfed by a sea of challenging emotions, including fear, loss, anger, disappointment and grief. Compounding the suffering, past emotional traumas and pent-up desires are surfacing and crying for attention. One way to navigate these treacherous waters is by first enveloping ourselves in self-compassion. Next, we can gather the courage to face our fears and experience unpleasant feelings in order to heal them and let them go. Then, we search for and internalize positive emotional states to rewire our brains for positivity. This noble voyage promises immense rewards along the way.

### The Cocoon of Self-Compassion

Some of us chase self-esteem like the Holy Grail, yet it eludes us when we need it most. Faced with a failing grade or cruel insult, our self-worth withers. We can't understand why we lost it or how to get it back. When we attach our self-worth to achievements or comparisons with other people, self-esteem becomes unstable and unreliable.

Enter self-compassion, the life-changing perspective of showing kindness to ourselves in any and all situations—a supportive best friend that lives within us and can be accessed any time, every day. A pioneer and expert in this topic, Kristin Neff believes that

self-compassion has three components: a decision to be kind to ourselves, a mindful awareness when we are in pain so that we can seek some relief and a sense of common humanity or connectedness.

We already know how to be compassionate, says Neff, an associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin and co-author of *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook*. “It’s linked to the parasympathetic nervous system, which is a natural part of our organism. We’re tapping into this way of feeling safe, which is through care, bonding and connectedness.”

Encouraging our friends when they’re feeling down or hugging our moms in the

morning is hardwired into us. When we decide to be kind to ourselves, it’s easy to think of what we would say: “I’m sorry you failed that test. You’ll do better next time. How can I help you?” To lend perspective, add a statement about our common humanity, counsels Neff. “This is hard for everybody. You’re not alone.”

We must be aware of our pain before we can comfort it, and many of us try to suppress or resist pain, choosing to numb it with distractions like alcohol addiction or compulsive shopping. Others may get lost in the storyline of what’s happening and succumb to suffering with no apparent way to obtain relief. Self-pity or self-criticism may creep in.

Mindful awareness is the antidote to these emotional extremes, because it helps us become aware that we are experiencing pain and to stay with that pain long enough to make a conscious decision to take care of ourselves. “One easy thing is physical touch,” says Neff. “The first few years of life you have no words, so the body is programmed to respond to touch as a signal of care. Put your hand on your heart or your stomach, or hold your hand. This changes your physiology, activates your parasympathetic nervous system, helps you calm down and helps you feel physically supported. Sometimes, that’s an entryway for people.”

### Finding Confidence Through Unpleasant Feelings

Nobody likes to feel sad or embarrassed. We’d rather have an ice cream cone or turn on the TV. But for Dr. Joan Rosenberg, a prominent psychologist and speaker, uncomfortable feelings present an invaluable opportunity for people to transform into confident individuals that relate to the world around them with authenticity and resilience.

In her book *90 Seconds to a Life You Love*, Rosenberg offers a formula—one choice, eight feelings, 90 seconds—to experience and move through eight of the most common unpleasant feelings: sadness, shame, helplessness, anger, embarrassment, disappointment, frustration and vulnerability.

“The choice is to stay aware of and in touch with as much of your moment-to-



moment experience as possible and not get lost in avoidance,” she explains, adding that there are more than 30 behaviors, thoughts and emotions that we employ as distractions, including substance abuse, social media, pornography, exercise, obsessive thoughts about body image, humor and denial.

“Be aware of what you’re aware of,” she advises. “If we know that we don’t like feelings, and we know we’ve been engaged in using ways to distract ourselves, then our challenge is to be more awake and aware of those times we do it, and as soon as we start to do the thing and become aware, that’s when we make the decision to stop and ask, ‘What’s really going on?’”

Discoveries in neuroscience suggest that most of us come to know what we’re feeling emotionally through bodily sensations. We might feel heat in the neck and face when embarrassed or a sinking feeling in the chest when disappointed. As feelings get triggered in the body, a rush of biochemicals in the bloodstream activate these sensations and are flushed out of the bloodstream in roughly 90 seconds.

“Most people have the impression that feelings linger a whole lot longer and that they’re going to be overwhelmed by it and never come out of it if they start. But when they understand that what they’re trying to avoid are uncomfortable bodily sensations that help you know what you’re feeling emotionally, and that these are short-lived, most people will start to lean into them, and once they do, their life changes,” Rosenberg says.

To move through bodily sensations, which may come in multiple waves, take deep, slow breaths. Try not to tighten up or clench the jaw and swallow. Notice the location and nature of the bodily sensations to help identify which of the eight unpleasant feelings it might be, and be curious as to what might have triggered it. All of this will take a few moments. With practice, identification will become faster, easier and more accurate.

“If I have more time, then I can think about whether this is connected to anything else. Is it just one thing that triggered it, or is it like something else that’s happened before?” Rosenberg says. This level of awareness leads to a calming effect, clearer



### Making Courage a Habit

In her book *The Courage Habit*, life coach Kate Swoboda presents a four-part method for people to face their fears, release the past and live their most courageous life.

**Access the body.** Practice any body-centric activity like mindful meditation, exercise or dancing every single day to release stress and anxiety, become centered and more present, and clear the mind.

**Listen without attachment.** When your self-critic offers a warning or criticism, hear the words, understanding that this is fear trying to protect you and deciding that it’s misguided and not true.

**Reframe limiting stories or beliefs.** Amend your internalized self-critic’s messages to be more respectful and supportive. If it says, “You’re stupid to try that,” revise it to, “I’m smart because I’m willing to try.”

**Create community.** Reach out to like-minded individuals that are supportive of the changes you are trying to make.





## Building Up Our Happiness Quotient

These exercises are recommended by psychologist Rick Hanson:

**Slow down, breathe and see the big picture.** This simple practice brings us into the present moment, reduces the stress activation in the body, disengages us from verbal chatter and negative reactivity, and buys us time to see more clearly. Take three breaths, making the exhalation longer than the inhalation.

### Five-Minute Challenge

**Take in the good.** It could be a flower blooming, birds singing or a nice exchange with another person. Slow down, take a few breaths and let it sink in for a minute or two.

**Focus on something to cultivate.** Perhaps it's patience or gratitude. Look for opportunities to have an experience of this quality and internalize it for another minute.

**Marinate in pleasant feelings.** Cultivate a sense of calm, contentment or warm-heartedness for a couple of minutes.

thinking, improved decision making and, perhaps most importantly, an ability to speak authentically.

"If we don't handle the eight feelings, we don't feel capable in the world," she says. The ability to speak adds to that empowerment. "From asking someone to stop a behavior so that you feel safer to telling someone you love them, asking your boss for a raise or letting people know about yourself and your work to garner opportunities and desired experiences—it cuts across every aspect of our lives and is absolutely crucial to our sense of well-being."

## Rewiring the Brain for Positivity

Discoveries in neuroplasticity have revealed that the brain changes throughout life well into adulthood. It's designed to learn not just ideas and information, but skills, attitudes, feelings and moods. Rick Hanson, a clinical psychologist and author of several books, including *Hardwiring Happiness* and *Resilient*, contends that we can develop greater happiness, just like we can develop greater depression.

"There's a lot of research that shows that through deliberate little practices spread out through the day or sometimes more formal practices like psychotherapy or meditation, we can actually produce

physical changes in the brain that are now measurable with things like MRIs," he remarks.

Hardwiring happiness is easy, pleasurable and doesn't take a lot of time. "If you take care of the minutes, the years will take care of themselves," says Hanson. "Little steps gradually move us forward a breath at a time, a minute at a time, a synapse at a time. Bit by bit, we grow the good inside while gradually releasing the bad."

"Our power to positively influence who we are in small, genuine ways every day is really important to compensate for the brain's negativity bias, which makes it like Velcro for bad experiences, but Teflon for good ones," he says. "We evolved a negativity bias over the 600-million-year evolution of the nervous system. Learning from negative experiences and mistakes was a critical survival skill, so we have a brain that is designed to scan for bad news, overreact to it and fast-track it into memory. It's not our fault, but it is our responsibility to deal with it by first, feeling the negative without reinforcing it and second, focusing on the positive and taking it in. Gradually, you can give yourself a brain that's like Velcro for the good and Teflon for the bad." 🙏

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



# SPECIAL YOGA SECTION

## OUT OF THE studio AND INTO THE world

by Sheila Ewers

Amid the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, the urgency of social injustice, and the constant need to provide modalities that help heal mind and body in vulnerable populations, it may be more urgent than ever to bring yoga out of the studio and into the world. This month, *Natural Awakenings* shines a spotlight on three organizations that have been bringing yoga to non-traditional populations for many years. Now, with the challenges of quarantine guidelines, they have been creatively adapting their methods in order to continue to serve the Atlanta communities that need them most.

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Amelia Reiser (Photo: Jason Dennard)

## Centering Youth

Founded in 2013, Centering Youth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit yoga service initiative that brings yoga and mindfulness to young people in the juvenile justice system and to those who have been sexually exploited, abused or are homeless.

Since its inception, the organization has been working with the State of Georgia to bring yoga and mindfulness classes to Metro Atlanta Juvenile Detention Centers as part of the justice system's mental health services program. That program is currently participating in a research study with the National Institutes of Health to measure outcomes related to the participants' behavior and adaptation to incarceration. Other organizations that benefit from Centering Youth's outreach include The Covenant House of Georgia, Pregnant Inmates at Helms State Prison, Anchor Hospital and the International Rescue Committee.

Founded by Holle Black, Marlysa Sullivan and Bob Altman, the organization's local operations are now run by Amelia Reiser, who trained with Black in the Pranakriya Yoga tradition and joined the group in 2018. A professional dancer, Reiser worked for many years with her mother, Dr. Joan Phillips, Ph.D., LMFT, LPC, in crisis

relief. They brought creative movement, breath and body awareness to devastated populations of tornado victims in Oklahoma and Missouri. Feeling called to facilitate outreach and drawn to embodied modalities, Reiser found her home at Centering Youth, teaching classes and working on operational, administrative, and fundraising aspects of the nonprofit.

Nine yoga teachers, all of whom have special training in trauma-sensitive yoga, teach for Centering Youth. The organization now reaches beyond the state of Georgia to New Hampshire, where Black is partnering

with Dartmouth University to create a program for pregnant women suffering from opioid use disorders.

The unique demands of COVID-19 have created unanticipated obstacles to servicing these less accessible populations, many of which require strict protocols and security even under ordinary circumstances. While teachers have been unable to go into detention centers, the organization is in talks with the State of Georgia to establish Zoom classes that will adhere to the privacy rights of the juvenile inmates. They have explored pre-recorded classes and are also communicating by telephone. According to Reiser, they are using the "pause" to streamline infrastructure and define best practices to avoid disruptions in service that could appear in the future. She believes that now, more than ever, the role of yoga is seva, or service.

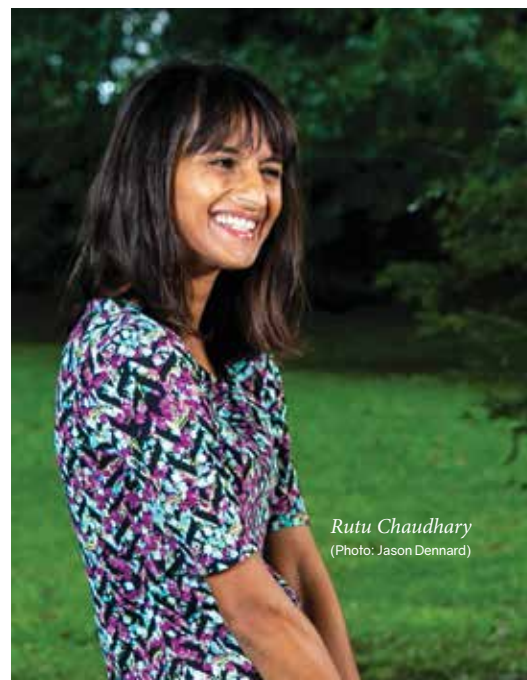
*Centering Youth is always looking for teachers who are willing to make a commitment to the work. They also need grant writers and financial support. For partnering and teaching opportunities, contact Holle Black at [info@centeringyouth.org](mailto:info@centeringyouth.org). For fundraising and educational opportunities, contact Amelia Reiser at [ameliareiser@gmail.com](mailto:ameliareiser@gmail.com).*

## The Dharma Project

The Dharma Project, which was founded in 2016 by Rutu Chaudhary, brings self-care in the form of mindfulness and yoga to communities and organizations that experience high levels of stress and trauma. [Ed: See our profile of *The Dharma Project* in our April 2019 issue: [bit.ly/NAD-dharmaProject](http://bit.ly/NAD-dharmaProject)]

**The goal of those offering outreach and yoga should always be to become dispensable, to solve a problem while empowering people to do it on their own.**

For the last several years, the Dharma Project has been providing yoga classes at the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) Metro Re-entry facility, a secure environment offering essential services for incarcerated men who are nearing release. The program has been so well-received that of the 15 to 20 men currently involved, six of them have expressed a desire to become yoga teachers themselves. Before the emergence of the coronavirus, Chaudhary was working closely with the DOC to create a Yoga Teacher Certification within the facility. As services have been interrupted, she has pivoted to create



Rutu Chaudhary (Photo: Jason Dennard)

an "Ambassador" program instead. She emails written curriculum to the Deputy Warden, who shares it with the men in the facility. Those who want to teach have short sequences to share with up to five other men who are not already practicing yoga. In this way, the program grows within the facility, and the men are empowered with new, viable skills that they can take with them upon release.

Chaudhary says that the goal of those offering outreach and yoga should always be to "become dispensable, to solve a problem while empowering people to do it on their own, to allow the communities receiving support to then support each other within the community." She believes that most problems are best solved by the communities experiencing the challenges.

Dharma Project also works with the Forrest Hill Academy, a school primarily for at-risk youth. Prior to the pandemic, teachers offered classes to students in the facility, but when learning went online, they shifted to teach yoga via Zoom to the faculty and administration who were in need of more support.

In partnership with All Life is Yoga, a studio owned by Chaudhary, Dharma Project recently launched its Give Yoga, Get Yoga program, a yoga teacher training program that can be paid with yoga service, hour-for-hour. The number of hours students train is the number of hours they offer to teach in the community under Chaudhary's guidance. While gaining full certification, prospective teachers also receive invaluable mentoring and sharpen real teaching skills for populations that often have no access to yoga.

Like all programs that Dharma Project commits itself to, Give Yoga, Get Yoga focuses on expanding access to yoga, and enhancing diversity and inclusion so that healing practices are welcoming for all.

*Dharma Project is always seeking support by means of financial donations, volunteers and networking opportunities with policy-makers and sponsors. To get involved, visit [www.thedharmaproject.org](http://www.thedharmaproject.org) or email Rutu Chaudhary at [rutu@alllifeisyoga.com](mailto:rutu@alllifeisyoga.com).*

## Little Brown Yogis Project and Ladybug for Girls Foundation

The Little Brown Yogis Project was born in response to the outcry from the Atlanta community to end racial injustice. Founded in 2020 by Treneisha Patton, the project aims to serve children of color who are dealing with the effects—and side-effects—of COVID-19, from being pulled from school to living with stressful conversations at home about the dangers to African Americans in America. A certified Grounded Kids Yoga Teacher, Patton offers free online classes to children of color, ages two to six, in order to support them physically, spiritually and emotionally. By the



Treneisha Patton (Photo: Jason Dennard)

end of their first month, Patton and other volunteers had worked with more than 50 families. The vision for the project continues to grow as offerings now include free monthly virtual yoga sessions, and plans are in the works for in-person engagement when conditions are safe.

Patton is also executive director of the Ladybug for Girls Foundation, Inc., a health-and-wellness, youth development, after-school club for girls. Operating for more than 10 years in Dekalb County schools, the foundation's mission is to

empower young girls by introducing positive thoughts about self-image early in their development in order to strengthen their resilience and coping skills before they reach adolescence. The practice of yoga is at the core of the organization's social and emotional learning objectives, but it also teaches many other skills, including gardening, personal hygiene and leadership. Patton reports that the combination of yoga, breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques helps girls experience reduced anxiety and heightened emotional management.

"We have found that girls who are in our after-school clubs are better able to develop the necessary coping skills that help them be more confident and resilient to

some of the social pressures girls typically face." Ladybug for Girls also works with underserved girls in West Africa and rural villages of India. 🐞

*Both Little Brown Yogis and Ladybug for Girls need volunteers, financial resources and assistance reaching families who need their services. To get more involved, email Treneisha Patton at [treneishapattton@gmail.com](mailto:treneishapattton@gmail.com) or visit [LadybugForGirls.org](http://LadybugForGirls.org) and [LittleBrownYogis.carrd.com](http://LittleBrownYogis.carrd.com).*





# 5 POSES TO ACTIVATE YOUR Inner Warrior

by Sheila Ewers

(Photos: 2TPPhoto)

Many of the yoga poses we practice today are named for Indian mythical heroes and legends from long ago. The story of the warrior pose emerges from a Hindu tale told in the *Puranas*, texts composed between the 3rd and 10th centuries. The story is rife with symbolism and, like most myths, reflects an ancient battle between good and evil, between the higher self and the ego, between renunciation and civilization, and between consciousness and materialism.

While many variations exist, in the most well-known version, the god, Shiva, takes a wife, Sati. Her father, Daksha, does not approve of the union because of Shiva's eclectic, renunciate ways. Shiva has a reputation of being a wanderer who has mystical visions, covers himself in ashes and cavorts with a group of yogis. Daksha

excludes the couple from a large ritual sacrifice that includes every other deva and villager, but Sati goes to the gathering anyway and renounces her father by casting herself into the ritual fire to her death.

In his fury and grief, Shiva tears out a lock of hair and throws it to the ground, creating *Virabhadra*, which, in Sanskrit, means “warrior-hero-friend,” and commands him to avenge Sati's death. But after the deed is done, he feels remorse, so he absorbs Virabhadra back into his body and returns to the gathering, where he restores Daksha's life by replacing his head with the head of a goat.

When Daksha's heartbeat is restored, he also feels regret for his ways, and, from then on, he calls Shiva “the Benevolent One.”

The battle represents the need for the highest consciousness (Shiva) to defeat the

ego (Daksha), but in its nuance, it also emphasizes a reconciliation between higher consciousness and will through Daksha's restoration. In the conclusion, the two polarities live harmoniously in recognition of the necessary roles that each one plays. The story reminds us that the spiritual and material can coexist within us and within society at large, that sometimes we must take righteous action and access the warrior within to keep both ourselves and the world in balance and that compassion and humility are powerful unifying forces. Notably, the entire conflict comes to a head when Sati, representing the pure heart, brings the two polarities together.

When we embody Warrior poses in our practice, we have the opportunity to relive this epic battle and to identify with it.



**Warrior I (Virabhadrasana I)**  
In Warrior I, the heart is straight forward with both arms elevated, and the gaze is upward. It represents the emergence of Virabhadra, as he rises from the earth

with his sight set on Shiva, ready for battle with swords overhead. The strong, upright position reminds us to stand bravely for truth and righteousness.

**To perform this asana:** Stand in *Tadasana*, or Mountain pose, at the front of your mat. Take a big step back with your right leg. Your front left foot should face straight forward. Bend your front knee to 90 degrees. Turn your back foot outward about 45 degrees with the heel on the mat. (Note: If the angle of the foot causes discomfort in the knee or ankle, lift your heel and turn both feet toward the front of the mat.) With your pelvis and chest turned toward the front of the mat, raise both arms overhead and lift your gaze slightly. Keep your shoulders down and away from your ears; keep your abdominal muscles engaged and keep your back leg strong. Hold for five breaths. Then step to the front of the mat and repeat on the other side.



**Humble Warrior (Baddha Virabhadrasana)**

Humble Warrior emerges from Warrior I. It is a pose of humility, as we drop the head below the heart, referencing Virabhadra's obedience and service to Shiva and presenting our own need to surrender to divine consciousness.

**To perform this asana:** From Warrior I, drop your arms behind your back and clasp

your hands to interlace your fingers. Keep a micro-bend in your elbows as you draw your shoulder blades closer together. Bow forward with your chest towards the inside of your front knee and your pelvis turned toward the front of the mat. Hold for five breaths. Then rise back to Warrior I and repeat with your opposite foot forward.



**Warrior II (Virabhadrasana II)**

In Warrior II, the arms draw wide as if wielding swords, and the gaze is to the horizon. As we take this “ready” position, the open posture and balanced effort encourage us to embrace action, to follow through and to set our sights towards the battles that are worthy of our engagement.

**To perform this asana:** Face the long edge of your mat and step your feet wide apart. Turn the left foot toward the short edge of your mat, and turn your right foot slightly in. Bend your front knee to 90 degrees, keeping your knee directly above your ankle. Spread your arms wide and stretch through your fingertips. Engage your inner thighs and abdominal muscles as you turn your gaze toward your left hand. Drop your shoulders away from your ears and keep them centered directly above the pelvis.



**Exalted Warrior (Viparita Virabhadrasana)**

A variation of Warrior II, Exalted Warrior represents a victorious posture after the sword has struck down the enemy.

**To perform this asana:** From Warrior II with your left foot forward, lift your left arm above your head with the palm facing behind you. Drop your right hand to your right thigh and slide it down as far as it will go. Keep your abdominal muscles engaged to avoid compression in your low back.



**Warrior III (Virabhadrasana III)**

This Warrior pose represents the beheading of Daksha. Balancing on one leg with arms stretched forward, the gaze falls to the earth, we are reminded of how delicate and precarious our footing can be in battle and in uncertainty.

**To perform this asana:** Standing in Mountain pose, bring your hands to your heart in *Anjali Mudra*, or prayer hands. Shift your weight to your left foot and hinge at your hips, stretching your right leg behind you with the toes and knee pointed straight toward the earth. Hold a steady gaze slightly forward on the floor. Engage your abdominal muscles and stretch your arms forward until your whole body is parallel to the earth. Hold for five breaths, then return to Mountain pose and switch legs.

Over time and with the consistent practice of these five poses, you may find yourself accessing a strength and resolve you didn't even know you had as you summon your inner warrior to action. 🙏



Sheila Ewers, ERYT500, YACEP, owns Blue Lotus Yoga in Johns Creek. A former professor of writing and literature, she leads yoga philosophy workshops, yoga teacher training and retreats. Contact Sheila at [Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com](mailto:Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com).



# Yoga in Atlanta

A Focused Advertising Section

## Chamblee

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## Decatur

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## Duluth

**DULUTH YOGA**  
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## Johns Creek

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## Midtown

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# HIGHLAND YOGA OPENS FOURTH LOCATION

This August, Highland Yoga, an Atlanta-based yoga community with locations in Virginia Highlands, Memorial Drive, and Buckhead, is opening a fourth studio at 450 North McDonough Street in Decatur under the leadership of founder and owner, Elspeth Brotherton.

Highland Yoga offers Heated Power Yoga, which features unique, creative sequencing coupled with mindfulness and breath awareness. According to Brotherton, plans have been in place for more than two years for this expansion. The first Highland Yoga location opened in February 2015, followed by a space in Grant Park in 2016, and Buckhead in 2017. In January of this year, the Grant Park location, once housed at Ormand



Drive, moved to 955 Memorial Drive SE, Suite 520. Each location has approximately 2,400 square feet with one large practice room. Combined, the four studios employ four full-time managers and 28 teachers. They also offer two 200-hour teacher training classes each year.

Like all studios during this time of pandemic, Highland Yoga has had to adapt to limited demand and has focused on continuing to serve their community

through online classes and a robust on-demand library of videos. Brotherton expects that they will emerge stronger than ever, answering to an even greater demand for health and wellness classes when it is safe to gather again. 🙏

For membership and schedule information, visit [Highland-Yoga.com](http://Highland-Yoga.com) or email [info@Highland-Yoga.com](mailto:info@Highland-Yoga.com).

## PRIVATE YOGA INSTRUCTION

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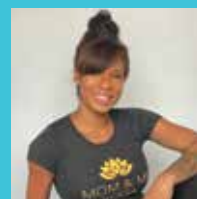
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# ATLANTA'S YOGA CLASS AVAILABILITY

Natural Awakenings reached out to Atlanta studio owners and private yoga teachers about what classes they are now offering as they adapt to the disruption of the pandemic. We received 30 responses representing 31 studios, and we share them in the table below.

Overall, live virtual classes are offered more than any other kind of class, with 74% of studios offering them. In-person classes with a limited number of participants came in second, with 55% of studios that responded to our survey saying they are doing so. Next was on-demand virtual classes and outdoor classes at 48% and 42%, respectively.

Four studios offered all four types of classes: Breathe Yoga Atlanta, Ebb Flow Yoga, The Fitness Collective ATL and Performance Power Yoga. Only one studio, Solstice Yoga + Barre, is not currently offering any classes. 🙏

Studio	City	None	Indoor	Outdoor	Virtual	On-Demand
Avolve Wellness					◆	
Breathe Yoga Atlanta	Cumming		◆	◆	◆	◆
Dancing Dogs Yoga	Atlanta			◆	◆	◆
Ebb Flow Yoga	Loganville		◆	◆	◆	◆
Firefly Yoga Center	Alpharetta		◆		◆	◆
FORM {yoga}	Decatur			◆		◆
Giving Tree Yoga	Smyrna		◆		◆	
Honor Yoga Roswell	Roswell		◆		◆	◆
Johns Creek Yoga	Johns Creek		◆	◆	◆	
Kashi Atlanta	Atlanta				◆	
Korsi Yoga	Roswell		◆			
Kula Co-Op Yoga	Atlanta			◆		
Lift Yoga	Alpharetta		◆	◆	◆	◆
Peach Out Power Yoga	Marietta		◆	◆	◆	
Performance Power Yoga	Lawrenceville		◆	◆	◆	◆
Progress Yoga	Canton		◆			
Sandalwood Yoga					◆	◆
Santosha Studio	Atlanta		◆			
Serenity Salt Cave & Healing Center	Snellville		◆			
Solstice Yoga + Barre	Atlanta	◆				
Still Hot Yoga	Decatur		◆			
Stillness Yoga	Marietta			◆	◆	◆
Studio 87 Yoga	Norcross		◆		◆	
Sweet Sunshine Yoga	Duluth				◆	
The Fitness Collective ATL	Atlanta		◆	◆	◆	◆
The Little Yogis				◆	◆	◆
The Yoga Loft	Snellville				◆	
Tucker Yoga Co-op	Tucker			◆	◆	
Village Yoga	Cumming		◆		◆	◆
Vista Yoga	Decatur			◆	◆	◆
Yoga Collective	Atlanta				◆	

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# Sandra Marinella on the Healing Power of Writing Our Stories

by Sandra Yeyati

An award-winning teacher and author of *The Story You Need to Tell: Writing to Heal from Trauma, Illness, or Loss*, Sandra Marinella has empowered thousands of people to use stories, poems and journal writing to find greater well-being and resilience in their lives. Prompted by a breast cancer diagnosis and her own journal, she helps people connect with their truth and move beyond entrenched negative emotions and thoughts.



replayed in the emotional centers, or right side, of your brain, and you don't have much control over it. To get unstuck, you need to voice this story and complete it. Writing it down and sifting through it later can help. Once you do this, you can be logical and choose how you're going to interpret, frame and live with it.

In the book, I talk about Chris, whose sister was homeless and died. He was struggling with that story. It was going around in his mind, over and over, all the time. He was in pain and grieving from the loss of his sister. It took him a while before he decided to rewrite the story as fiction, telling it in the way he wished it had come out. In the process, he was able to better understand his loss, make peace with it and set it free.

**What is the power of story and personal writing?**  
We all have stories in our minds that play over and over again. They define who we are. In recent years, neuroscience has led us to this powerful understanding that we are quite flexible as human beings. After we become conscious of our stories and how we're using them in our lives, we can rework and reframe them, and choose to see them in a positive or better light. We can change and grow our stories to become better people with greater well-being.

**How do we get unstuck from playing out stories in our minds?**

A story that keeps looping, one that you are obsessed with, is generally being

**If we don't tell others or write our stories, can they harm us?**  
Yes. I think they can, but I don't want to underestimate the value of silence. When we are facing trauma, we need space and time and silence to be able to wrap our heads around the hard things that are happening to us. But then, breaking the silence is cathartic. It releases the pain. It helps us establish not only that we have the pain, but how we can bear it. Later, we can come back to those words and reflect on them—that's when we come to understand more about where we are, what we think, what we feel and how we can move forward and rewrite and regrow our stories in positive ways.

**Do you have any recommendations for those suffering in these trying times?**  
I've interviewed many war veterans, and they said that when they were out in the midst of warfare, they had to put their thoughts and emotions on hold so that they could move forward and be strong. That's why many of them were falling apart with PTSD afterwards. I also interviewed a few soldiers who carried journals into war and found it extremely helpful to be able to scream, yell and release their words into them. We should be giving all healthcare workers journals and online support on how to write and how to take care of themselves. Counseling and therapy are wonderful, and I wish we could provide it to everybody all the time, but we can't; and journal writing, or any kind of therapeutic writing, is such a wonderful backup for a human being to have when they are struggling. Keeping a pandemic journal might prove to be not only a healthy choice for our times, but a treasure historically for our grandchildren. 🌱


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

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Have you gathered interesting insights from unusual experiences that sing out for sharing?

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## \* HERE'S HOW \*

Email your story to [editor@naAtlanta.com](mailto:editor@naAtlanta.com)

Put "WEOH" in the subject line

Maximum 650 words

Please, no preaching.

Provide a bio of up to 35 words.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

QUESTIONS?

Reach out to [editor@naatlanta.com](mailto:editor@naatlanta.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Publicize your event! This section hosts free and paid listings. Each month, we select a limited number of events — they must have broad appeal and cost no more than \$10 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$35 and enhanced listings are \$75.

Submit free listings to [calendar@naAtlanta.com](mailto:calendar@naAtlanta.com) and paid listings to [ads@naAtlanta.com](mailto:ads@naAtlanta.com).

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

**Untrips From Home: The Conasauga River** – 12-1pm. Join the Georgia Conservancy Stewardship Trips Director Clark Harrison, special guests, and others around the virtual campfire for current news and other details about some extraordinary places. Swap stories, share photos, remember favorite trips. Free. Via Zoom. [GeorgiaConservancy.org](https://www.GeorgiaConservancy.org).

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

**Online Fall Native Plant Sale: Pre-Order** – Sept 9-23. Pick Up: Sept 25-26. Fall is the perfect time for planting. A long cold winter enables plants to develop dense root systems \for strong healthy growth in the spring. All proceeds support gardens, education and conservation by the Horticulture dept. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. 770-992-2055. [ChattNature-Center.org](https://www.ChattNature-Center.org).

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

**Virtual Community Engagement Workshop** – 6-7:30pm. Workshop will feature a presentation on Appreciative Inquiry by Dietra Hawkins that focuses on using your community's strengths to set in motion positive change. More info: [ParkPride.org](https://www.ParkPride.org).

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

**The Veggie Taste** – 12-6pm. 10th annual outdoor vegan, plant-based, raw food tasting event. A family fun-filled event encouraging healthy eating habits to everyone. Learn how easy and affordable it is to transition into plant-based, vegan lifestyles. Kipp Strive Academy, 1444 Lucile Ave, SW, Atlanta. [TheVeggieTaste.com](https://www.TheVeggieTaste.com).

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

**Untrips From Home: Arabia Mountain** – 12-1pm. Join the Georgia Conservancy Stewardship Trips Director Clark Harrison, special guests, and others around the virtual campfire for current news and other details about some extraordinary places. Swap stories, share photos, remember favorite trips. Free. Via Zoom. [GeorgiaConservancy.org](https://www.GeorgiaConservancy.org).

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

**The Nature Club** – 7-9pm. Space limited; registration required. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. 770-992-2055. [ChattNatureCenter.org](https://www.ChattNatureCenter.org).

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**Grove of the Willow Wood Virtual Open House** – Sept. 6. 2-4pm. Anyone interested in the Traditional Craft may attend where teachers will speak about the Old Religion. This informal forum is loosely structured and based on the needs and experience levels of those attending. Free. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore: [Meet.google.com/yqoruha-qju](https://www.Meet.google.com/yqoruha-qju).

**Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys** – Sept. 24. 7-8:30pm. With Vicki Evans. Shamanic Journeys are an opportunity to connect with Spirit and your guides for healing and direction. You can use the journeys to ask about all areas of your life, not just the spiritual side. Spirit loves to help you live the best life possible. \$20 To register, PayPal [PayPal.me/vickievan-shealing](https://www.PayPal.me/vickievan-shealing).

## ONGOING EVENTS

### sundays

**Online Sunday Experience** – 9am, Adult Study; 9:30am, Meditation; 10am, Music; 10:30am, Service. With Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta. [slc-atlanta.org](https://www.slc-atlanta.org). To watch: [Facebook.com/spirituallivingcenteratlanta](https://www.facebook.com/spirituallivingcenteratlanta).

**Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service** – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, dharma discussion. Via Zoom. To watch: [RedClaySangha.org](https://www.RedClaySangha.org).

**Online Meditation Open House** – 10am. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: [AtlantaShambhala.org](https://www.AtlantaShambhala.org).

**One World Spiritual Center Sunday Service** – 11am. To watch: [OneWorld-SpiritualCenter.net](https://www.OneWorld-SpiritualCenter.net).

**Shamanic Journey** – 11am. 1st Sun. A virtual healing experience brought to you by Heron House via Zoom. Free; donations accepted. To register: [Tinyurl.com/yctrp49j](https://www.Tinyurl.com/yctrp49j).

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

**Unity North Online Sunday Service** – 11:15am. To watch: [UnityNorth.org](https://www.UnityNorth.org).

### mondays

**Meditation & Modern Buddhism** – 7:30-8:45pm. Learn how to integrate Buddhist teachings and meditation into daily life so that you can apply a peaceful mind, wisdom and a good heart in every situation. With Gen Kelsang Norden. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

### tuesdays

**Heart Jewel Chanted Prayers and Meditation** – Mon-Fri, 8-9am. Chanted Buddhist prayers and meditation. Free. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

**Online Meditation Open House** – 7pm. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: [AtlantaShambhala.org](https://www.AtlantaShambhala.org).

### wednesdays

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

**Guided Lunchtime Meditation** – 12:15-12:45pm. Treat your mind to a mid-day get-away. Introductory meditation techniques to help you improve your concentration and create mental stillness in your busy day. No meditation experience needed. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

**Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience** – 7pm. To watch: [UnityNorth.org](https://www.UnityNorth.org).

**Weekly Wednesday Meditation Class** – 7-8:30pm. Open to all levels. Experience true inner peace. With the Venerable Nicholas Thannissaro of the Georgia Meditation Center via Zoom. To register: [MeditationCircle.org](https://www.MeditationCircle.org).

### thursdays

**Dunwoody Beekeeping Club** – 6:30-7:30pm. 1st Thurs. Meeting features a program, followed by a question and answer session with the ability to meet and learn from other local beekeepers. Free. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. [DunwoodyNature.org](https://www.DunwoodyNature.org).

**Livestream Meditation Fundamentals** – 6:30-7:30pm. With Meditation Teacher Melanie Boyd. Suitable for complete beginners. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

**Twin Hearts Meditation** – 7pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. With Atlanta Pranic Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: [AtlPranicHealing.com](https://www.AtlPranicHealing.com).

### fridays

**Prayers for World Peace** – 6:30-7:15pm. An opportunity both to simply pray for world peace and to be a part of the solution. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching

and chanted prayers for world peace. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

### saturdays

**Free Saturday Meditations** – 8-8:30am. To register for livestream: [MeditationInGeorgia.org](https://www.MeditationInGeorgia.org).

**Dunwoody Nature Center Saturday Volunteers** – 9am-12pm. 2nd Sat. For anyone in the community who wishes to volunteer. A wonderful way to start off your weekend in nature and service. To promote social distancing, sign-up is mandatory; limited to 24 people. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. [DunwoodyNature.org](https://www.DunwoodyNature.org).

A happy family is but an earlier heaven.

~George Bernard Shaw





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# Full Circle

by Mindy Strich

There's an old story about a farmer who worked his crops for many years. One day his horse ran away. When his neighbors heard the news, they came to visit.

"Such bad luck," they said sympathetically.

"Maybe," the farmer replied. The next morning, the horse returned, bringing three wild horses with him.

"How wonderful," the neighbors exclaimed.

"Maybe," replied the old man. The following day, when his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, he was thrown and broke his leg. The neighbors came once again to offer their sympathy about the farmer's misfortune.

"Maybe," answered the farmer. The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the farmer's son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out.

"Maybe," said the farmer.

Maybe the worst thing that ever happens to us can also turn out to be the best thing.

September 29, 1984, was my 25th birthday. It was also the day that my mother died. But, I couldn't wrap my head around it. After all, I thought, mothers don't die on their daughter's birthday!

Well, yes, sadly, they do.

On the first anniversary of my mother's death, I quit my job, packed my bags and left home. It was time to start my next chapter. I headed south to Atlanta, the city of some of my happiest childhood memories. My family welcomed me with open arms, and they were willing to do whatever they could to help me start a new life.

The problem was, I didn't know who I was or what I wanted to do yet. For someone who likes to keep things real, I finally realized I was lying to myself all along. It took my husband courageously telling me he was gay for me to realize he wasn't the only one who needed to come out of the closet. I was hiding my true self, too.

Sometimes when everything seems to be falling apart, it comes together at the same time.

I decided to join a spiritually oriented book club to make new friends. That one decision changed my life in ways I could never have imagined. I found my tribe. When my marriage died, they were the ones that welcomed me with open arms. It was also the time I was introduced to energy healing. Even though I knew nothing about what "healing" was, whenever someone mentioned it, I found myself strangely curious.

Seeds were planted in my consciousness, seeds that sprouted when I got divorced. I needed healing and I was ready to sign up. That was my plan, but the universe had a much bigger plan in mind. While I was in energy healing school, I started to connect some dots that had started revealing themselves the day my mother died. Storms became signs; devastation could be seen as divine intervention. I finally started to see that I am supposed to be a healer. Every fiber in my soul knew it was true.

It turns out that my mother gave birth to me twice. The first time was on the day I was born; the next was on the day she died. Her death was the catalyst to the life I am living today.

September 29 has become a day I celebrate and honor the soul connection between my mother and me. There have been many experiences over the years to confirm it, but the greatest was on my 59th birthday. That was the day my granddaughter Madison was born. Full circle. Thanks, Mom. ♡



Coauthor of The 28 Day Thought Diet and F\*A\*I\*T\*H\*: Finding Answers in the Heart, Mindy Strich is a certified I.E.M. biofield therapist and I.C.F. life coach. For a complimentary healing consultation, call 678-642-7771 or visit [MindyStrich.com](http://MindyStrich.com).

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# The Awakening of Humanity?

By Lynne Girdlestone

Today we are all experiencing one or more of the negative effects of an incredibly destructive 'agent of change.' Although horrific things happen every day on this planet, they usually affect other people elsewhere. COVID-19, however, can potentially reach anyone, anywhere, upending our lives in a multitude of ways. The obvious questions—how do we stop this virus, will a vaccine help, will the global economy recover—are all unknowns. They occupy our thoughts and emotions with every newscast.

For some, the crisis is merely an inconvenient interruption in their 'business as usual.' For others it has created new ways to profit at the expense of others. But for most, it's an amplified survival issue.

We know that nothing happens by chance: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" and "As you sow, so shall you reap." What is happening today has its roots in everything that has gone before. When dysfunction reaches a tipping point, something extraordinary happens to get our attention. This pandemic may be saying "STOP... NOW ... look at the world you've built ... untold suffering amidst obscene excess ... all life forms and the planet itself in mortal danger!" The slowing and isolation are giving us the opportunity to consider these issues deeply and emerge with a better Plan B.

That so many people are getting the message is an incredibly hopeful sign. Neighbors are helping each other; service organizations are expanding their roles and methods; scientific organizations around the world are sharing their research findings on possible treatments and vaccines; governments are trying to lift the financial burden of their citizens.

What would happen if this behavior were to continue post-Covid-19? Could it lead to treating a recovering planet as a 'global village' and its citizens as the one human family it is? It would take time, but we can start by demanding of our 'leaders' that we all push the 'reset' button and begin to move in that direction!

Fortunately, at this very time, a little-known cosmic event is also taking place. As we move into the Aquarian age, characterized by energies of synthesis, unity and cooperation, the spiritual custodians of human evolution—the Masters of Wisdom—have once again sent one of their great ones into the world to act as a teacher for the coming time. Some of the past teachers we have known historically as Confucius, Krishna, Buddha, the Christ and Mohammed. Major world religions all expect another great teacher at some future time, and his imminent appearance has been foreseen by some writers since the late 1800s.

For more than 40 years, British esotericist and lecturer Benjamin Creme informed the world of a coming change—of the collapse of our old structures to make way for the new. He served as a herald for the World Teacher for this age, Maitreya—the one expected by many and longed for by millions (consciously or not), who has come now to guide us through this perilous time and into a cleansed and transformed new world.

Maitreya has advised humanity to make the needed changes to put our world on a saner, fairer path:

"He [Maitreya] will show that essentially men are one, no matter the colour or the creed, that the bounty of Earth belongs to all, and that sharing of that bounty is the key to man's future. Only sharing, and the justice which it will

bring, offers hope to man. Only justice wrought out of sharing will end the plagues of war and terror. Only sharing and justice can bring men to that Brotherhood which is their true inheritance. When men see this they will rise to the challenge and tackle one by one the many problems which daunt us now." (Benjamin Creme's Master from 'Transformation,' Share International magazine)

Maitreya and his group have worked behind the scenes for millennia to guide our human family. Now, with these powerful, incorruptible allies openly in the world for the next 1,500 years, we have the opportunity to build a new world that works for everyone. Will we take it? In response to today's injustices, we are marching. We are protesting. We are sharing resources and helping others. We are agitating for change. We are on the right track! Let's not even consider returning to 'business as usual.'

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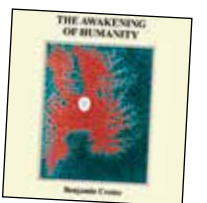
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In *The Awakening of Humanity*, Benjamin Creme leads us on a journey of hope for the joyful world-changing events that are on the way.

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