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STAYING HEALTHY IN A TOXIC WORLD

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Ayurveda Coverage

Ayurveda is one of the world's oldest and wisest systems of health maintenance. The word means science of life, and we published a three-part series on it last fall. 2020 has focused us on health as never before, so now is the perfect time to revisit Ayurveda's secrets.

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Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

~Mark Twain

#Be Kind

CORRECTION: In the article “Out of the Studio and Into the World” in our September issue, we misspelled the last name of the Dharma Project founder. The correct spelling is Chaudhari.

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I knew I had to write an endorsement this month despite the fact that *Natural Awakenings* typically steers away from politics. I am under no illusion that my small but earnest publication holds any sway among the Atlanta electorate, but I do believe that silence is complicity, that every voice matters and that the “hundredth monkey” is out there.

A few weeks ago, I imagined this space enumerating a long list of indictments against the current resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and the party he represents. But I felt uneasy with that idea, and, just last week, I realized why: The Law of Attraction.

This fundamental law states that like attracts like. Yet we often find that, as much as we dislike somebody, something, or some situation, we get more of it, not less. The reason is that our minds are more focused on the negative—what we don’t want—versus the positive—what we do want. And negative minds attract more negative realities.

Accordingly, my “endorsement” is to ask you to vote for what you want, not what you don’t want. In other words, the state of mind you bring to the polling booth should be one of love, not fear; of hope, not despair.

Whether you vote in person or by mail, I urge you to take whatever time you need to generate *positive* feelings and not commit the act of voting with a negative mind.

While I know this might be difficult to do, remember the truism articulated by philosopher and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

Dr. Wayne Dyer’s elaboration on this pronouncement is further instructive:

The non-spiritual being hates evil and is determined to eradicate that which he believes to be evil. The spiritual being knows that everything that he hates and fights weakens him, and that all that he is for empowers him. The non-spiritual being knows what he hates, and much of his energy, both mental and physical, is devoted to fighting what he perceives to be bad or evil. Spiritual beings do not order their lives to be against anything. They work for what they are for rather than fighting what they’re against.

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

(I have to say I do have a nigggle with Dyer’s use of the term “non-spiritual being.” I believe we are all spiritual beings; it’s just that some of us do not realize it and live accordingly.)

So, with a month to go before election day, I encourage you to start now. Generate positive feelings throughout the month so that, by the time November 3rd rolls around, perhaps we can collectively generate a tidal wave of positivity that drives more positive people to the polls. Remember: Like attracts like. If you spend October criticizing, decrying, screaming, abhorring and hating, what type of voters do you think are going to show up in waves?

One last thought for those of you who believe that you are once again saddled with a choice of the lesser of two evils and that you have to hold your nose while pulling the levers of electoral justice: Paraphrasing the advice of Abraham, when you find yourself unable to generate positive feelings for a specific thing, think in more general terms.

Finally, I also urge everyone to contemplate and meditate on the idea of a society that is based much more upon the Divine Feminine than ours is now. In an interview with Bustle Digital Group, Suzanne Kingsbury said, “Consciousness is basically divided up into the masculine side and the feminine side, and we need both to achieve our highest creative potential.” She points out aspects of the Divine Feminine that I encourage you to repeat, like a mantra, to attract what many of us ultimately want on November 3rd—empathy, compassion, creativity, community and collaboration. Please repeat them throughout the morning, afternoon and evening. Then, let’s reap what we sow. 🌱

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.

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WISE TRADITIONS CONFERENCE

Staying Healthy in a Toxic World

The 21st annual Wise Traditions Conference will be held November 13 through 15 in Atlanta, both in person at the Sheraton Atlanta hotel and online via livestream and on-demand viewing.

Produced by The Weston A. Price Foundation, the conference will feature key influencers talking about cutting-edge topics in nutrition and health, including Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Del Bigtree, Natasha Campbell-McBride and Stephanie Seneff. The exhibit hall is free to attend with up to 100 wellness-oriented exhibitors.

From 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, up to 30 speakers will discuss topics that newcomers and well-educated health advocates alike will find valuable. Topics include The Perils of 5G Wireless, Building Biology, Devil in the Garlic, Glyphosate and Cancer, Gut and Psychology Syndrome, Broths and Stocks and Safe Dental Amalgam Removal.

A free film, Andy Wakefield's *1986: the Act*, will run on Friday night.

"The speakers this year are fantastic," says executive director, Kathy Kramer. "Our speakers are covering topics that are especially critical now for staying healthy in a toxic world: healthy foods, healthy homes, 5G, vaccines, GMOs, glyphosate and viruses. The conference is always high-energy, has in-depth learning with a great group of people and, of course, there's delicious food!"

A raw milk fundraising reception will be held on Thursday, November 12. On Monday, November 16, professional guide Will Winter will lead an all-day guided farm visit to help people learn what to look for and what to ask when it comes to farms.

The cost of attending the conference ranges from \$75 to \$440.

The Sheraton Atlanta Hotel is located at 165 Courtland Street, NE Atlanta. The conference sessions will also be available via livestream and recorded for viewing on demand. For more info, visit WiseTraditions.org or call (703) 820-3333. For livestream info, visit FleetwoodOnsite.com/wise/2020/stream/.

Fitriffic Launches Virtual and In-Studio Classes and Consults

Launched in Atlanta in July 2020, Fitriffic is an online portal giving people access to hundreds of virtual and in-studio fitness and wellness classes, including yoga, strength training, high-intensity interval training (HIIT), dance, sound baths, Pilates, Barre, Zumba and more. The service also offers consultations with health coaches, nutritionists, Ayurveda specialists and other wellness professionals.

Unique to the fitness industry, Fitriffic requires no contracts or monthly or annual membership fees. Patrons can buy credits and pay as they go.

"I am so excited to launch this company where we are making fitness flexible again!" says founder and CEO, Ayesha D'Cruz. "Our vision is to help people find balance by providing access to great trainers and workouts as well as experts in wellness modalities like nutrition, meditation and yoga. You can find a virtual or in-studio class or consultation 24/7, and you can work out with experts from around the U.S., Canada or India, either from the comfort of your home or by walking into the nearest Fitriffic-registered studio."

Credit packages range from \$200 to \$550. Free trial class and local events are also offered.

For more information, visit Fitriffic.com, email info@fitriffic.com or reach out on social media.

Souper Jenny Returns to Decatur at Nuts 'n Berries

Even though Decatur's Souper Jenny restaurant closed in early 2019, fans of the neighborhood eatery can get several of its menu items in Decatur once again. From now until the end of the year, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, Souper Jenny staff will be cooking up their hot soups, fresh salads and signature sandwiches at Nuts 'n Berries Healthy Market in Decatur.

The Souper Jenny café in Decatur had been in business for five years but was forced to close due to rising rents and problematic parking. Other locally owned Souper Jenny cafés are located around Atlanta in Brookhaven, Buckhead, the Westside and Roswell. Their menus change daily based on what is fresh and in season.

"We couldn't have dreamed up a more perfect partnership for our North Decatur community," says Nuts'n Berries co-owner, Mari Geier. "Souper Jenny has a restaurant next to our Brookhaven location, and our customers can shop for groceries there on their lunch hour and get a warm lunch at the same time. Now, with our Decatur store's expanded selection of groceries, supplements and CBD, we can provide Souper Jenny fans in Decatur with the conveniences of a healthy meal and a quick shopping trip, too."

Nuts 'n Berries is an Atlanta health food store celebrating 40 years serving the community. It is located in Decatur at 2118 N. Decatur Road and in Brookhaven at 4274 Peachtree Road NE. For more information, visit NutsnBerries.com.



UNITEA & COFFEE Reopens in West End

Vegan café, workspace and community gathering spot, UniTEA & Coffee café has reopened in the historic West End of Atlanta.

Featuring a vegan grab-and-go market stocked with wraps from Tassili's Raw Reality and other local vendors, the Black-owned, woman-led business offers locally and internationally sourced free-trade coffees and teas along with its gourmet vegan cuisine. Favorite sandwich fare include the West Endian, the Fiesta Burrito and the Vegan.

UniTEA & Coffee was originally established in 2016 as 640 West Café with a mission of building a bridge between the arts and the community through food and social events.

Connection to the community is central to the newly reopened café's identity. It hosts pop-ups and community networking events and offers a community event space for rent.

"In a time when it's important to know your impact on the economy, UniTEA & Coffee is an option for supporting a small business that partners with local vendors," says the café's marketing manager, Aziza A. Sheppard. "This synergy ensures a progressive growth for all within a comfortable environment."

UniTea & Coffee café serves breakfast and lunch daily from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is located at 640 Evans Street SW in Atlanta. Visit 640WestATL.com for more.

Busch Center Treats Prostate Cancer with Ultrasound Technology

Studies show that prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men. According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, men in Georgia have a greater incidence of prostate cancer and higher mortality rates than the U.S. average. Traditional treatment options typically include surgery or radiation, both of which can cause significant side effects.

Alpharetta-based Busch Center now offers an alternative treatment for prostate cancer. Transurethral Ultrasound Ablation (TULSA) technology delivers precise doses of sound waves to destroy diseased prostate tissue while protecting the healthy tissue surrounding the cancerous cells. The Busch Center claims to be the first facility in the Southeast to offer the treatment.

The Center uses MRI imaging to identify the precise location of the cancer for accurate and precise targeting of the

technology. After treatment, Busch Center patients can review their imaging results right away with the radiologist in the same visit. The team also provides personalized recommendations for each patient's care plan, based on evidence-based medicine.

Lead physician, Joseph J. Busch Jr., M.D., is an oncological radiologist with 40 years experience in diagnostic radiology. He has trained with and collaborates with experts in whole-body MRI techniques. He offers proactive MRI screening to foster early detection, diagnosis and treatment at Busch Center.

Busch Center is located at Brookside Concourse 100, 3650 Brookside Pkwy, Suite 175, in Alpharetta. For more information, visit BuschCenter.com, Facebook/BuschCenter or Twitter/Busch Center or call 770-424-6270.

Mantra HHC Opens in Woodstock

Mantra HHC is a new metaphysical store and healing center in Woodstock, offering paranormal investigations, spiritual cleansings, holistic healing, CBD products and more. Co-owners Rev. Adam Stoudt and Jay Tree also offer a variety of events to the public, including drum circles, meditations and Reiki energy healing.

"We are excited to open our new shop doors to the public and help them with all of their spiritual needs," says Stoudt, a Universal minister who has been serving the spiritual community for 25 years. "Our services include blessings, spells, palmistry, candle magic, crystals, chakra realignment and healing, entity removal, sound therapy and a calendar of events for the year ahead."

Mantra HHC holistic healing center is located at 703 Bascomb Commercial Parkway, Suite 101 in Woodstock. For more information, call (678) 403-8933.





A Better Breakfast

Healthy Tips and Recipes to Start the Day

by April Thompson

Breakfast sets the stage for the day ahead, and it can either drain or energize us, depending on the what, when and how much aspects of the meal. While health experts agree that many traditional breakfast foods can do more harm than good, delicious, healthy alternatives are within easy reach of the breakfast table.

Morning favorites like pastries, sugary cereals and pancakes, high in refined sugars and carbs, cause insulin production to spike and blood sugar levels to crash, according to David Perlmutter, an acclaimed neurologist based in Naples, Florida, and author of *Grain Brain: The Surprising Truth about Wheat, Carbs, and Sugar - Your Brain's Silent Killers*. “People need to train their bodies to tap into the energy reserves within, harvesting fat for energy rather than being reliant on the next meal. A breakfast high in protein and fat will do that,” he says.

While often waiting until noon for his first meal of the day, Perlmutter frequently opts for eggs and salad drenched in an extra-virgin olive oil dressing to break the fast. Perlmutter suggests waiting 12 hours or longer between dinner and the next day's breakfast. “Time-restricted eating,” or intermittent fasting, can have surprising health benefits, helping crank up production of the brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a powerful initiator for growth of new brain cells, and kick-start autophagy, the body's method of cleaning out damaged cells, according to the neurologist.

A plant-based chef based in Bruges, Belgium, Julie Van den Kerchove switched from a raw, vegan diet to a mainly keto diet, low in carbohydrates, to regain energy after “hitting a wall, experiencing hormonal imbalances and nutritional deficiencies. Before, I would have green smoothies with lots of fruit and leafy greens, but would be ‘hangry’ a few hours later. Now my breakfast consists more of healthy fats and proteins, which helps me stay satisfied and energized until lunchtime. I experience more mental clarity and calmness because my blood sugar is not going up and down,” says Van den Kerchove, a blogger and author of vegan, raw-food and keto cookbooks.

A typical breakfast for her now is a chia seed pudding with a nut or coconut milk, berries, nuts and seeds with a protein powder and stevia, which is easy to prepare in advance, or a warm porridge with hemp seeds, nut butter, chia seeds and almond, hemp or coconut milk, which is high in fiber and healthy fats. “If I feel like [having] something savory, I'll have seed crackers topped with avocado and eggs or a Mediterranean omelet,” she adds.

Teresa Fung, a professor of nutrition at Simmons University and adjunct professor at Harvard University, both in Boston, cautions about completely cutting carbs from breakfast, however. “Fruits and vegetables are important healthy sources of carbs, essential to get enough fiber to maintain healthy gut microbiome and feed the good bacteria in your GI tract,” says Fung, who is an associate editor for *The Journal of Nutrition*. “Optimal morning fuel will include a good dose of protein, vitamins and minerals, fiber, antioxidants and some heart-healthy fats. It will also include a healthy source of carbs that your body can use as energy, leaving proteins to be used for protein synthesis,” says Fung, suggesting a simple, but hearty breakfast of high-fiber oatmeal or yogurt with nuts and fruit.

Like Perlmutter, Fung stresses the importance of eating during daylight hours when certain enzymes are activated. “Our bodies react to daylight even when our eyes are still closed. Eating should match up with our biological clocks, as we are daytime animals, using most of our energy in the day,” she says.

Fung notes Americans that tend to make breakfast the smallest meal of the day and dinner the largest need to better balance meal sizes rather than load up on calories late in the day.

These experts agree on the need to tune into the body's signals for hunger and satiety, not just eating breakfast on an autopilot schedule. “If I've eaten a huge holiday dinner the night before, I may skip my morning meal. I'm a huge proponent in being flexible and listening to your body,” says Van den Kerchove. 🌱

Connect with Washington, D.C., freelance writer April Thompson at AprilWrites.com.

Healthy First Meals

Caramel Apple Cinnamon Crisp Overnight Oats

These oats are a great dessert/breakfast mix that's delicious, but good for you, too. It's made clean by cooking the apples using coconut sugar instead of refined white sugar and adding cinnamon and nutmeg for spice. Prep the oats by mixing all the ingredients, then make a date caramel sauce that's healthier than any caramel sauce you can purchase from the grocery store and so luscious that you'll fall in love with it.



photo by lacey baier

For the Cinnamon Apples:

2 large Honeycrisp or Pink Lady apples, cored, peeled and diced
2 Tbsp coconut sugar
1/8 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp nutmeg

For the Oats:

1 1/2 cups rolled oats
1 1/2 cups unsweetened almond milk
2 Tbsp chia seeds
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

For the Date Caramel Sauce:

10–12 pitted dried dates
1/8 tsp sea salt
1/2 cup hot water, divided

To make the cinnamon apples, combine the apples, coconut sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg in a saucepan, and cook over medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes until the apples are softened, but not mushy.

For the oats, combine the oats, milk, chia seeds, vanilla and cinnamon in a mixing bowl.

To make the date caramel sauce, process the dates and sea salt in a food processor until they are finely chopped. Add the water, 1 tablespoon at a time, to the dates until the mixture becomes smooth and resembles caramel. You may need to scrape down the sides of the food processor.

Spoon half of the oat mixture into the bottom of an 8-ounce jar with a lid or a sealable container, then top with the date sauce and apples. Repeat in a second jar with the remaining ingredients.

Refrigerate the oats overnight or for at least 4 hours. The oats can be enjoyed cold straight from the refrigerator or heated in the microwave for 1 to 2 minutes.

Reprinted from *Clean-Eating Breakfasts and Lunches Made Simple*, by Lacey Baier.

Salmon Cakes with Fennel & Parsnips

For the vegetables:

1/2 cup fennel, shaved thin (use a mandolin slicer for thinnest slices)
1/4 cup parsnips, shaved
1/2 Tbsp coconut oil

For the salmon cakes:

6 oz can boneless, skinless, wild-caught salmon, drained
1 egg
1 Tbsp quinoa flakes
1 Tbsp fresh chives, chopped
1 tsp capers
1 tsp lemon juice
1/2 Tbsp coconut oil, for frying
4 radishes with greens



Heat oil in a skillet and sauté fennel and parsnips until tender, about 7 minutes. Remove to serving plate.

In a mixing bowl, combine salmon, egg, quinoa flakes, chives, capers and lemon juice. Stir to mix until most of the large chunks of salmon are broken down.

Heat oil in a frying pan over medium heat, form salmon mixture into 2 patties and cook 4 minutes per side.

Place salmon cakes over fennel and parsnips and garnish with radishes. Serve warm.

Provided by David Perlmutter, DrPerlmutter.com.

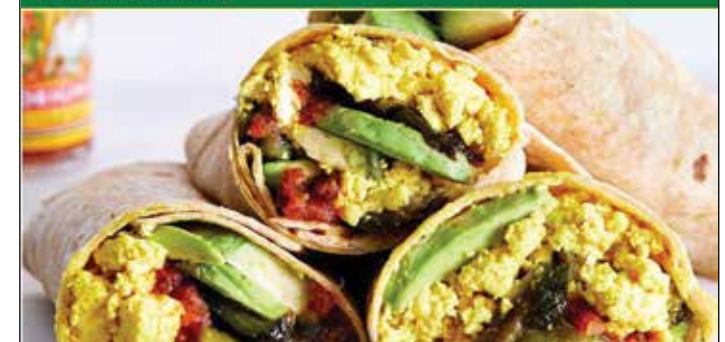


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Calm Down

Taming the Flames of Stress-Related Illness

by Marlaina Donato

We are beings of neurochemical and hormonal intricacy, and within this mixed bag of biology lies our magic. Our human experience is visceral; we cry from sadness and joy, flush from embarrassment, laugh with amusement and exhibit quirky mannerisms when we lie. Whether we see it as a blessing or a curse, we're hardwired to embody the sacred fire of our emotions.

It also means that stress and our bodies are in perpetual partnership. "Systematically, the mind and body work together. Grabbing your belly when you hear bad news and saying, 'I feel sick,' or having 'butterflies in your stomach' are a testament to how everyday stress affects us physically," says Stephanie Mansour, Chicago fitness expert and host of the national PBS show *Step It Up With Steph*.

"Stress serves a useful purpose by increasing alertness—the sometimes lifesaving 'fight-or-flight' response—but chronic stress leads to elevated stress hormones like cortisol and catecholamines," says emergency room physician Thomas Krisanda, at Northwest Hospital, in Randallstown, Maryland. "Cortisol can elevate blood glucose and suppress the immune system. Elevated catecholamines raise blood pressure and stress the heart. Over time, this can lead to hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes or strokes."

According to The American Institute of Stress, 77 percent of people experience the physical backlash of emotional stress in the form of headaches, chronic migraines, fatigue, digestive woes, muscle tension, dizziness and changes in libido. Research published this year in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* shows that children that experience severe adversity or live with alcoholics or drug addicts are at a 50 percent higher risk for developing cardiovascular disease later in life. Experts agree that this statistic goes beyond poor lifestyle choices, and might point to a biological inability to cope with everyday pressures.

Working with—rather than against—the body's nervous system by employing lifestyle changes, releasing trauma and considering options like a nourishing diet, safe herbal options and gentle energy modalities can help to break a vicious cycle.

Gut Instincts

Studies involving both mice and humans show that beneficial gut microorganisms are altered by emotional stress. The same bacteria responsible for bolstering the body's fortress of immunity also generate neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and

norepinephrine. These neurochemicals in the gut's enteric nervous system control major biological functions that include heart rate, sleep cycles, muscle movement and mood.

While commonly prescribed antibiotics eradicate infectious invaders, they also kill off beneficial bacteria and neurotransmitters, opening the door to depressive disorders. Because approximately 95 percent of the body's serotonin is produced in the gut, it's not surprising that overuse of antibiotics has been associated with mental health conditions. British research published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* in 2015 documents case-control studies over an 18-year period involving 202,974 patients with depression. The findings show a high risk for anxiety and depression following repeated antibiotic use.

Connecting the dots further, 2018 research published in the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* correlates compromised intestinal permeability with a weakened blood-brain barrier and alcohol addiction. Research published in 2014 in the journal *PLOS One* involving patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) reveals abnormalities in catecholamines, elevated plasma cortisol and hyperactivity of the amygdala—the part of the brain that can become stuck on overdrive from trauma and other life stresses.

In a nutshell, negative emotional states can suppress immunity and foster more frequent antibiotic prescriptions and in turn, promote neurological loops of chronic depression and anxiety, and even more compromised immune response.

Functional gastrointestinal disorders like IBS and inflammation-driven Crohn's disease are often exacerbated by emotional upset and improved with stress management techniques like biofeedback, cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis, hypnotherapy, meditation and breath work.

One Body, Many Selves

Resolving emotional trauma can offer unexpected hope for conditions that elude improvement or scientific understanding. A deeper look into how unrecognized or unreleased emotional pain can contribute to disease might help to solve the riddle of digestive problems, eczema, inflammatory bowel conditions and pain syndromes,



including the multi-system agonies of fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. It's a widespread misunderstanding that psychosomatic (mind-body) health conditions are imaginary or the product of mental instability. In actuality, the term psychosomatic simply refers to physical diseases with no organic origin that are presumed to have unconscious emotional taproots.

"We are made up of different types of energy," explains LaStacia Ross, a reiki master and sound healer at Eclectic Soul Studio, in Pittsburg, Kansas. "Physical or sensory energy is the energy of the physical body. Our outer energy field is subtle energy which consists of layers and includes thoughts and emotions. I like to think of the subtle energy field as a library containing the records of everything we've ever experienced."

Reiki, a form of non-touch therapy, is now deemed valuable by many respected hospitals, like the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, in Manhattan. Springboarding from the philosophy that we are trinities of body, mind and spirit, reiki and other forms of energy medicine aim to encourage the flow of vital life force. Ross, who also uses sound resonance via tuning

forks in her work, has witnessed significant improvement in her clients. "Energy work can help release stored energetic patterns of trauma and stress that no longer serve us," she says. "Relaxation is an immediate benefit of energy work. People often feel a huge mental weight lifted and report pain relief, sometimes after just one session." Despite the many gains of energy work, Ross emphasizes individual timing. "On a subconscious level, pain or illness can serve us in some way without us realizing it. Sometimes we're not ready to work through our issues or let them go, even if we think we are."

Investing in Equilibrium

Stress-induced psychosomatic illness does not discriminate, and even affects members of the medical field. A 2009 study published in the *Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* found that professional burnout in nurses can manifest as back and neck pain, acidity, anger and impaired memory.

Krisanda underscores the importance of self-care in all walks of life. "If you don't take care of yourself, you are useless to care for others. Adopt a healthy diet and

Everyday Practical Tips

From Stephanie Mansour:

- Deep breathing and rolling the shoulders forward and back a few times can relieve muscle tension.
- Eating something crunchy like an apple or carrots can lessen feelings of stress.
- Meditating for even one minute can help reduce excessive cortisol in the body. Doing small increments daily rather than over long intervals net better and bigger benefits.
- If your mind is racing 24/7 and breathing techniques don't work, change your environment. Get up and go to another room in the house. Go outside. If tight on space and can't go outside, turn your body to look in a different direction. Stay in the same spot on the couch and just look at something else.
- Don't put your body under more stress with demanding, cortisol-fueling workouts; opt for yoga, meditation and Pilates.
- When you get your heart rate up (in as quickly as five minutes of doing cardio), you feel happier.
- Maintain a healthy sleep schedule and go to bed earlier.

From Sarah Kate Benjamin:

- Reconnect to the earth in whatever way you can; go for a walk, cook a meal, smell flowers or just sit outside.

From LaStacia Ross:

- As an energy exercise, try what I call The Fountain of Light: See and feel white light coming up from the earth and into your feet. Feel it move all the way up through your body, out of your head and back down to your feet to start again, like a fountain. Repeat this many times, feeling the vibrant, white light energy flowing through you.

Plant Power for Combatting Stress

Sarah Kate Benjamin's Personal Favorites:

Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) soothes restless minds from anxiety and insomnia, and eases menstrual cramps or muscle spasms.

Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) helps to strengthen the brain and revitalize the central nervous system, and helps to calm the mind and relieve nervous stress and headaches. It is even more beneficial when combined with lavender or chamomile.

Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) helps to soothe emotional and muscle tension; relieve stress-related gut symptoms like gas, cramping, irritable bowel syndrome and ulcers; calm heat-related emotional and physical issues such as eczema, anger and frustration; and generally promote a sense of calm. Wonderful in baths, teas and as an herbal garnish.

In addition to Benjamin's recommendations, other stress-fighting herbs to consider are Ginkgo, panax and Siberian ginseng, fo-ti, rhodiola, reishi mushroom, goji berries, licorice root, lavender, rose, lemon balm, tulsi (holy basil), ashwagandha and mimosa bark.



alisonmarros/Unsplash.com

exercise and make it a routine. We live in a very materialistic society, and I believe this also leads to stress, unhappiness and a sense of being entitled and never being satisfied. Just let go."

He also stresses the importance of support. "An emergency room is an incredibly hectic, frightening and sometimes violent place. I rely on my colleagues, and we support each other. For me, the most important thing is to realize that I'm not in it alone." Krisanda also finds balance by taking a few minutes in a quiet place to collect his thoughts and enjoy a peaceful moment.

Basic, whole foods can help to maintain homeostasis. "Make sure that food is fueling you," says Mansour. "Cooked vegetables and broths are very soothing. Instead of a juice cleanse or an extreme diet, focus on nourishing, calming foods like soups, lean proteins to stabilize blood sugar levels and healthy fats to support brain function. Reducing alcohol can help improve liver function."

Sarah Kate Benjamin, a holistic chef and herbalist in Sebastopol, California, finds her own healing rhythms by eating with the seasons and using medicinal plants in inspired, everyday dishes. Co-author of

The Kosmic Kitchen Cookbook: Everyday Herbalism and Recipes for Radical Wellness, she sees herbs as life-giving examples of resilience. "Herbs have been here long before us and have experienced their own form of stressors. Working with nervous system-supportive herbs in my food, beverages or even as tinctures really help me find balance when I'm overwhelmed."

Some of her allies are oat tops, lemon balm, skullcap, chamomile and passionflower. For Benjamin, everyday choices play a huge role in healing. "Making small lifestyle shifts in your work or home life can really help you move into a more relaxed state. I like to think of it as a sort of mantra: 'Help the herbs help you,'" she says. In a world that is fixated on external validation, little things matter. "If I give myself permission to do the things that really nourish me, I'll be the best version of myself. Perhaps most importantly, I will like me, and that matters tremendously."

Marlaina Donato is an author and recording artist. Connect at AutumnEmbersMusic.com.



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HEALING WAYS



Strong and Supple Joints

How to Keep Hips and Knees Happy

by Ronica O'Hara

Occasional knee or hip pain affects almost everyone, keeping us from daily tasks, making sitting painful and walking difficult. Causes can range from over-exercise to injuries, obesity and arthritis as we age. By the time we reach 65 years or older, 69 percent of women and 56 percent of men have arthritic symptoms, according to Boston University researchers. Costly joint replacement surgery which carries a high risk of adverse effects is often recommended for advanced cases, but by taking simple, natural preventive and remedial measures proactively, we can strengthen our knee and hip joints, handle related problems if they arise and remain physically strong and active.

Ways to Strengthen Hips and Knees

Consume foods that nourish bones and connective tissues. For strong bones, eat foods rich in calcium, magnesium and potassium, such as dark leafy greens (bok choy, Chinese cabbage, kale and collard greens), figs, nuts, tofu, avocados and bone broth. Six prunes a day boosted bone density in women over 70 with osteoporosis, research shows. Foods that support flexible

tendons and ligaments include fatty fish, lentils, nuts, vegetables like spinach and broccoli, and colorful fruit like strawberries and oranges.

Practice tai chi, qigong or hatha yoga.

The gentle, low-impact movements and stretches associated with these approaches get synovial fluid flowing in the larger joints, effecting smoother mobility and increased flexibility; numerous studies document that they reduce joint pain and stiffness. "The key is not just to stretch, but to balance strength and stretching in a safe, mindful way," says Andrea Trank, a health coach and yoga teacher in Fort Myers, Florida. Although personal or class instruction is best, how-to videos can be found on YouTube.

Walk every day. In a four-year Northwestern University study, people at risk of knee osteoarthritis that walked at a moderate or brisk pace for at least 10 minutes a day, one hour a week, had one-eighth the disabled mobility of those that walked less. Posture helps: Walking straight and tall while extending each leg back as far as it'll go will "really let your glut muscles work," advises

chiropractor Aaron Rossi, of Marietta, Georgia—an important compensation for the time we sit with knees and hips flexed.

Ways to Lower Pain Levels

Consider the right supplements. Obtaining 1,000 milligrams daily of calcium and 600 international units of vitamin D is essential for bone health, according to the National Institutes of Health; consider taking a supplement if the diet is not adequate. In addition, study-proven options that reduce joint pain in the knees and hips include glucosamine and chondroitin, S-adenosyl-L-methionine (S-AMe) and avocado soybean unsaponifiable.

The benefits of bodywork. A massage can loosen up tight muscles and realign structural issues in the knees and hips while also lowering stress-producing cortisol and raising levels of pain-reducing serotonin. A study at Canada's McMaster University found that massage works on the cellular level to reduce inflammation and promote the growth of new mitochondria in muscles. Useful styles are Swedish, deep tissue, myofascial release and shiatsu. Ask for references from friends, medical practitioners, fitness centers and natural health stores or find online a certified practitioner with at least 500 hours of training.

Try acupuncture. A new meta-study of 39 studies with 20,827 patients concluded that acupuncture effectively reduces pain for as long as 12 months, and the National Institutes of Health endorses it for knee pain. "It is believed to stimulate the nervous system and in turn, the way the brain registers pain signals," says acupuncturist Daryl Thuroff, at the Yinova Center, in New York City. Find an acupuncturist at nccaom.org/find-a-practitioner-directory.



Supplements for Suppleness

Glucosamine and chondroitin. Research suggests this combo relieves pain, improves joint mobility and slows arthritic damage to the joints. One study found it benefits up to 70 percent of people with knee arthritis, and a large multinational trial found the mixture to be as effective at reducing pain, stiffness and swelling in knee osteoarthritis as the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) celecoxib. It appears most suited for treating moderate to severe pain and takes two months to take effect.

S-AMe. This naturally occurring S-adenosyl-L-methionine molecule builds strong joints by delivering sulfur to cartilage, and research shows it may be as effective as aspirin and ibuprofen at improving joint function. It takes a month to take effect, but doesn't have the side effects of NSAIDs. It's also been shown to lower depression.

Avocado soybean unsaponifiable (ASU). Routinely used to treat osteoarthritis in Europe, ASU improves symptoms of hip and knee osteoarthritis (OA) and reduces or eliminates the use of NSAIDs, a meta-analysis concluded; it also appears to reduce OA's progression.

Consult a chiropractor. People with osteoarthritic knees that underwent two weeks of chiropractic knee adjustments had substantially less pain, better mobility and fewer grinding and clicking sensations in the knees, reported a study in *The Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association*. In a small study in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, four out of five patients with hip arthritis noticed improved symptoms after nine or fewer chiropractic treatments. Many chiropractors offer not only spinal adjustments, but also a range of treatments from exercises to prolotherapy.

Explore injection therapies. Known as regenerative medicine, these therapies use injections in the knee or hip to naturally stimulate the body to produce collagen and rejuvenate tissue. In a *British Medical Bulletin* meta-study, 82 percent of patients with mild to moderate osteoarthritis of the knee were satisfied with prolotherapy, which uses dextrose injections. Platelet-rich plasma injections use centrifuged platelets from the patient's body, and have been used by athletes like Tiger Woods and Rafael Nadal to treat sports injuries.

Ronica O'Hara is a Denver-based health writer. Connect at OHaraRonica@gmail.com.

Pain Relief with Chiropractic

In addition to the traditional chiropractic focus on adjusting the spine to ease joint pain, many doctors today are using a wide array of approaches to ameliorate hip and knee pain, whether the cause is an injury, inflammation, arthritis or another chronic condition.

Determining the cause is the first step, says chiropractor Derrell Blackburn, senior manager of chiropractic relations and training for The Joint Chiropractic, a nationwide chain of 500 clinics. If both hips or knees go bad, he says, it's probably due to aging. If the problem involves a hip or knee on one side, "the underlying truth is overuse or compensation," which can be helped by realigning the sacroiliac joint or pelvic girdle.

Chiropractor Gil Kentof, of the Dr. Gil Center for Back, Neck, and Chronic Pain Relief, in Franklin, Tennessee, first recommends that patients with hip pain join a basic yoga class, find a good video or search "hip stretches" online and exercise according to what they research five times a week. "If there is no improvement in three weeks, or if there is more pain while doing the exercises, an examination is in order to determine the



origin of the pain and the best treatment option," he says.

The exam often includes X-rays and sometimes an MRI. Treatment options can include specific chiropractic adjustments, deep tissue laser therapy, stem cell injections into the hip joint and in severe cases, a referral for surgery, but, "Surgery is always a last resort," he says. For knees, "Good success has been obtained with stem cell treatment and platelet-

rich plasma injected into the knee," he advises. "This procedure is performed by our medical team and is minimally invasive with very little downtime." He also suggests that knee-pain patients stretch their hamstrings, quadriceps and calves on a regular basis and use a pull-on brace or ice packs for temporary relief.

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Ayurvedic Self-Care Tips for the Fall Season

by Jaya Ramamurthy

Anip is in the air, and trees are starting their colorful transition—fall is upon us! Ayurveda, a holistic healing system from ancient India very much in use today, focuses on seasonal wellness and recommends shifting one's self-care accordingly in order to adapt optimally to the environment.

Ayurveda talks of three *doshas*, or fundamental life forces—*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*—which combine in unique ways to make up our natural constitutions, or *prakriti*. Knowing one's *prakriti* helps one optimize health of body and mind and knowing how the seasons express the doshas can deepen one's harmony and vitality.

In Ayurvedic terms, fall is the start of the *vata* season.

Fall is cooler and drier than summer, and under *vata* influence, the qualities of fall are cold, dry, rough, mobile and light. To bring balance, one must counter those qualities with their opposites: warm, moist, smooth, slow and heavy. For fall—and winter, too—it is best to favor heavy, moist foods made with good fats such as ghee, virgin coconut and sesame oils. It's also recommended to choose sweet, sour and salty tastes and to reduce astringent, bitter and pungent tastes, which are naturally drying and cooling.

To maintain well-being, Ayurveda recommends that we slowly shift our daily routines from one season to the next. As summer turns to fall, cooling and juicy fruits and vegetables give way to sweeter and heavier ones. Melons, fresh greens and cucumbers are replaced by root vegetables and squashes, and sweet fruits like apples and pears come to harvest. Freshly harvested grains and legumes also enter into the diet in the fall in most cultures. Ayurveda recommends we eat what is naturally growing in the seasons. But since grocery stores carry most produce year-round now, this wisdom can get lost.

Look for locally or regionally grown produce that tends to be seasonal. In addition, it is also important to avoid cold, dry and light foods—chips, cereals, granola bars, and cold salads, for example—that aggravate dryness and cause imbalance in the body. In the fall, it is best to eat warm, moist meals. Soups and stews made with colorful fall vegetables and spices provide nourishing options. Fall spices, such as turmeric, ginger, black pepper, cinnamon and allspice, are warming and aid in digesting heavier foods.

Ayurveda points out that our digestive power is lowest in the summer and highest in the winter. Also, one's appetite follows the sun each day; it peaks in the middle of the day along with the sun and is comparatively lower at dawn and dusk. Modern medicine supports the idea that eating seasonal foods according to this biological and chronological clock is smart science. Eating smaller breakfasts and suppers and consuming the heaviest meal around the middle of the day allows the body to optimize digestion.

Seasonal Cleanse

As seasons change, it is wise to do a gentle home-based cleanse. This checklist is a good starting point and can be practiced for the entire season.

- 1 Reduce or eliminate caffeine, white sugar, white flour and alcohol.
- 2 If a morning tea or coffee is habitual, especially to stimulate the bowels, switch to an herbal tea, such as Holy Basil or Tulsi with rose. It is a heat-reducing tea that will cleanse summer's heat buildup.
- 3 Cultivate a regular habit of elimination soon after waking. Make the time to start a morning hygiene routine.
- 4 Eat a light breakfast of seasonal, stewed fruit at room temperature. Avoid dry cereals, protein bars and multi-ingredient smoothies.
- 5 Sip warm water throughout the day.
- 6 Take advantage of cooler days to get more time out in the sun.
- 7 While still enjoying summer's fresh vegetables and fruits in salads and lighter fare, avoid eating raw food in the evenings. Switch to a small cooked supper instead.
- 8 Eat dinner or supper at least two hours before bedtime.

- 9 Adjust bedtimes to reflect the change in sunlight.
- 10 Listen to your body's cues. Appetites tend to increase as the weather cools and the desire for cold, light foods naturally decreases.
- 11 Start a daily oil massage practice before the shower. This practice is called *abhyanga* in Ayurveda. It is a grounding and nourishing self-care practice that helps counter the season's drying and unsettling tendencies. The skin gets protection from the drying effects of a warm shower, so there's often no need for topical lotions afterward. Add a few drops of an essential oil to extra virgin olive oil for the massage. Experiment with warming oils, such as frankincense, patchouli, or ginger. Sesame oil is traditionally used due to its warming properties.
- 12 Ayurvedic daily practices of *neti* and *nasya* are invaluable in protecting nasal membranes and sinus passages during this dry time of year. *Neti* is the practice of washing the sinuses with saline water, which keeps these passages free of allergens and congestion. Neti pots are easily available online.
Nasya is the practice of placing a few drops of oil (typically, sesame oil) inside each nostril with a dropper and inhaling deeply. *Nasya* keeps nasal passages from drying out, providing a strong barrier against seasonal germs.
- 13 Adjust the timing of outdoor exercise to a warmer time of the day rather than early mornings. Take care not to expose the body to the drying effects of cold temperatures. It is best to protect against the elements, erring on the side of being warm rather than cold. On frosty mornings, a brisk yoga practice in a sunlit room may get the job done, creating warmth and flow and making for an energetic start to the day.

As summer gives way to fall, these simple recommendations can help foster balance for total well-being.

Grounding Breathwork

When the weather starts to cool, many find that colder days leave them feeling foggy, anxious or sleep-disturbed. *Anuloma viloma pranayama* is a form of alternate nostril breathing that's designed to ground the body and mind without disturbing the body's energies. A daily meditation practice where one sits still can be challenging; this practice offers a great way to start a meditation habit focused on the breath. A demonstration of this breathwork is easily available online. [For a longer version of this article, go to bit.ly/ayurveda-fall-20 — Ed.]



Jaya Ramamurthy, whose Indian roots inspired her to share the restorative wellness offered by Ayurveda's health care methods, is a state-certified clinical Ayurveda specialist in private practice. Reach her at AyurWellness@gmail.com or AyurJaya.com.

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TAI CHI AND QIGONG

Life Force in Motion

by Marlaina Donato



The flowing movement of tai chi mirrors the serenity of water, but still waters run deep. This ancient practice of gentle meditative movement is an offshoot of Chinese martial arts that offers a spectrum of surprising benefits, including healthier soft tissues and bones, as well as improved sleeping.

According to *Harvard Health Publishing*, when practiced consistently, tai chi supports both upper and lower body strength with effects that are akin to resistance training and brisk walking. Tai chi helps to fine-tune neurons of the inner ear and encourages muscle and ligament flexibility, resulting in better balance and fewer falls. The practice is highly adaptable and anyone can benefit, even those that are wheelchair-bound or recovering from surgery.

“It appears effortless, with slow and smooth movements, but there is immense power underneath the tranquility,” says Paul Lam, family physician and director of the Tai Chi for Health Institute, in Sydney, Australia. “Tai chi has been shown by over 500 medical studies to benefit almost all aspects of health, including mobility, immunity and heart and lung function.” Lam also highlights other related benefits, including lower blood pressure, less arthritis pain and stress relief.

Research published last year in the journal *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* shows that 12 weeks of

tai chi practice initiated beneficial changes in the immune system with subsequent improvement of lung function in children ages 6 to 12 with asthma.

A River of Energy

While tai chi is a modified martial art with a focus on form, its close relative, qigong, is a mind-body wellness system that uses breath, simple movement and stillness. Both cultivate *qi*, or life force, that is believed to permeate all natural existence. The concept of qi, yet to be understood scientifically, is the basis of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the focus of many studies in China and elsewhere.

“It is believed that qi flows throughout and around the body. If we are healthy, the qi will be moving smoothly and abundantly. If we are not healthy, the qi may be stagnant, excessive or deficient,” says qigong instructor and acupuncturist Jeffrey Chand, in British Columbia, Canada.

Robert Chuckrow, a retired physics professor in Ossining, New York, and the author of *Tai Chi Dynamics* and *The Tai Chi Book*, explains, “When muscles are tensed, qi is inhibited. Instead, when muscles are relaxed and the body is open and moves naturally, qi is enhanced. Such cultivation of qi is the main component of qigong. Tai chi actually includes qigong.” Chuckrow currently

has two students that are 100 years old and notes that seniors greatly appreciate and benefit from these arts once they experience the connection between mind and body.

Lee Holden, a qigong master teacher at the Holden QiGong Center, in Santa Cruz, California, emphasizes the consequence of being in perpetual “fight-or-flight” mode from everyday, nonthreatening life stresses. “The waves crashing to the shore, the river flowing down the mountain, demonstrate nature’s boundless energy. We, as human beings, have cut ourselves off from that source of energy. Through qigong practice, we plug back into that natural energy reserve and circulate it through our minds and bodies. Stress, like a kink in the hose, causes a stagnation of qi. Relaxation, like unwinding the kink, gets the qi to flow.”

Nourishing the Nervous System

Tai chi and qigong lower the stress hormone cortisol, improve brain function and have been shown to decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression. Both approaches are part of many addiction recovery programs to help nourish mind-body connections for better managing stress.

“In my view, both qigong and tai chi are wonderful exercises for the nervous system, which during practice, undergoes intense moment-to-moment receiving, processing and sending of neural electrical information. This electricity stimulates cells to absorb oxygen and nutrients and expel waste products, and it beneficially helps arrange material within cells,” says Chuckrow.

In essence, it’s all about encouraging calm, something we all need. Chand summarizes its benefits superbly. “It empowers individuals to help themselves. The more stress management tools we have to help ourselves, the better our overall health and quality of life is.”

Marlaina Donato is a body-mind-spirit author and visionary composer. Connect at AutumnEmbersMusic.com.

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CONNECTING WITH THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Yoga Asanas for Balance, Strength, Safety and Self-Compassion

by Sheila Ewers

(All photos: 2TPhoto)

Both yoga and its sister science, Ayurveda, view the physical universe as a composition of five primary elements: earth, water, fire, air and space. These elements compose the world outside of ourselves and within our own bodies. They represent expressions of energy that move from dense to subtle. Yogis believe that our ability to keep them in balance can preserve our health and well-being — physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The sequence below is helpful to sense and balance all five elements through traditional yoga asana.

Earth

The earth element relates to the framework of the body itself and can be experienced most fully in the density of bones as they get moved by muscles and placed in various shapes. We often begin a yoga practice connecting to the earth element to build awareness in the body and come home to ourselves. The energy of the earth element helps us experience stability, grounding and a sense of belonging. It dominates *muladhara chakra*, the root energy of the body, and, when it is in balance, it promotes feelings of safety and support. We can experience the earth element in yoga asanas that shift our awareness downward and emphasize stillness at the root of the body.

Asana: Thunderbolt Pose

Kneel on the floor with your lower legs folded beneath you and your hands resting gently on your thighs. Keep your big toes and knees close together. Use the support of a block beneath the buttocks or blanket beneath the heels to relieve any tension. Elongate your spine, reaching through the crown of your head. Close your eyes or keep the gaze softly focused on the floor



in front of you as you direct your awareness to your breath. Visualize the breath moving through the steady container of the outer body as you practice *sama vritti*, or balanced breathing, by inhaling for a count of four and exhaling for a count of four.

Water

The water element dominates the sacral chakra and encompasses the entire hip and pelvic region, along with the organs of reproduction and elimination housed therein. Energetically, water connects to emotions, creativity, fluidity and pleasure. When in balance, the water element allows us to move with grace and flow with the inevitable waves of pleasure and pain that roll through our lives. In yoga asana, we experience the water element through movement and flexibility and practice linking breath to movement.

Breath: Victorious Breath

As you breathe in and out through the nose, gently constrict the back of your throat to narrow the glottis, creating a vibration in the throat. The friction will sound like the rhythmic waves of the ocean. Keep the breath long, smooth and effortless as you begin to initiate movement while maintaining the breathing.



Asana: Cat/Cow Pose

From Thunderbolt, transition to hands and knees. Linking breath to movement, inhale and create an anterior tilt in the pelvis. Slowly extend the spine and feel the movement roll through until the chest and head are lifted and forward for Cow Pose. Then exhale as you create a posterior tilt in the pelvis and roll the spine into flexion for a Cat tuck. Continue moving with the breath for four to five rounds until the movement feels fluid and the spine feels supple.

Fire

The element of fire is hot, stimulating and invigorating. It connects most fully to the solar plexus chakra, and when it is in balance, it promotes will-power, discipline, commitment and strength. The fire element is enhanced when we practice yoga regularly and challenge ourselves to achieve greater stamina, work towards more challenging asana, or hold shapes for longer stretches of time. With consistent practice, the fire element purifies the body, tames the fluctuations of the mind, and harnesses attention into single-pointed concentration.

Asana: Mountain Pose

Transition from hands and knees to standing upright in Mountain Pose at the front of your mat. Then warm your body with three to five rounds of Sun Salutations as you continue to link breath and movement.



Asana: Plank Pose

From Mountain Pose, fold forward and bring your hands to your mat directly



beneath your shoulders. Step one foot at a time towards the back of your mat until your body forms one long straight line. Wrap your abdominal muscles towards the center of your body and isometrically lift through the inner thighs, squeezing everything toward the midline of the body. Reach through the crown of the head and the heels and hold for at least five breaths, then drop your knees to the floor and rest.



Asana: Dolphin Pose

Come on to all fours, aligning shoulders over hands and hips over knees. Keeping your arms parallel and shoulder-width apart, slowly lower your forearms to the ground. Press your palms and forearms firmly into the mat. Curl your toes under, then begin to lift your hips toward the sky. Keep your knees bent slightly at first to lengthen your spine; then engage your core and extend your legs. Continue pressing the forearms down and firm your shoulder blades against your back. Gaze slightly forward and down between your arms. Hold for at least five breaths. Then lower your knees to the floor and rest.

Optional Challenge: Feathered Peacock Pose

From Dolphin Pose, walk your feet towards your elbows until your hips are above your shoulders. Lift one leg towards the ceiling as you continue to press down through your forearms and engage your abdominal muscles. Bend the knee of the leg that remains on the floor, then exhale and kick up through both legs, straightening as much as possible. Keep pressing down into the forearms as you wrap the abdominal



muscles towards the center of the body and reach through both legs. Hold as long as you feel safe, then return to Dolphin Pose and lower your knees to the mat to rest.

Air

The air element connects us to lightness, movement and adaptability. In the body, it expresses through the breath and the circulation of *prana*, or energy. On a more subtle level, the air element reflects the discriminating faculty of the mind that allows us to practice non-judgmental awareness and see the connection among all beings. In asana practice, the element of air relates to the energy of the heart and can be heightened in shapes, such as balancing poses, that demand effortless concentration, softly focused awareness and self-compassion.

Asana: Mountain Pose

Once you feel rested from Dolphin Pose, return to standing in Mountain Pose at the front of your mat.

Asana: Open Tree Pose

Root your right foot into the mat as you flex your left hip and float your left knee forward, then open the left knee wide, abducting to the left. Keep the foot floating as you point the left toes and balance on your right leg. Lift your right arm softly overhead with the palm facing inward, and float your left arm out by your side with your palm facing up. Keep your abdominal muscles engaged for stability and focus your gaze on an unmoving point ahead of you.



Space

The final and most subtle element is space. In yoga and Ayurveda, the element of space is primordial. It is that from which all other elements emerge, and it connects to consciousness, the sound of OM and

the intelligence of the Universe or the Divine. It is more subtle than form, but enlivens form with wisdom. Connecting to the element of space in our yoga practice brings us into connection with the crown chakra, which is often perceived in meditation or stillness.



Asana: Corpse Pose

When you have completed Open Tree Pose on both sides, lie down on your mat in a supine position. With or without props to support your body, make space by widening your legs and moving your arms slightly away from your body. Lengthen the back of your neck. Scan your body to soften any muscles that are still engaged. Part your lips slightly to unhinge your jaw and relax the tongue in your mouth. Release any technique or pattern in the breath so that the breath is soft, smooth and effortless. Then simply observe your inhalation and exhalation. If thoughts move through the mind, return awareness to your breath. Stay for five to 10 minutes and emerge by slowly returning to a seated position.

In every yoga practice, regardless of the poses we choose, we have the opportunity to connect with all five elements and to harmonize them within our bodies, moving our awareness from the density of earth to the infinite possibility of space. In so doing, we are reminded of the many dimensions of our own human form and possibility as well as our connection to everything in the Universe that derives from the same elements. 🌸



Sheila Ewers, ERYT500, YACEP, owns Blue Lotus Yoga in Johns Creek. A former professor of writing and literature, she leads group and private lessons, yoga philosophy workshops, yoga teacher training and retreats. Contact Sheila at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.

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LifeQuakes

Awakening to Your True Purpose

by Paul Chen

Dr. Toni Galardi describes herself as a soul purpose activator. She holds a Ph.D. in psychology and is a shamanic practitioner, a Jungian astrologer and, formerly, a psychotherapist. The 10th-anniversary edition of her book, *The LifeQuake Miracle: Awakening to Your True Purpose in Times of Personal and Global Upheaval*, was released in July. In the book, Galardi presents a seven-stage process for navigating the life episodes known as “the dark night of the soul.” I was particularly impressed with her discussion of the early stages of the process, which, if recognized and addressed, can help one avoid a lot of doubt and pain. I interviewed Dr. Galardi in August. [Lightly edited for clarity —Ed.]

PC: First, tell us what the book is about.

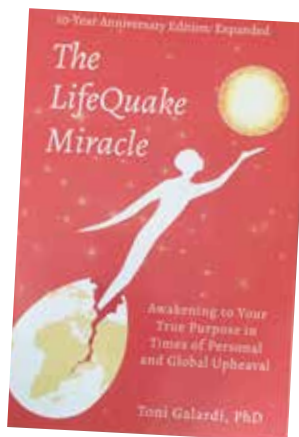
TG: LifeQuakes are those times in your life when you have outgrown the structures — both outer and inner — of your life, and it's time to move into a new state of consciousness. The book is about helping people dissolve their fear of change and gives tools for how to do that so they can begin to pay attention, in the first two stages of the model, to notice when the subtle beginnings of a chapter of their life is ending.

I use the body: I describe how to go into your body and go right into where you fear change — and go back to the very beginning. What was the first traumatic experience you had when change meant loss? People who fear change have had experiences where change equals loss.

If you don't pay attention and don't reorganize your life by stage three, the radical severance stage, then you have to go through a cataclysmic crisis. You lose a spouse, or you lose a job, or you get an illness — something happens that wakes you up.

PC: Why a 10th-anniversary edition? What prompted an update?

TG: Because I'm also an astrologer, I knew what was coming; I knew that there was a massive shift coming in 2020. I thought it



was going to be another Wall Street crash that was going to be massive. But I also realized that over the course of 10 years, I had acquired a lot of understanding of the new neuroscience of mind-change mastery. HeartMath was not really in the zeitgeist yet. So, there's a lot of new data on the neuroscience of change mastery in this book.

PC: I want to dig more deeply into the idea that you can actually notice the dark night of the soul approaching, and you don't have to go through the intense pain of it. You can proactively deal with it. Can you give an overview of how you can avoid it if you see the signs coming?

TG: Most of the time, it has to do with your job, or it has to do with your health. A lot of people think that cancer just happens. It doesn't just happen. Cancer typically can take about seven years before it actually manifests. It can sometimes start with trauma that's in the etheric body that's not been cleared. And when it stays, it can take the form of post-traumatic stress disorder and can eventually lead to maladaptive cells in the body.

PC: One sign that I found particularly interesting was that a certain type of boredom could be a sign. Could you explain that?

TG: I'm not talking about the kind of boredom that some people have where they get a new toy and then, six months later, they're bored with it. I'm talking about an acute boredom, where what you've been doing was authentic to who you were, but a time comes where something shifts and changes inside of you, and you outgrow the form. Maybe you really liked doing it at one time; maybe you enjoyed the work you were doing, or you were in a good marriage. It's when a cycle is ending.

PC: What steps can people take to overcome their fear of change?

TG: You can drop into your body, right into wherever the fear of change is, and you just breathe into it, and you keep asking the question, “How far back does this go? What is the very first time that I experienced fear around change?” Typically, something will pop through from childhood. We now see that trauma in childhood is a great predictor for the beginning of addiction in the teenage years. So, the very first thing to learn how to do is to feel the feelings that come up around change rather than self-medicating them. Be willing to sit with your fear.

PC: You write, “Learn to observe where feelings live in your body; once you have located that place, listen to their messages.” What do you mean by “listen to their messages?”

TG: I ask clients, “Where do you notice the fear of change in your body?” Then I ask them to just breathe, just keep focusing the breath right into that place and see if a memory comes up. If a memory doesn't come up, I ask for a symbol. And so, when the symbol comes up—let's say the symbol is a hawk—they ask the hawk, “What is your message for me?” You will almost always get some message. If you're a visual person, you might see it written on a scroll. If you're an auditory person, you'll hear the message. If you're kinesthetic, you can just feel it into your body. Like asking: “What is the hawk wanting me to know on a feeling level?”

PC: In the first edition of your book, during stage two, which you call “The Deep Freeze: The Winter of Your Discontent,” you write about the need for your body to slow down. You say, “expend as little external energy as necessary.” Why is that?

TG: One thing I talk about in the book is that stages one and two are not times to make radical changes. In stage one, I say that slowing down allows you to become a keen observer of your life. Stage two is about starting to let go, seeing what is falling away, rather. So, part of the slowing down is taking a nap in the afternoon, or, if you can't nap, meditate. Slowing down begins to heighten your observation of what is wanting to come next. It can actually start to give you clues as to what's dying away and what is slowly emerging.

PC: Some of your motivation for writing this book was that you went through some pretty difficult times, and you wanted to help others not suffer as you did. Can you tell us about your experiences?

TG: They happened in three different areas of my life. The first one was in my workplace. I was working on Skid Row with junkies after I finished my undergrad degree, and I had the distinct feeling that things were changing, and we needed a bodyguard. I was miserable at the job. One day, a junkie got through screening. He was high, and I tried to escort him out, but he tried to take me out of this life by choking me to death.

The second one took place in my marriage seven years later. I no longer believed in the psychodynamic Freudian theory I'd been trained in at the time, and I was miserable as a psychotherapist. I knew there was something else; there was something that could help people that was quicker. I was going on a metaphysical path, and my husband had no interest in any of it. Then I was in three car accidents over a six-day period, and I almost died in one of them.

Then, years and years later, the third experience took place in my home. I was getting a funny feeling that it was time to leave the beach [near Los Angeles], but I loved living near the ocean. I was getting sicker and sicker, and then we discovered that the walls of my home were filled with toxic mold. When the doctors did my bloodwork, they said the mold is connected to 20 different cancers. I had to walk away from everything I owned within a two-hour period of time.

PC: How did that turn into an impetus for change?

TG: When I gave my very first speaking engagement, I talked about quantum theory, chaos theory: When an organism reaches its highest level of functioning, it deconstructs into chaos so that it can reconstruct into a higher form. Because I saw what had happened in my own life, the nature of this book, my passion and mission shifted to help people prepare for and notice the early signs that it's time to move on in your life — before you get hit over the head like I did. I was definitely one of those people who wanted safety and security and really feared change. 🐼

For more information about Dr. Galardi, visit DrToniGalardi.com. To buy *The LifeQuake Miracle*, visit: bit.ly/lifequakes.

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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 re \$35 and enhanced listings are \$75.

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

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Poetry Open Mic Night – Oct. 9. 7-9pm. With Michael Burke. An evening of splendor with enchanting and thought-provoking spoken word performances from some of Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore's flourishing community of poets. Encourage poets of all ages. Free. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. 404-255-5207. PhoenixAndDragon.com.

Shaman Circle – Oct. 17. 7:30-9:30pm. With Don Simmons. Each circle consist of 3 parts: healing, journeying, global prayer. Working with a guest from the audience, the shamans, without knowing the "disharmony" of the guest, will diagnose and implement energies of plants, animals, crystal and other forms of Angelic and energetic healing in this lifetime and even from past lives. \$10. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. 404-255-5207. PhoenixAndDragon.com.

Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys – Oct. 22. 7-8:30pm. With Vicki Evans. An opportunity to connect with Spirit and your guides for healing and direction. You can use the journeys to ask about all areas of your life, not just the spiritual side. \$20 via PayPal. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore, 5531 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. 404-255-5207. To register: PayPal.me/vickieevanshealing. PhoenixAndDragon.com.

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. To watch: Facebook.com/spirituallivingcenteratlanta.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, dharma discussion. Via Zoom. To watch: RedClaySangha.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 10am. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

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

Sunday Morning Talks and Discussion – 11am-12pm. With Vedanta Center of Atlanta via Zoom. To watch: VedantaAtlanta.org.

Unity North Online Sunday Service – 11:15am. To watch: 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.

tuesdays

Heart Jewel Chanted Prayers and Meditation – Mon-Fri, 8-9am. Chanted Buddhist prayers and meditation. Free. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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

wednesdays

Zoom Check In: Wellness Wednesdays – 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. 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.

Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience – 7pm. To watch: 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.

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.

Livestream Meditation Fundamentals – 6:30-7:30pm. With Meditation Teacher Melanie Boyd. Suitable for complete beginners. To register for livestream: 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 Pranik Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtIPranikHealing.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.

saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations – 8-8:30am. To register for livestream: 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.



Animals are such agreeable friends—they
ask no questions; they pass no criticisms.

~George Eliot

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and I am one with them.

I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not
exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward
of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer
form, and life and all events,
And bring to light the
love which underlies the
happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate
and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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Coronavirus as a Calling

by Gregg Levoy

Not to diminish the fact that we're dealing with a serious and worldwide epidemiological threat, the pandemic can be transmuted into golden opportunities, especially if we follow the sometimes blind spiritual instinct that tells us this crisis—indeed each of our individual lives—has purpose and meaning, and that we need to act on this impulse despite the temptation to back down and run for cover. Here are four ways to respond to the call of these turbulent times:

Use it as a reset. For months, it has been impossible to conduct busyness-as-usual, and we may be left with unaccustomed time on our hands. But like the asteroid that ushered out the dinosaurs and gave the mammals underfoot a shot at prominence, once the thunder lizards of everyday busyness and distraction are sidelined, parts of us that are normally overshadowed may be given an entrance cue—not just projects we've back-burned in deference to the daily grind, but deeper thoughts and feelings about our priorities, the status quo, work/life (im) balance or our inner life. The better part of valor and wisdom may lie in asking, "What can I learn here?" rather than, "How can I overcome this?"

Consider it a powerful meditation. Meditation teachers tell us that distractions aren't obstacles, they are the meditation, so that we say to ourselves, "Ah, the dog-bark meditation," or "Ah, the weed-whacker meditation." The same with the coronavirus. Approach it not just as a distraction from

our goals and how it can block our intentions, but as a vehicle of meditation itself: How do we feel, what wants to emerge and what do we truly know?

Appreciate it as connective tissue in society. We're seeing firsthand how our individual actions can affect those around us, for better and for worse, and that we depend on one another for survival. Washing our hands and sheltering in place are acts of both self-care and community care. In the weeks following 9/11 when the fiction of our invulnerability was so shockingly revealed, many of us began holding doors open for strangers, spending more time with our kids, honking less and listening more. Life's fragility, our fragility, woke us up to our need for each other. Now that social isolation is suddenly forced on us, it reminds us how precious those connections are.

Approach it as a reminder of mortality. The pandemic is a perfect opportunity to practice the fine and fearsome art of non-attachment, because life will ultimately ask us to surrender everything. "We all owe God a death," Shakespeare wrote. We can use this time to clarify what's important and how to best use our precious nick of time. When we strip ourselves of any illusions of immortality, we are thus free to live our lives to the fullest. 🍀

Gregg Levoy is the author of Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life and Vital Signs: The Nature and Nurture of Passion, and a regular blogger for Psychology Today. Learn more at GreggLevoy.com.



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cells. Here's why this is a
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Stem Cells

"Stem cells are the body's raw materials — cells from which all other cells with specialized functions are generated," says the Mayo Clinic.

In other words, stem cells generate healthy cells that replace diseased cells, and they can be guided into generating the specific cells your body needs to repair and regenerate diseased or damaged tissue.

However, stem cell activity declines with age. By 60, our bodies' stem cells show very little activity. That's why older people heal more slowly.

Stem cell therapy is the potential solution to this situation which has, perhaps, received the most attention. But as of now, it is not a viable alternative for a number of reasons: It's too risky—there's a 30% chance that injected cells will damage your body instead of helping it; the chance of success is only 30%; and it's very expensive.

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Peptides are communications devices that the body uses to initiate chemical processes.

And GHK-Cu, discovered by biochemist Loren Pickart in the 1970s, can increase stem cells, activate over 4,000 genes, reduce pain, reduce anxiety, promote organ regeneration, tighten loose skin, and reduce inflammation and free radical damage.

But like stem cells, GHK-Cu levels decline with age. By age 60, our GHK-Cu levels have dropped by 60%.

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~Betty Aslanis

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~Dr. Michinori Tao

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