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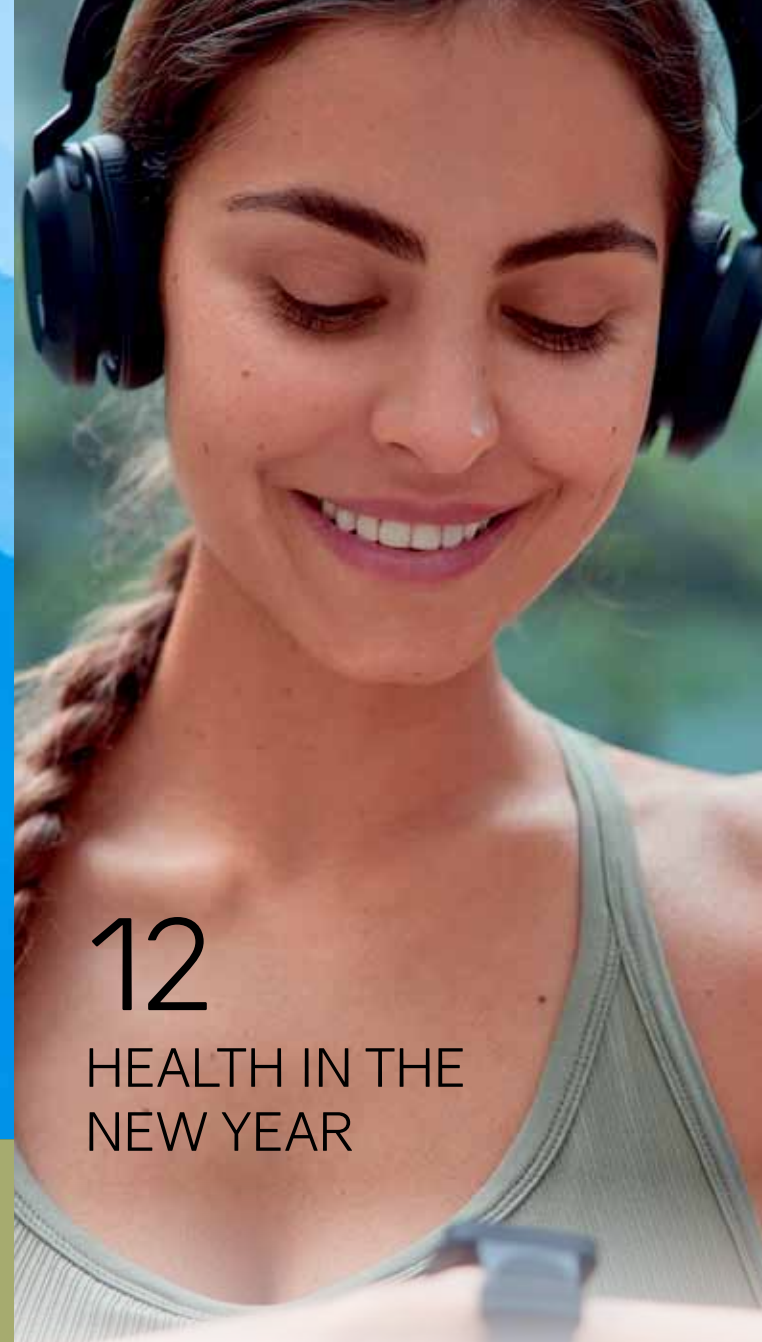


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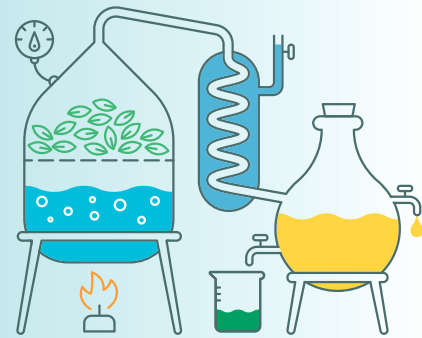


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GLOBAL BRIEFS

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2021's TOP 10 MOST READ

It's always interesting how our most popular stories are from previous years. This year's mystery: The most-read article published in 2021 was a News Brief on the opening of Skinny Beats ATL! The only other 2021 content to make the list: The landing page for our February special section on Healing the Trauma of Slavery.

THE VARIETIES OF ENERGY HEALING MODALITIES

(Apr 2019)
bit.ly/naa-varieties-of-energy-healing



VIBRATIONAL SOUND SHOP OPENS IN DECATUR

(Aug 2021)
bit.ly/naa-skinny-beats

SELF-LOVE STORIES

(Feb 2020)
bit.ly/naa-self-love-stories

HEALING THE TRAUMA OF SLAVERY

(Feb 2021)
bit.ly/naa-slavery-LP

BRUCE LIPTON on the Role of Consciousness in Healing

(July 2019)
bit.ly/naa-lipton-01

WEAK GLUTEUS MUSCLES LINK TO POOR PELVIC HEALTH

(Apr 2018)
bit.ly/naa-weak-gluteus

AYURVEDIC PRACTICES FOR ORAL HEALTH

(Feb 2020)
bit.ly/naa-ayurvedic-oral-health



WHOLE BODY DENTISTRY

Biological Dentists Get to the Root Causes (Aug 2020)
bit.ly/naa-whole-body-dentistry

HARMONIC EGG USES TESLA TECHNOLOGY FOR SOUND HEALING

(July 19)
bit.ly/naa-harmonic-egg

ATLANTA CSA DIRECTORY

(Apr 2020)
bit.ly/naa-CSA-2020

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CORRECTION: In our December issue's Atlanta Wellness Spa Directory, the listing for Forever And A Day mistakenly included infrared sauna and negative ion therapy in their list of available therapies.



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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

TAKE YOUR LIFE TO THE NEXT LEVEL: Consider a Coach!

Happy New Year!

With this first issue of 2022, we deliver two things I've wanted to deliver for some time: a special section on coaching and a new coaching column!

I'm sure I've previously mentioned that my primary motivation for publishing this magazine is to encourage self-development and personal evolution. While improving our professional skills is important, I'm talking about enhancing our capacity for love and compassion and growing our connection to God/Source/Infinite Intelligence/All There Is—whatever you wish to call whatever is responsible for our existence.

Coaching may be the most common way people enhance their personal evolution outside of pursuing a spiritual path. Granted, achieving one's goals—which writer Sandra Bolan reports is the most cited reason for turning to a life coach—does not sound useful when it comes to raising your emotional quotient (EQ) or connecting to all there is. Still, many of the other reasons do align: to be happier, to find one's purpose, to do what one loves, to increase confidence, to help improve relationships. Contributor Diane Martinez even reports that coaches list “growing spiritually” as one of the nine top issues clients bring to work on, as well as quelling the inner critic and nurturing self-love.

Although I have not personally used a life coach, I feel more than comfortable

recommending that more people should give it a try. To begin with, engaging a coach is a big step in one's commitment to oneself. Taking that first step might be the hardest part since doing so entails overcoming some fear and a lot of inertia. Just deciding to engage a coach is progress in and of itself.

Another reason I feel comfortable encouraging people to consider coaching is the success we hear about. Our third article tells the stories of four coaching clients. Any one of us would be thrilled to make the progress these four Atlantans have made. While I have no idea what the overall success rate of coaching is, the truth of the matter is that success lies in our hands, not the coach's. As coaches will tell you, it's the client that has to do the work.

Perhaps the biggest reason I've wanted to promote coaching is my awareness of the need for seekers and strivers to have a companion, a champion—a “champanion”—to walk the path with them. I don't know if it's impossible to make big progress in personal evolution without such a person, but I do know that the effort is far more arduous and lonely without them. Moreover, engaging a coach practically guarantees you'll have someone to lean on and be there for you when you need them.

So, in this season of resolutions and renewals, consider giving yourself the best gift possible: a better you!

Ask a Coach

As an ongoing commitment to encouraging personal evolution, we're introducing

our new column, “Ask a Coach.” It is an opportunity for you, our readers, to ask a coach about anything—well, preferably something they can answer—but that covers a lot of ground!

Our “Ask a Coach” column will be a monthly feature on our website and will also appear in our print magazine once a quarter. To submit a question to one of our coaches, go to bit.ly/naa-ask-a-coach.

We've engaged three coaches to write once a quarter for the column. We decided to use more than one writer simply to spread the “wealth” of the *Natural Awakenings* platform and to help expose readers to more coaching resources. As we provide insight into multiple approaches and styles, we hope it encourages more of you to consider coaching!

The three coaches who will be writing for us in 2022 are: Adele Wang, who was a guest editor for our energy healing special section in April 2019; Diane Martinez, author of the second article in this month's special section; and Terri Kozlowski, an author, blogger and podcaster, as well as a life coach.

We'll get to know all of them better in the months ahead. In the meantime, send your questions here: bit.ly/naa-ask-a-coach.



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.

VALHALLA RESORT

Presents First Holistic & Wellness Expo

The Solasta Spa at Valhalla Resort in Helen, Georgia, is presenting its First Annual Holistic & Wellness Expo on February 5, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will feature lectures, vendors, demos, healing experiences and, on February 6, optional, in-depth breakouts.

The keynote address, "Organic Food: Does It Really Matter?" will be given by Dr. Krishna Doniparthi of Functional Medicine of Georgia, located in Alpharetta. Doniparthi will discuss what "organic" truly means, the pitfalls in buying organic, the difference between GMO and non-GMO foods and more. Doniparthi is board-certified in family medicine, obesity medicine, and regenerative and functional medicine and has been practicing since 2002.

The expo will feature more than 20 holistic vendors, including specialists in yoga, skincare, naturopathy, massage and energy healing.

"We are so excited to offer this experience to the North Georgia area," says spa director Irene Bynum. "Having been in the spa and wellness industry for over 25 years, I have been fortunate to meet, collaborate and learn from some of the best in our field, and it has been my dream to bring as many of them together in one location to share their knowledge with others."

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. A discount of \$2.50 is available for groups of six or more. Valhalla Resort is located at 688 Bahn Innsbruck in Helen, Georgia.



Valhalla Resort [Photo: M. McCall]

For more information, visit ValhallaResortHotel.com/holistic-wellness.

Local Author Launches Monthly Happiness Circle



Trish Ahjel Roberts

Trish Ahjel Roberts, author of *Mind-Blowing Happiness: A Journal of Insights, Quotes & Questions to Juice Up Your Journey* and *Thinking Outside the Chrysalis: A Black Woman's Guide to Spreading Her Wings*, has started the Mind-Blowing Happiness™ Circle, a monthly virtual gathering.

Membership includes a live monthly call at noon on the 12th of each month. Calls will last approximately one hour, and Roberts will speak to happiness topics raised in her books and blog posts. Members will have access to call recordings for at least six months plus occasional bonus calls.

Digital copies of the two books are included with membership.

"I have it in my heart to create a large global community where people can get the clarity and focus they need to move towards their goals," says Roberts. "I also want it to be accessible, so I priced it less than a cup of coffee so everyone can benefit."

Circle membership costs \$9.95 a month, however, the first 30 days are offered as a free trial. Roberts is offering 50 percent off introductory memberships through the end of January. Use code FOUNDER50 during registration. To register for the Mind-Blowing Happiness™ Circle, go to bit.ly/naa-MBH-circle.

Disclosure: Ms. Roberts is a consulting editor for this publication.



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Health in the New Year

10 Top Wellness Trends for 2022

by Sandra Yeyati



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Every new year marks the convergence of endings and beginnings—an opportunity to assess where we’ve been and anticipate where we’re going. As this dynamic relates to our health, this year promises an intensification in the development and adoption of several trends that have been years in the making.

Plant-Based Foods Take Center Stage

The consensus among researchers is that filling our plates with colorful vegetables and fruits improves health and reduces our risk of developing a number of chronic degenerative diseases. “This approach, along with eating less meat and avoiding sugar, is wonderful to control blood sugar, lower uric acid and nurture your microbiome, which is fundamentally important to reduce in-

flammation, increase your body’s production of antioxidants and vitamins and help maintain the integrity of the gut lining so that you don’t get leaky gut and, therefore, inflammation,” says board-certified neurologist David Perlmutter, author of *Grain Brain* and four other *New York Times* bestsellers.

Awareness of the devastating effects of industrialized meat production is also accelerating. “Avoiding animal products is probably the first and most important ethical choice one can make,” says Princeton University bioethics professor Peter Singer, author of the seminal *Animal Liberation*. “That’s going to dramatically lower your carbon footprint. You will no longer be complicit in the suffering of tens of billions of factory-farmed animals, and you won’t be contributing to the increasing risks of viruses being bred in factory farms.”

According to market analysis firm CB Insights, “As COVID-19 spread across the globe, shifting consumer behavior and virus outbreaks in factories

has dealt major blows to the meat supply chain, with the beef industry alone facing an estimated \$13.6 billion in losses.” Several U.S. meat processing plants were forced to close their doors.

In response, a growing inventory of plant-based alternative proteins is emerging, offering new products that seek to mimic the experience of eating a juicy hamburger (Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods) or crispy chicken nugget (Simulate). Banza makes high-protein pasta from chickpeas. Retail sales of plant-based meals in the U.S. have grown by 25.5 percent over the past two years, and other manufacturers joining the field are Plantible Foods, Rebellious Foods, Livekindly and InnovoPro. A recent survey found that 36 percent of consumers intend to increase their consumption of alternative protein sources in the near future.

Perlmutter cautions, “Just because they’re plant-based doesn’t give them full sanction. They may contain unfermented soy, which may not be non-GMO or organic, and per an article in the *New York Times*, their carbon footprint may be a lot higher in production of these products than we have been led to believe. Do a little research on these manufactured foods and go for plant-based options that aren’t processed. Shop the periphery of the grocery store.”

Telemedicine Will Continue After the Pandemic

According to management consultants McKinsey and Company, when COVID-19 began, the level of telemedicine increased in America 78-fold, peaking in April 2020. Although it has been declining since then, the use of telemedicine is still at a 38-fold increase compared to pre-pandemic times. “While it has leveled off, we are going to see persisting use of telemedicine in situations that involve basic communication with a patient,” says Perlmutter, citing compelling attributes such as cost savings, convenience and a lower carbon footprint because people don’t have to commute to a doctor’s office.

“Core concepts like being present in the moment or taking in the other person in an empathetic way are rippling out into so many aspects of life.”

—Leslie Davenport

Wearable Devices and Home Testing Empower Patients

Perlmutter also anticipates an amplification of the use of wearable devices and

home testing to provide biometric data that informs people about their health status and inspires them to modify lifestyle choices. The Oura Ring records the time it takes to get to sleep, how many times the wearer awakens during the night and how much time they spend in REM and deep sleep. This information enables people to modify day-to-day activities to improve the quality and quantity of sleep.

Apple Watch aficionados are increasingly relying on the device’s biofeedback features, including its newest metric, blood oxygenation, while diabetics and non-diabetics alike employ continuous glucose monitoring systems to pinpoint how lifestyle choices like food, exercise and sleep affect blood sugar levels. “That is not only trending now, but will increase quite dramatically as consumers push to learn more about themselves,” Perlmutter predicts. “No longer is this information going to be siloed in the doctor’s office. People are becoming more and more empowered to learn this data about themselves and act on it.”

Learning to Improve Genetic Expression

“Our evolving understanding of epigenetics—how we can change our gene expression—is bringing more people on board to the idea that our lifestyle choices matter,” Perlmutter says. “When I went to medical school, we thought our DNA was locked in a glass case and that it would determine everything about us. Nowadays, we know that the expression of more than 70 percent of our DNA that codes for health and longevity is under our control and influenced by our lifestyle choices. The food we eat, whether or not we slept well last night, the stress in our lives, whether or not we spent time in nature—all of these things, moment-to-moment, change our gene expression. Holy Toledo! We now know that certain lifestyle choices are good for you because they favorably change gene expression. They teach it in med school now. It’s a breathtaking reality.”

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Harnessing the Power of Low-Level Stress

Life hackers and high-performance junkies are looking to leverage something called hormesis, which involves introducing low-level stress to the body for a positive outcome, so that when the body repairs itself from that condition, it doesn't just repair back to the previous level, but to a new one with an advantage. This includes exposing the body to a hot sauna or cold exposure through cryotherapy, as well as intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating. "People are starting to see how good things happen when we engage in things that push us in places that are perhaps a little bit uncomfortable, activating mechanisms that help with metabolic health, immunity, cognitive function and even the growth of new brain cells," Perlmutter explains.

Mental Health Destigmatized

When U.S. gymnast Simone Biles dropped out of the 2021 Summer Olympic Games citing mental health challenges, she created an opening for other people to speak up. If a world champion could reveal her vulnerability on the global stage when the stakes were so high, certainly so could they. Her compelling story is emblematic of an emerging trend: Mental health is gradually becoming destigmatized.

"It's becoming acceptable to talk about our feelings and ask for help, and this trend is

shattering unhealthy cultural myths, like the erroneous assumption that if we talk about our emotions we're going to fall into a pit of despair and sadness," says Licensed Integrative Psychotherapist Leslie Davenport, the author of *Emotional Resiliency in the Era of Climate Change*. "There's a boldness among younger generations that are challenging the status quo and demanding to be accepted as they are. Tucking away anything that might not be socially acceptable is a part of the past. Kids want their families and adults to accept and love them exactly as they are." On Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, #itsoknottobeok is a popular hashtag.

Mental health surveys show that eco-anxiety in particular is prevalent among the young. Late last year, scientists at the University of Bath, in England, interviewed 10,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 25 across 10 continents. In the U.S., 68 percent said that the future was frightening. Almost half admitted that they had distressing feelings related to climate change on a daily basis, 42 percent believed that the things they valued most would be destroyed and 35 percent feared that their family security would be threatened.

A Surge in Coaching

According to Davenport, "In addition to therapy becoming more acceptable, I've seen coaching become more common as another option in which people don't have

to examine their past and can instead look forward. A coach can help them make sense of their life, set goals and hold them accountable."

Mindfulness Becomes Ubiquitous

In a few decades, mindfulness practices have catapulted from Buddhist monasteries to corporate boardrooms and have become a billion-dollar industry in the U.S. with an 11 percent annual growth rate. "Mindfulness has been emerging for a while, but at this point, it's a household word," Davenport says. "People are talking about mindful eating or mindful conversations. Core concepts like being present in the moment or taking in the other person in an empathetic way are rippling out into so many aspects of life."

Therapy and Meditation Apps Abound

Redefining the conventional, in-person therapy session that is 50 minutes in a quiet room, therapy apps allow people to have short phone calls, video chats or text exchanges with a therapist for a low monthly fee. Notable therapy apps include *BetterHelp.com*, *OnlineTherapy.com*, *BrightSide.com* and *Calmerry.com*. For meditation, *Calm.com*, *InsightTimer.com* and *HeadSpace.com* are dominating the field.

Virtual Experiences Are Here to Stay

Many people that were devastated by isolation and loneliness during the pandemic sought social engagement via streaming and app-enabled webinars, exercise routines or art classes. Suddenly, virtual conferences attracted participants from all over the world. Davenport relishes the fact that she was able to take tap dancing classes from a renowned New York City teacher, even though she lives in Washington State. "In a surprising silver lining, we've come to appreciate the convenience of these virtual experiences, which we likely wouldn't have attended in person before the pandemic." 🌟

Sandra Yeyati is a professional writer and editor. Reach her at SandraYeyati@gmail.com.



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THE Giving Season GALLERY

Here at *Natural Awakenings*, we've dubbed the months of November, December and January as "the Giving Season." A lot of energy moves outwards in November and December, culminating, for many, in a burst of giving to others.

That's why we include January as part of the Giving Season—because we need to give more to ourselves. While January is traditionally the month of resolutions and resets, we would do well to expand our giving impulse to ourselves.

A Birchbox-Kelton Global study of self-care found that 56% of women "feel burnt out quite often" and that 32% "consistently make time for self-care." And a third of respondents say they feel guilty taking time for themselves!

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High Times for the Cannabis Industry

Emerging Trends with a COVID-19 Caveat

by Jim Motavalli

It's fair to say that the cannabis industry has arrived. Recreational marijuana has now been approved in 17 states, and 37 have allowed marijuana for medical purposes. "We have CBD!" proclaim store signs selling the buzz-free cannabidiol. In 2020, more than 240,000 people worked in cannabis-related jobs. The Brightfield Group says the medical cannabis industry will reach \$16 billion in annual U.S. sales by 2025. Cannabis market research firm Headset predicts this will be "a year of positive growth" for the industry.

Legalization and expansion are strongly in line with public sentiment: Two-thirds of Americans believe marijuana should be legal, says the Pew Research Center. Opposition has fallen from 52 percent in 2010 to just 32 percent by the end of 2019.

"Dispensaries and cannabis cafés are as commonplace as Starbucks, and ordering edibles is as easy as getting pizza," reports

marketing firm Grassfed Media. The National Retail Federation noted a 700 percent increase in the demand for CBD-based products in 2019.

One caveat, however, is COVID-19. Ron Newman, a sustainable development analyst with Lee Enterprises Consulting, says the hemp/CBD business was flat during 2020 because of the pandemic. "With the economic situation, people were buying only essentials," he says. "But we're seeing the business start to come back now." With COVID-19 recovery, more growth is certain, and here are some upcoming trends.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the active ingredient in marijuana that gets the user high. The natural compound CBD—is being heavily marketed in the form of oils, edibles (including gummy bears and lollipops), oral sprays, creams and pills. The third-most

popular food-related Google search term in 2018 was "CBD gummies." CBD dietary supplements are the biggest category, followed by topical applications and third, food and beverage additives.

THC is still illegal in many parts of the U.S., but CBD cultivation and sales were legalized by the 2018 Farm Bill. California offers a model for the states in regulating cannabis. Both medicinal cannabis and adult recreational use are legal, but the industry is strictly regulated by the Department of Cannabis Control to ensure that businesses operate safely and that products are free from contamination, properly labeled and kept away from children.

Research into cannabis is an emerging field, with 23,000 papers published since 2010, and Grassfed believes that some future products will be based on "other cannabinoids and terpenes such as CBN, CBG, THCA and THCv." In addition, strains labeled indica, sativa or hybrid, or with names like Gorilla Glue and Wedding Crasher, may increasingly be replaced by a scientifically supported classification system.

Bar & Restaurant magazine wants its bartenders to know there might be THC-free CBD cocktails on their future bar menus. It reports that these drinks are "a legal grey area; federally they're illegal, but some states have their own CBD-related laws." The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says flatly, "It is currently illegal to market CBD by adding it to a food or labeling it as a dietary supplement," but the agency has said it is considering relaxing this prohibition.

There's a Wild West quality to the CBD/hemp industry today. An FDA study found many CBD products to be mislabeled, with either more or less CBD than indicated. A significant number contained THC.

And then there are the laws, with federal prohibitions and state regulations, that can be quite different. For instance, New York bans CBD products with more than 0.3 percent THC, and bans CBD from any alcohol or tobacco product. So determining whether any specific product is "legal" or not in different locations is complex. But marketing benefits are plain. Wynk alcohol-free seltzer says it has "2.5 milligrams of THC and 2.5 milligrams of CBD in every can." However, Wynk is not widely available. Casey Coughlin, Wynk brand manager, says, "We only sell Wynk through the dispensary channel, which is highly regulated on a state-by-state basis. So, although CBD and THC beverages are not federally legal, they are at the state level under regulation."

Jody McGinness, executive director of the Hemp Industries Association, says the FDA doesn't actually have strong enforcement powers, and that the worst thing CBD/THC legal violators can expect from the agency is a warning letter posted on the FDA website.

Gregg Sturz, co-founder of Florida-based CBD Hemp Experts, a leading wholesale provider of cannabis-derived products, says he expects the FDA to eventually approve CBD for use in dietary supplements. "I don't think they're trying to shut the industry down, just come up with some clear guidelines," he says.

The legal status of THC is such a question mark that, according to Investopedia's *Marijuana Investing Guide*, large banks "are currently afraid of money-laundering charges they may face if they work with these businesses ... The American Bankers' Association

has been pushing for more legal clarity."

Newman, who studies the medicinal uses of CBD, notes that in some cases it's being marketed as a topical analgesic for pain relief, when actually the other proven ingredients in analgesics—including methanol and camphor—are doing the heavy lifting. This situation has also produced FDA warning letters, because if CBD is claimed to relieve pain, then it is required to go through a new drug application process for efficacy.

In 2018, the FDA approved Epidiolex, an oral solution with CBD as an active ingredient, used for the treatment of rare and severe forms of epilepsy. While it's the only approved product so far, studies suggest CBD might be useful for anxiety, insomnia, skin protection and addiction.

McGinness sees the major growth area for cannabis-related products not in CBD, but in industrial hemp fiber. As hemp growers gear up in the Midwest after decades of federal bans, they're likely to expand beyond cottage clothing companies into such areas as auto and industrial parts and building materials, he says.

"Hemp products made in a green way create fewer emissions," McGinness says. "And the bioplastics made from hemp are lighter-weight, which increases fuel efficiency. I expect we'll see heartland industrial hemp grow so much it will make CBD look like a niche." 🌿

Jim Motavalli is a Connecticut-based journalist who writes about the environment, cars and music. He can be contacted via JimMotavalli.com.



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WHOLE-PERSON FITNESS

Current Trends in Wellness Tools

by Maya Whitman

Insiders agree that the idea of fitness is changing, and this means an exciting wave of trackers and apps that go beyond achieving the ultimate six-pack abs. “So many of us want a nice exterior, but now more than ever, we realize how important it is that the interior match that exterior,” says Dominic Kennedy, a Los Angeles trainer and founder of the Dominic Effect, an app that provides fitness workouts, customized meal plans and mind-body tools like meditation, yoga and affirmations.

The industry of wearable technology has been expanding since the advent of the FitBit Tracker in 2014, and the trend is not slowing down. Current fitness wearables even include rings that offer more detailed biometric data including blood pressure, heart rate, sleep and calories burned. With some smartwatches now priced under \$50, it's clear why the business marketing firm Grandview Research predicts significant annual growth for such products for the next six years.



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lifestyle. Whether it be wearable technology, customized online personal training apps or mindset workouts that work on getting your mind in gear, 2022 has me excited,” says Stephanie Mansour, a Chicago-based fitness coach and host of the national PBS fitness and wellness show *Step it Up with Steph*. “I think we're going to be focusing on habits and other areas of life like food, sleep and mindset that contribute to the effectiveness of workouts.”

She also foresees people picking up inspiration from hardcore fitness devotees that share more of their personal daily habits such as journaling, affirmations and how they stay committed to investing in health.

Bringing a water bottle to a yoga class or slipping on active-wear is becoming digitalized, making it easier to target overall health. Staying hydrated based on individual needs is effortless using a Thermos app-connected hydration bottle with a smart lid that tracks daily intake. Man-

sour's favorite fitness ally is clothing inlaid with resistance bands. “You can actually get in a workout while doing everyday activities with this resistance apparel. I love how resistance bands are built into these pants so my daily walk, yoga session or washing dishes and doing laundry turns into a workout because my muscles engage and work harder,” she says.

More Support, Less Pressure

Kennedy sees a sense of community taking root since the start of pandemic, especially via online forums and groups centered on

health and fitness. “We spend so much time on the internet and social media, and during the pandemic, it was a huge outreach that will continue to grow since you can do it right from your computer or phone.”

New Jersey-based fitness trainer Nadia Murdock sees a trend of prioritizing ourselves without all-too-common feelings of guilt. The founder of Core Program, designed to help entrepreneurial mothers take charge of their health and fitness, she warns about the possible trigger effect of digital trackers that use pop-up screens or reminders about daily steps. “I would suggest asking yourself why you want to use a tracker. Once you have identified the reason, you can now seek out alternative options that may cause less pressure,” she says. To stay accountable without mental anguish, she suggests using a multisport watch that offers the perk of real-time audio coaching.

Kennedy concurs, saying, “The point is not to cause any more anxiety and to create a safe space. We should not be obsessing about weight and putting ourselves down, but finding a space that will lift our spirits.”

Despite the benefits of the latest technology and extras, Mansour reminds us to adhere to “tried and true methodologies like regular workouts that you enjoy, eating nutritious foods and taking care of your mental health through meditation, stress-reduction techniques and getting adequate sleep.”

Maya Whitman writes about natural health and living a more beautiful life. Connect at Ekstasis28@gmail.com.



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THE ART OF BALANCE Yin-Yang

by Mila Burgess

It's quiet season. As the days get shorter, temperatures drop and winter arrives, and it feels like a not-so-subtle suggestion from Mother Nature to slow down, curl up and get cozy. Still, for many people, this time of year is far from quiet. Holiday gatherings, travel and celebrations combined with increased personal, family and social commitments can make the quiet season feel more like the busiest season of all.

Part of the art of finding balance in life comes from the ability to create harmony between the hustle of contemporary living and intentional moments of serenity. *Yin* and *yang* are ancient Chinese principles rooted in the notion that balance is part of the natural order of things and that it is key to optimal health and well-being.

The familiar yin-yang symbol, called a *taijitu*, represents the duality of opposing yet complementary and interconnected forces that exist together in harmony. The light-colored side of the symbol represents *yin* energy, which is grounded, quiet, soft, still, cool and connected to qualities of contraction, femininity and inward focus. It's associated with the moon, the Earth and the oceans. In contrast, *yang* energy, represented by the darker side of the symbol, is active, fiery, fierce. It expresses itself through movement, expansion, growth, light and heat and is considered a masculine force.

Illustrated by the single drop of the opposite color on each side of the taijitu sign, the yin-yang philosophy is founded on a "both/and" logic, acknowledging the paradoxical nature of things that coexist. For example, a person can be both strong and flexible or can practice both self-discipline and self-compassion. Nothing is only yin or only yang; the qualities are interdependent, and both are necessary for anything to thrive.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) teaches that all of the organs and *meridians*, or energy channels, in the body are assigned a yin or yang energy. Because yin and yang are in a constant state of flux, illness and disease can arise due to imbalances. Accord-

ing to TCM, good health is achieved and maintained by striking a balance between yin and yang. In fact, the role of acupuncture in TCM is to eliminate blockages along the meridians in order to promote the free flow of yin-yang energy, optimizing wellness.

Like TCM, yoga applies the yin-yang perspective to the physical body. The word "yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit word "yuj," meaning "to join or unite." The physical practice of yoga is a union of opposites, much like the relationship between yin and yang. A well-rounded yoga practice invites practitioners to move through a series of poses that creates balance. Sequences include complementary actions such as pose/counter pose, inhale/exhale and open/close. The movements flow seamlessly together, not in spite of being unified opposites but because of it.

In the *Yoga Sutras*, a collection of Sanskrit axioms about the theory and practice of yoga that is considered to be the foundational texts of the practice, author Patanjali wrote, "sthira sukham asanam." Loosely translated, his words suggest that one should engage in yoga poses with *sthira*—strength, stability and steadiness—on the one hand and *sukha*—comfort, relaxation and joy—on the other. These two qualities are opposite in nature yet equally important to develop. The modern yogi is also encouraged to engage in a well-rounded practice that includes both yin- and yang-style classes.

Yang-focused activities include active yoga practices that develop muscular strength, endurance, stability and the flow of movement. Yin-style yoga, on the other hand, invites participants to practice mindfulness in grounded, passive, long-hold postures that benefit the connective tissues and joints and promote flexibility. True to the yin-yang perspective, opposites are not mutually exclusive; it's common to experience some yang in yin classes and vice versa. Most importantly, making time for both types of practices helps optimize the physical and mental benefits of yoga.



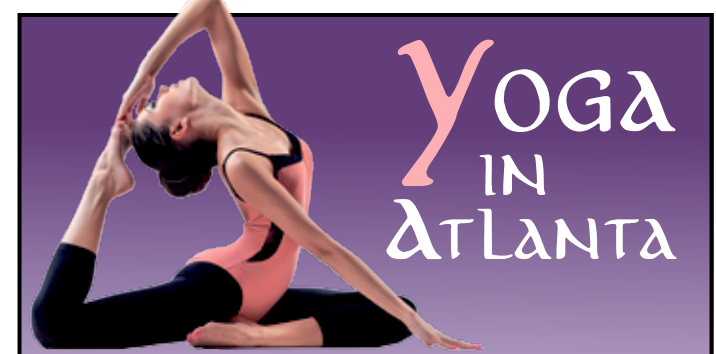
The yoga mat also provides a space to nurture one's ability to flow from yang's quick, expansive actions to yin's slow, inward-turned stillness using the power of breath as a bridge between the two states. The breath softens edges when things challenge the mind or body on the mat; it can serve as the off-the-mat pathway to peace and calm even in the midst of chaos. It's as important to find the balance between yin and yang off the mat as it is on, and the more unity experienced on the mat, the more equipped one is to find it off the mat.

When we get stretched too thin in one facet of life, negative effects will be felt in other parts sooner or later. It's difficult to feel good when life is out of balance, and if the pendulum swings too far towards yin or yang, it's not sustainable long-term. The balance between the two keeps us grounded and primes us for optimal wellness.

Although the yin-yang philosophy is an ancient one, balancing these two complementary yet opposing forces in the busy-ness of 21st-century life makes vibrant, sustainable health and well-being more attainable and enjoyable. 🌸



Mila Burgess, E-RYT500, YACEP, teaches at LifePower Yoga in Sandy Springs. She is the owner of Metta Yoga, offering workshops, private lessons, virtual classes, teacher trainings and retreats. Contact her at Mila@MettaYoga.studio.



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LIFE COACHING

What Can It Do For You?

by Sandra Bolan

There's nothing like the feeling of having someone in our corner, cheering us on and letting us know we've "got this." Coaches are often associated with athletes, but why can't an accountant, homemaker, mechanic or grocery clerk have someone in their corner, too?

Parents and best friends can wave pom-poms, but that might just be considered part of their job description. For the most part, a person's inner circle lacks the skills to transform someone from a dreamer to a doer.

That's where a life coach comes in. Life Coach Spotter, an online resource for life coaches, defines a life coach as "a professional who helps you reach a goal or make a change in your life." Life coaching takes its cue from athletic coaches, whose job is

to motivate, keep people accountable and provide the tools necessary to help them become the best versions of themselves. Instead of fixing weaknesses, life coaching focuses on developing a person's strengths; it addresses the future instead of dissecting the past.

Why do people work with life coaches? Life Coach Spotter points to many reasons, but the most popular are: achieving one's goals (64%), happiness (51%), finding one's purpose (48%), doing what one loves (44%), career (43%), confidence (39%) and to help improve relationships (38%).

Who can benefit from a life coach? Prime candidates are people who are in a funk and can't figure out how to get out of it. Also, those who know what they want—in life, in relationships or in work—but

have no idea how to get it.

"Everyone deserves the best life they can give themselves. Everyone deserves to be happy and waking up to a life they love every day," says Tatiana Franklin, owner of Atlanta-based Tatiana Franklin Healing and Coaching.

Most life coaches won't tell their clients what to do, nor will they do the work for them. They are there to ask the uncomfortable questions friends would never dare ask because they don't want to hurt other people's feelings. By asking thought-provoking questions and with the help of other modalities, coaches help clients figure out how to get where they want to go.

"It's not me asking you to change. It's you discovering you need to change," says life coach Tracy Lefebvre, owner of Ready

for Reboot in Marietta. Lefebvre says life coaching is like having someone hold up a mirror for you to help you discover what's getting in your way.

Life coaching is not therapy; coaches don't treat depression, anxiety or mental illness. That doesn't mean people can't have a life coach and a therapist, only that they need to expect different outcomes from each expert.



Tracy Lefebvre

COACHING CERTIFICATIONS

According to neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp, the human brain has seven core instincts: seeking, rage, fear, lust, care, panic/grief, and play. Seeking is the most important of the seven, says Panksepp.

"The innate human desire to seek means that we can never truly feel that every desire and wish has been met," according to Quartz, a news organization that analyzes the global economy.

The human need to continually search

out something more has spawned an \$11 billion self-help industry in the U.S., according to The Institute for Life Coach Training. Of that \$11 billion, the life coaching industry is estimated to be valued between \$1 and \$2 billion.

While life coaching is not officially designated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is listed on its career pages. As of 2020, there were more than 17,000 life coaches in the United States, according to IBISWorld, a company that provides research on thousands of worldwide industries.



Vince Bellitto

Life coaches are not required to have any specific degrees or certifications. However, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) is among the first to create and publish standards and ethics for the industry. The ICF now has more than 44,000 members worldwide, including Lefebvre. Franklin is certified by the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coach-



Tatiana Franklin

ing, which is accredited by the ICF.

Terri Kozlowski, a Woodstock-based life coach, is accredited through Achology Ltd. but admits, if she had to do it all over, she wouldn't obtain a certification. "The only person who has asked me [if I was certified] was my dad."

Vince Bellitto received his certification through The Recovery Coaching Center. He has since created his own training methodologies and teaches them through his Atlanta-based company, Inner Coach Academy, because, he says, the ICF standards don't fit well with his methodologies.

According to The Coach Connection, Bellitto's academy is among the more than 600 training schools and almost 20 coaching-related associations that connect people and coaches. Methodologies, specialties, ethics and backgrounds are as varied as the number of life coaches out there.

"I really think, for most people, if I want to learn how to be a better business per-

son, I go to a successful business person,” says Kozlowski.

Like most life coaches, Bellitto and Kozlowski put into play a unique constellation of modalities to help people clear obstacles of fear and procrastination and to help create a roadmap to success.

Kozlowski is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. After years of telling her story, she wrote *Raven Transcending Fear*, a book that is part memoir and part self-help guide. Two years ago, she became a certified life coach, specializing in helping others escape fear in their daily lives. She utilizes the same approaches with her clients as she used to transform her own life.

Kozlowski says that some people who have suffered a childhood trauma fail to emotionally evolve and, as they age, they get stuck in a world fraught with fear. She helps clients uncover where the fear stems from and how it affects their current way of thinking. She then helps them reframe their story, which helps them shift from



Terri Kozlowski

feeling like a victim to becoming a thriver and survivor.

Lefevre says that the ways people emotionally react to situations, people and even things are set in place by the age of two, and behavioral habits are ingrained by age seven. By the time we reach 35 years old, 95% of what we do is subconscious and stays that way unless the

process gets disrupted.

“That’s why it’s hard to change—because we don’t even know why we’re doing what we’re doing,” says Lefevre.

Bellitto spent his formative years doing everything he could to escape the fear, shame and powerlessness he felt at age 10 when his soon-to-be stepfather beat his mother. He joined a gang, turned to drugs and alcohol and escaped a near-death experience. He is now a trauma-informed performance coach, specializing in addiction, trauma, mental and emotional freedom, communication and relationship coaching.

“If you want to alter your behavior, you need to alter your perception,” says Bellitto.

Unlike most life coaches who only work one-on-one with their clients, Bellitto prefers a group model, which he says is more effective. Having one’s pain acknowledged by a handful of people is more affirming than just one person, he says. The group

model can also be more challenging because it can stir up triggers that a one-on-one session might not tap into.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Like psychotherapists, life coaches do want to know about their clients’ family histories, but they don’t use it to drive the sessions. Clients set the agenda.

“I’m coaching the person, not the problem,” says Lefevre, who describes herself as her clients’ “thinking partner.”

Sessions are typically 45 to 60 minutes long, occur weekly and last a number of months. They can be conducted in person, over the phone or via Zoom. “We just have a conversation. People like to talk about themselves,” says Kozlowski.

Prior to the first appointment, Franklin requires prospective clients to complete an online Energy Leadership Index (ELI) assessment. She utilizes the responses she gets to obtain an in-depth analysis of a person’s energy level. For example, Level

1 is feeling lost, and Level 7 reflects a deep passion. The ELI is performed again a year later with the goal of the client being at a higher emotional level than when they started.

The coach-client relationship ends when the client, not the coach, feels they have achieved their version of success.

No matter the life coach’s modalities, clients are most likely to achieve success when they’re clear about what they want. “It’s not up to me what they want,” says Franklin. “Who am I to say they can’t? If they really want it, I say, ‘Go get it.’ I would never discourage anyone from their goals.”

For more information about Vince Bellitto: VinceBellitto.com or 781-436-2877.

For Tatiana Franklin: TatianaFranklin.com or 678-622-2661.

For Terri Kozlowski: TerriKozlowski.com or 770-530-5376.

For Tracy Lefevre: ReadyForReboot.com or 470-719-2690.

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Top Reasons People Seek Life Coaching

by Diane Martinez

Since the 1980s, life coaching has become a distinct career path, and it has grown in popularity ever since. We spoke to several coaches from Atlanta and around the world to find out some of the top reasons people seek the help of a life coach.

Gaining Clarity

For some people, a persistent sense that something is missing in their lives provides the impetus to reach out to a life coach. They experience a lack of satisfaction or fulfillment in their lives, but they're not clear about what is missing. "My life is ticking all the boxes; objectively, everything is good. But I still feel like something is missing," say many of Tara Van Dam's clients. Van Dam is an integrative life coach and owner of Wholistic Joy Wellness in Atlanta. In such situations, it is not about moving around certain pieces of one's external life to create a desired result; it is about going within to discern and understand the origin of the feeling.

"It's about shifting focus from the external world to looking within," says Van Dam. In a society heavily influenced by social media, looking within ourselves for our answers seems a radical and bold approach. Certified life coach Carol Lazgin adds, "People are in their life, but they can't see their life. A coach's job is to hold up a mirror to the client for them to notice and develop awareness."

Reaching Goals

Sometimes people are clear about their goals but struggle with being consistent enough with their efforts to be successful, so they look to a life coach for support. "People want coaching to improve their lives in concrete ways. Coaching focuses on action, and with that action comes increased confidence and competency," says life coach Kate Crow, owner of Shift It! in Red Hook, New York. "In therapy, people talk about thoughts and feelings with the idea that it will trickle down to their actions. In coaching, we flip that around. We say, 'let's take some actions,' knowing that the thoughts and feelings will follow." A

life coach can serve as the objective guide in one's journey and play the dual role of cheering them on each step of the way while also holding them to their highest vision for themselves. "Why get coaching?" Crow asks. "Because we're human and we get stuck," she answers.

Dealing with Crisis

Divorce, job loss and health crises can be devastating and difficult to process, and life coaching can help navigate these unexpected events. Anna Garcia, who was voted one of Australia's top 10 life coaches, explains that trying to change what has already happened is like trying to change a photograph. "What needs to change is the consciousness that created the situation." A life coach works with her clients to cultivate a higher level of awareness of the beliefs and thoughts they hold that determine the direction in which their energy flows.

The direction of one's focus is key to success. People unwittingly tend to focus on what they lack rather than on the vision of what they desire. Garcia helps her clients by working with them to envision what they want to create, whether it is a healthy body, financial abundance, or the love of their life. When we change our level of consciousness, our outside circumstances change, she says.

Quelling the Inner Critic

According to a recent report from the CDC, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of people experiencing symptoms of anxiety and/or depression—from 36.4% to 41.5% of those surveyed. The nation's mental health has been particularly challenged recently, and some are reaching out to life coaches to help them develop a sense of centeredness and peace. Van Dam helps her clients learn how to deal with their "inner critic"—the voice inside their head that continually bombards them with negative messages about themselves and their lives. Listening to that voice leaves people feeling sad, discouraged and lacking the confidence necessary to move forward toward their dreams. Van Dam guides her clients to question that inner voice.

"We take the negative voice at face value without looking for evidence that the opposite is true," she says. Van Dam encourages her clients to give themselves gold stars—just like what kids get in elementary school—to help them appreciate whenever they demonstrate kindness, compassion, strength and competence. With regular practice, the voice of the inner critic quiets down, helping people experience more satisfaction and peace.

Manifesting

Renowned teacher Abraham Hicks explains the theory of the Law of Attraction as "that which is like unto itself is drawn." The theory holds that an individual attracts to herself what she focuses on most. It is the premise behind vision boards, which people use to post images of their desired life conditions, such as vacations, cars and relationships, and display them in a prominent place in the home. However, when the desired circumstances fail to manifest, frustration can set in.

Bijoux Wright-Romero, life coach and owner of Fabulous and Grounded, advises them, "Be aware of what you're putting out there energetically." People often focus on the lack of what we desire more than the feeling they'll have when their vision becomes a reality. Wright-Romero used this approach in her own life to manifest a life partner and wedding. Before she had a romantic partner in her life, her sister held a "fake" bachelorette party for her, complete with a bride-to-be sash, decorations, balloons, drinks and a cake tasting. Her father even made a toast to her as he would at her wedding. One year later, it all came to be.

Wright-Romero says that while it is not necessary to hold a fake party each time we want to manifest something new, it's important to remember to focus on the feeling we'll enjoy when our vision comes to pass.

Nurturing Self-Love

Internationally acclaimed author Louise Hay said, "Love is the great miracle cure. Loving ourselves works miracles in our lives." Empowerment coach Angela Oh, owner of Empower Love Now, notices that

many clients come to her with a victim mentality; they want to know why bad things are happening to them. Oh explains that such a mentality stems from a lack of self-love; in some cases, it even originates from self-hate. Oh works with her clients to take back responsibility for their lives, helping them to develop a healthy self-love. One practice she encourages her clients to do is to meditate for 10 minutes a day. "Sit quietly and breathe and listen to your crazy mind. Then breathe again." She explains that it's about showing up for yourself the same way a good mom shows up for her children.

Discovering Life Purpose

"I've done what my parents told me to do and walked that path, but I am not fulfilled," clients explain to Wright-Romero. Not knowing one's life purpose can leave one feeling unsettled, frustrated and even a little panicky. When clients seek help in uncovering life purpose, Wright-Romero guides them to tap into what brings them

joy. Howard Thurman, an American author, theologian, educator and civil rights leader, counsels, "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." Wright-Romero encourages clients that want to leave the corporate world in search of more gratifying work to explore how the activities they most enjoy could produce income. It often takes some guidance and support to learn to tune into their inner guidance and trust its nudges.

Growing Spiritually

Some people seek help from a life coach to further their spiritual growth. Life coach Diana Cohen describes this client as "someone who understands life can be more peaceful; things can be better." Though spiritual growth is a journey within our own psyche and soul, outside help can be a tremendous help along the way. A life coach can help craft personalized affirmations and practices that ease

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Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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and accelerate the process. Cohen states that clients that seek spiritual growth “want to be the best version of themselves and understand that it’s an ongoing process. They have a knowingness that there is more to life, and they have to find it.”

Building Financial Abundance

It might seem odd that someone would seek the help of a life coach for issues regarding money, but life coach Anna Garcia says that it’s not uncommon. At some level, people who go to a life coach for help with money understand that there is more to creating financial abundance than meets the eye. The key is “to not focus on getting more money, but to change your relationship with money,” says Garcia. The subject of money is often loaded with emotion, she adds, but money “is just another form of energy—like spaghetti!” Part of her work is to release any emotional charge and help people approach their relationship with money in much the same way as they would approach a relation-

ship with a person. Dr. John Demartini, an author and speaker who’s been a big influence on Garcia, teaches, “Money comes from having equanimity within yourself.” It is yet another example that addressing our mindset and our thoughts can be more effective than seeking to manipulate the circumstances around us. 🌱

RESOURCES:

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Diane Martinez is a certified holistic life coach based in Sandy Springs. She offers virtual and live one-on-one life coaching and small group classes on Zoom. Follow her on

Instagram @lifecoachmartinez and visit ConsciousCreatingLifeCoaching.com.

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Life Coaching *Success Stories*

by Noah Chen

Life coaching clients and their journeys are as unique as fingerprints. The following are stories of four individuals who were transformed by working with a few of Atlanta’s life coaches.



RENEE TYNER David Smith / I Speak Life Coaching

When Renee Tyner met life coach David Smith, she was an executive assistant at Urban League of Greater Atlanta, but she had dreams of becoming an entrepreneur. Smith was brought on to provide team building and coaching for Tyner and her co-workers, and she was intrigued by his ability to get her team to connect with each other and to see the people they worked with eight hours a day “in a more trusting light.” She was so impressed, she immediately hired him for private coaching.

“I needed a different perspective on how I was viewing life because it wasn’t moving how I wanted it to move,” says Tyner. “I learned it was because of the lens I viewed my life through.”

With Smith’s guidance, Tyner left her position and started her own business, Ride Out with Renee, providing spin coaching.

“The confidence to be an entrepreneur and get my business out there was important, and Coach Smith helped me find that,” says Tyner.

Once her spin classes were a success, Tyner launched a second business, Neema and Company, a consulting company that helps start-up businesses set up their finances and get their products to market.

It’s been five years since Tyner first met Smith, and both of her businesses have become successful. Even so, she continues to receive coaching from Smith. “The coaching makes you more self-aware and more aware of other people,” Smith explains. That sense of awareness keeps her going back to Smith. “If self-awareness is not at your forefront, he will bring it to your forefront. He goes really deep and really makes you think.”

Tyner found that extra helping of self-awareness crucial to balancing her work, social and personal lives. “Once you shed the corporate structure, you’re the one that’s in charge and has to generate revenue.” She found it easy to get too focused on her work, and that was impacting her social and personal life. Smith helped her realize she had control over her time, helping her to find the balance she needed.

“If you’re working a 12-hour day to get your business off the ground, what do you do in the 13th hour? You have to be there for your spouse, and you have to focus on social/relationship goals to be a healthy, balanced individual,” says Tyner. She especially appreciated the practical tools she got from Smith that helped her establish a healthy lifestyle in her work and the rest of her life.

“Success comes from what makes you truly happy,” Tyner elaborates. “There has to be some level of a happy, harmonious relationship between your physical and cog-

nitive being. Me being happy and peaceful, having harmonious relationships—that’s ultimate for me.”



ELLEN MCLEOD Jill Volpe / Jill Volpe Coaching & Healing

In 2020, Ellen McLeod wanted to change her lifestyle, but she wasn’t ready to take the leap. She was working as an office manager and trying to get promoted but was frustratingly underestimated by her management. Denied a promotion, McLeod began to doubt herself.

“I was afraid to apply for these other jobs; they seemed out of reach for me,” she says. Unable to progress in her current role and unsure of her ability to score interviews, McLeod felt stuck. McLeod had been to therapists in the past, but this time around, she was drawn to a life coach.

“The thing I liked about coaching was that it’s goal-driven,” McLeod explains. “I was at a point in my life where I needed to make a professional change for myself, and I needed someone to help me refine, set and hold me accountable to my goals.”

Enter Jill Volpe of Jill Volpe Coaching & Healing. Jill is a life coach and energy

healer, and McLeod was drawn to this pairing. “I enjoy the fact that I could work with her both on the physical plane and also on the energetic plane as well,” says McLeod. McLeod, who is also a yoga teacher, found the spiritual side of Volpe’s coaching integral to the process. “I don’t think I could move forward without having some awareness of spirituality. That may not be something for everyone, but Jill has this really beautiful structure to her programs, and they’re all very personalized.”

So McLeod began life coaching sessions with Volpe and started receiving Reiki from her as well. They structured their sessions around defining McLeod’s goals and, through the lessons, McLeod was able to envision a new path for herself.

“I identified I was interested in working as an administrative assistant, which is a higher level than my previous job, but I didn’t have the confidence to seek out and say, ‘Yes, I can support your CEO,’” says McLeod. “Sometimes the fear of not getting what you chase after will cause you not to chase after it.” After a few sessions, she was ready to take the leap. She left her position and began the job hunt.

Today, McLeod is an executive assistant to a CEO and CFO for a company in Lawrenceville, Georgia. But she has also seen other changes stemming from her lessons with Volpe. “I’ve gained a kind of boldness,” says McLeod. “Being bold is something I had to practice. It’s being willing to ‘Brené Brown’ the world—get into the arena and do it.”

Volpe taught McLeod practical methods to embody the boldness she desired.

“We developed a mantra that I work with: ‘Everything I need is available to me at just the right time.’ That’s what I learned about being bold. If you don’t chase it, you will 100% not get it.”



JEREMY CICCONE
Anthony Strayhorn / StrayFit

Sometimes life coaching looks like a therapy session; other times, it looks like a workout. When Jeremy Ciccone goes to his coaching sessions, he doesn’t go to an office or someone’s home, he goes to the gym. That’s because he trains with Anthony Strayhorn, founder of StrayFit. Strayhorn focuses on both physical and mental aspects of his clients, and Ciccone and his wife have been receiving his coaching for the past six years.

“We wanted to take better care of ourselves,” says Ciccone. “Someone gifted us a session with Anthony, and we really liked it. So we just kind of stuck with it.”

Strayhorn’s sessions are a mix of train-

I needed a different perspective on how I was viewing life because it wasn’t moving how I wanted it to move.

~Renee Tyner

ing exercises designed to emulate games and discussions of goals and methods of achieving them. “They have a sign on the wall that says it’s 50% consciousness, 30% nutrition, and 20% exercise.”

“Being mindful of choices that you’re making leads to different momentums and energies in your life,” Ciccone says. He found that the blend of physical and life coaching and the consistency with which it is taught are what has kept him and his wife in the class. “Anthony is a very consistent guy,” says Ciccone. “He’s consistent in his tone, in his advice, and he’s consistent in showing up.” That was necessary, Ciccone explains, because the training might not get done if it was just up to him and his wife.

“We like the idea of a neutral third party as our accountability,” says Ciccone. “I can rationalize not doing something for myself, but if I’m paying for someone’s time, it’s hard for me to blow that off.”

Through his training, Ciccone realized the importance of mindfulness in his life. A few years into the training, he and his girlfriend got engaged, and Ciccone decided to slim down for the wedding. Afterward, his weight slowly crept back up.

“So now we talk with Anthony about having a bigger ‘why.’ You need something bigger than something that’s just three months into the future, like my wedding. Because that’s not a lifestyle. A change in lifestyle plays for bigger prizes.”

Ciccone says it’s hard to be mindful without a larger goal, so to increase his mindfulness, Strayhorn is helping him define that larger goal. “You can change a plan,” says Strayhorn, “but you can’t change no plan.”

Ciccone sees his physical training, mindfulness, and goal setting as part of the

same system. To lose weight, he needs to be mindful. To be mindful, he has to have larger goals.

To that end, Ciccone began to meditate in an effort to become more mindful, which, in turn, opens up more pathways as his goals become concrete. “Really, the coaching is about acknowledging everything that you’re doing is a choice and not letting your brain go on autopilot.”

This approach has also helped him ease social interactions that are often stressful. “It changes the accountability structure,” Ciccone says. “I’m in control of myself, but I can’t control what others are doing. I can only control how I react to it.”

Whether it be physical fitness games or meditation, Strayhorn’s coaching has helped Ciccone become stronger, more aware and more in control of his life.



ELLI MCKINLEY
Diane Martinez / Conscious Creating Life Coaching

“If you told me five years ago that I would move to a beach in Portugal, I would have told you you were nuts.”

For the past four years, Elli McKinley has been building confidence in—and learning about—herself with the help of life coach Diane Martinez, owner of Conscious Creating Life Coaching. McKinley sought out life coaching because she realized she was repeating an unhealthy pattern handed down by her mother—and she wanted to break free of it.

“I learned [from my mother] that, as a woman, I had to not have a voice, and I had to go with the flow and not make waves,” says McKinley. Happily married to her husband for 43 years, she wanted to learn to speak up for herself. “My husband loves the new wife that he has. He loved the old me, too, don’t get me wrong. But I think he can see that I’m steering the boat a little more now, and he likes that.”

But she wasn’t always like that. “I literally had to learn the words to speak up for myself,” she says. Martinez helped her realize that some of the stories she told herself were false, and she could move past them.

“When I first got married, I had a friend who told me I was a terrible cook and that I was too slow. I realize now that I’m very deliberate because I approach cooking with love. For me, that takes time. And I’m a great cook! So there!”

There’s also a spiritual part of Martinez’s coaching, says McKinley, that helped her change her life for the better. “Diane introduced me to so much reading. Researching helped me find my center, find peace.”

McKinley had been craving peace for a long time, and in the past, she would simply “go with the flow” and wouldn’t speak up for herself, she says. But today, her peace has taken a whole new shape. Once the world shut down in response to COVID, McKinley and her husband started dreaming of traveling the world with their children.

They loved the idea of going to Portugal, but there was a hitch. “We learned we could move there, but we couldn’t travel there.” After talking it over a while, McKinley and her family packed their whole life into 19 suitcases and left for the warm sands of Portugal. “We are living out our dream,” says McKinley. “Through life coaching, I’ve been able to bring these dreams to fruition,” she says. “I’ve allowed myself to start thinking broader, and I’ve been able to start asking myself, ‘Why not?’”



Noah Chen is an Atlanta writer and journalist who writes for a wide variety of large companies and publications.

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7 Keys to Finding the Right Coach

- 1 Do your research:** Read up a little on what life coaching is and what it helps people accomplish and then consider whether it might help you. Search online for coaches in your area or ask friends for referrals.
- 2 Training and certifications:** For every coach you're considering, find out about their professional background, training, methods and certifications to see if they have the skills you'll need to help you get the results you want. It's also enlightening to find out how long they've been coaching professionally. While there is very little governance and regulation of the coaching industry, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) has published standards and ethics for the industry. Certification by the ICF provides a professional stamp of approval.
- 3 Style:** Although life coaches can have a lot in common, each one is unique. Some work in an organized and structured fashion, for example, while others are more free-flowing, responding to your needs as they come up. Some coaches have warm and supportive personalities while others are effective by challenging and confronting you. Do you want to be inspired, pushed, encouraged or supported? Ask a prospective coach how they would describe their style and then think about if that is the type of support you want.
- 4 Consult:** Most life coaches offer a free consultation so you can get a sense of who they are and how they work. Some even offer a free 30-minute sample session, which can be insightful—but be sure to get them to agree to answer a few questions first. That's when you can get a summary of their background and find out about their approach to coaching. Prepare some questions in advance.
- 5 Success rate:** Is the coach really successful at helping clients make sustainable changes in their lives? Go online and read the reviews or testimonials that have been published, or ask for a couple of references when you talk to them.
- 6 Cost:** Find out what is included in the coach's hourly rate. Do they provide any additional services, tools or resources? Do they have a team, group, or app that might provide additional structure or support if needed? Price is not always an indication of quality, and quality is the most important factor. You are making an investment in your life and your future.
- 7 Trust your gut:** After you've spoken with a life coach, looked at their website or social media presence or conversed with them over email, notice how you feel. Look for a combination of feeling relief, excitement, safety and openness toward your life changing for the better. A good fit is with someone with whom you have rapport, making you feel safe, seen and heard.

Ask a Coach



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

White Stone Ceremony — 11am-12pm. Have you ever wished to claim a new identity rooted in Truth? Join Rev Jenn as she leads us in this uplifting and inspiring spiritual experience. Claim a new name for yourself and realize a greater connection with God. Unity Atlanta, 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8

Wellness Pop-Up Shop — 12-6pm. A taste party. Our specialty is gluten-free, soy-free and sugar-free cuisine. Vendors that support and encourage wellness using a variety of services and products. Free. Go Vegan Grill Restaurant, 2179 Lawrenceville Hwy, Ste D, Decatur. Register: Tinyurl.com/2p8chw8p.

New Year, New Beginnings — 1-2pm. Fire symbolizes fresh starts, renewal and hope. Learn to build a fire, fire safety and ancient fire-starting methods. Participate in our annual bowl burning; the perfect way to begin 2022 with a clean slate. Free. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

Winter Family Night Hike — 7-9pm. Listen for the sounds of winter in the woods and gaze up at the stars while enjoying the crisp air of the season. A campfire, where you can roast a marshmallow, will be waiting for you as we wrap up the evening. \$12/nonmember, \$10/CNC member. CNC, 9135 Willet Rd, Roswell. Registration required by Jan 6: ChattNatureCenter.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad, email your listing to ads@naatlanta.com. Cost is \$1/word; minimum \$25. Deadline: Fifth of each month for the next month's issue.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

Aromatherapy Winter Protective Essential Oils — 2-4pm. Kelly Clonts brings a great deal of knowledge and enthusiasm, as well as her devotion to making a difference in health and wellness by using the gifts of nature. \$20. RSVP.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

Change Your Interiors, Change Your Life with Feng Shui — 2-3:30pm. Also Feb 20. With Roberta Grant. Informative, interactive and fun workshop to learn about the history, principles, Bagua map, The Five Elements, Ch'i Enhancers, clutter clearing and much more. Free; love offering appreciated. RSVP.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28

Let Go, Let Flow: Full Moon Releasing — 7-8pm. With London. Workshop dedicated to using the full moon energy to release what is no longer serving you and making room for new opportunities. Free; love offering appreciated. RSVP.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

Online: Transmission Meditation — 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Eventbrite. Info: 404-680-7423 or Info-SE@Share-International.us. Register: Tinyurl.com/y7nv43wb.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19

Virtual Green Reads Book Club — 6:30-8pm. Delve into essential reads related to land conservation and protection, sustainable growth and stewardship among other environmentally focused subjects. Jan book: Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter by Ben Goldfarb. Register, Liza Mueller: GreenReadsBookClub@yahoo.com. GeorgiaConservancy.org.

Our intention creates our reality.

-Wayne Dyer



JANUARY 22 - 23

Predictions for 2022

2-4 pm, January 22; 1-3pm, January 23. Join astrologer Susan Reynolds as she discusses the economy, politics, geographical and celebrity news, and overviews what 2022 holds for each astrological sign.

Solstice Gem Store, 1200 Johnson Ferry Rd, Suite 310 Marietta GA 30068. Cost: \$30.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

Online: The Nature Club Dine and Discover — 7-9pm. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. Via Zoom. Registration required by Aug 25: 770-992-2055 or ChattNatureCenter.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29

Georgia Audubon Society Bird Walk — 8-10am. Meet Atlanta Audubon leader in the DNC parking lot to begin the walk. Free. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

MONDAY, JANUARY 31

Online: Well Begun Is Half Done — 11:30am-12pm. A Life Alignment Experience. Let's set up the energy up for the new year. Let's clean together the energetic residues of 2021, and begin with an infusion of self-confidence, and connection with our higher self. Let's create together the vibe we want for 2022. \$10. Register: Tinyurl.com/muvevt7d.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

First Annual Holistic & Wellness Expo

10am-5pm. Presented by Valhalla Resort in Helen, GA, the expo features lectures, vendors, demos, healing experiences and optional, in-depth breakouts on Sunday, February 6. Tickets: \$15 advance, \$20 door.

688 Bahn Innsbruck, Helen, Georgia 30545. valhallaesorthotel.com/holistic-wellness.

ONGOING

Sundays

Online & In-Person Sunday Experience — 9am, Adult Study; 9:30am, Meditation; 10am, Music; 10:30am, Service. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Ste A, Atlanta. More info: slc-atlanta.org.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service — 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, service & dharma discussion. Via Zoom or in person. 3420 W Hospital Ave, Ste 102, Chamblee. More info: RedClaySangha.org.

Online: NWUUC — 10am. Via Zoom. Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation: 770-955-1408 or nwuuc.org.

SRF Atlanta Meditation Service — 10-10:45am. An opportunity to meet with other truth-seekers to commune with God and share spiritual fellowship. 4000 King Springs Rd, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. srfatlanta.org.

Meditation Open House — 10-11:30am. Discussion at 11:30am and tea at 12pm. Meditation instruction available from 10-11am for those new to the practice. Atlanta Shambhala Center, 1447 Church St, Decatur. More info: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Second Sunday Sober Bike Ride — 10:30am. 2nd Sun. Brings together people from all walks of sober living who are seeking fun and active ways to connect with likeminded people. BTA Bicycle Tours of Atlanta will provide a bike at no charge if needed. Bicycle Tours of Atlanta, 659 Auburn Ave NE, Atlanta. Register: Tinyurl.com/yjzutj4f.

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

Unity Atlanta Sunday Services — 11am. Attend in-person or watch via live stream. 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Online: UUCA Service — 11am. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta: uucalive.org.

SRF Atlanta Reading and Inspirational Service — 11am-12pm. An opportunity to meet with other truth-seekers to commune with God and share spiritual fellowship. 4000 King Springs Rd, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. srfatlanta.org.

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

Unity North Online & In-Person Sunday Service — 11:15am. 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: UnityNorth.org.

Last Sunday Social — 12:12-3:33pm. Last Sun with Kosmic Brew. Join us and our community of vendors as we share a healing space, engage in meaningful dialogues and create lasting memories. For location: Hi@KosmicBrew.com or Linktr.ee/KosmicBrew.

Mondays

The {SAMA} Class: Virtual — 9am. Also held Thurs & Fri. Incorporates 25 mins of yoga, 10 mins of breathwork, finishing off with 10 mins of meditation. Each teacher will bring their own spin to the class based on their particular line of training. More info: SamaFoodForBalance.com.

Tuesdays

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

Metro Atlanta Sierra Club Meeting — 7:30pm. 2nd Tues. More info: SierraClub.org/georgia/atlanta.

Wednesdays

30-Minute Guided Meditation — 8am. Be guided through a simple yet powerful meditation that gives rise to an experience of mental peace and wellbeing. No experience necessary. Beginners welcome. \$5. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Zoom Check-In: Wellness Wednesdays — 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. slc-atlanta.org.

Angel Message Circle — 6:30-8:30pm. Sharon Ragan works with the energy of thousands of Angels and guides you in your next steps. \$20. Heart Soul and Art, 1470 Roswell Rd, Marietta. Pre-registration required: Heart-Soul-And-Art.square.site.

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.

Meditation Fundamentals — 6:30-7:30pm. Suitable for complete beginners. Get a practical introduction to meditation and includes topics such as the benefits of meditation, mindfulness, good posture, types of meditation, and how to start a daily meditation practice. In-person & online. \$15. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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

Fridays

Qigong Exercises & Meditations — 12-12:45pm. 1st & 3rd. Led by Master Cheng, who has been teaching in Atlanta since 1976. Free/member, \$8/nonmember. Tai Chi Association, 3079 Midway Rd, Decatur. More info & registration: Tai-Chi-Association.com.

Drumming Is the People's Medicine — 4-7pm. There is liberation, experimentation, meditation and laughter at this supportive, donation-based gathering for beginners led by Daniel Ellis or Kim Hobbs. Santosha Studio, 896 Davis Dr, Atlanta. More info & to register: Santosha-Studio.com.

Saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations — 8-8:30am. A guided meditation to start your day with a positive state of mind and carry that inner light with you for the rest of the day. No prior meditation experience necessary; all welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

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

Oakhurst Farmers' Market — 9am-1pm. Closed Jan 1. Year round. Fresh produce, meat, baked treats, and more. Additional offerings include live music and chef demonstrations featuring seasonal recipes. Masks required. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630 E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst.

Free Online Guided Meditation for All — 9:45-11am. Will go over basics and guided meditation. No prior experience is needed. Classes meant to come together and meditate and learn little by little. Via Zoom. Register: Tinyurl.com/y3x5yy2s.



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by Rosemary Kimble

A Recapitulation Story

As a teenager, my journal was my best friend. I could trust it and tell it anything, knowing my secrets would never be shared. I used my journal to work through my life problems. I found consolation in it when I was sad or just happy to share something. I have been journaling ever since; it is perhaps the greatest tool that I use as an adult today.

When I was 30, I read *Tensegrity* by Carlos Castaneda, which introduced me to the shamanic practice of recapitulation, an exercise in remembering and healing from the past. The naguals of Mexico consider recapitulation to be a very healing process, as it allows them to retrieve energy they've left behind in an experience as well as return any energy that they had taken from it. Before a nagual apprentice can become a shaman, they have to complete the exercise and recall every detail of their life in the process. It can take several years.

I'd wanted to write a memoir for a long

time. Many years of journaling showed me that I had a story to tell. I knew that a recapitulation process would help me to write my memoir because I would have to remember everything that had ever happened to me. I also realized it would help me to work through painful events from my past and give me the courage to be able to share them later. I believed my stories could be an inspiration to others on their spiritual path.

It took years before I found the will and the courage to start, and I promised myself I wouldn't write my memoir until after I'd written my story for myself. I discovered the recapitulation process was nothing like journaling. It took me to a much deeper place of reliving my life than I ever could have imagined. It was a very difficult process. Remembering the painful times was intense, but it was also joyful and inspiring to remember the beautiful times. It took me ten years to recapitulate most of my life story.

Writing my memoir turned out to be just as difficult to do because I relived every experience again and again, since writing a book often requires numerous rounds of edits. Some memories were wonderful to relive, such as witnessing supernatural phenomena and visiting exotic places. But the hard ones, including almost drowning and being in love with an addict, were difficult for me to feel once more. Still, writing and editing my story was a profoundly healing process.

It was also a deeply spiritual experience. Through the recapitulation process, I was able to see that my past does not define me. I was able to let go of the shame I felt for some of my previous actions. I understood that we are constantly reinventing ourselves. I realized that all of my life experiences had helped me to grow, no matter how hard they were. It allowed me to have no regrets for my past.

Through my recapitulation, I realized what the naguals of Mexico understood—that to re-examine my life and to look at my traumas without fear gave me an essential healing from my past. Plus, reliving the many lovely moments showed me just how special my life has been. I understood that every experience I've had has led me to be who I am now, and every challenge has helped me to be a better person.

Journaling continues to help me process emotions and reevaluate my life circumstances. It is a powerful tool for transformation and self-expression. Knowing my journal is a safe place for me to say anything gives me the courage to examine my life thoroughly. It also helps me to be grateful for all of the beauty and challenges my life brings. 🌱



Rosemary Kimble was born an artist with an inclination towards the metaphysical and the healing arts.

She is an animal communicator, medium, intuitive

healer, ceremonialist and co-director of Adventures in Empowerment Retreats. Visit VisionsAndReflections.com or email Info@VisionsAndReflections.com.

Nature's Virus Killer

Copper can stop a cold before it starts

By Doug Cornell

Scientists have discovered a natural way to kill germs fast. Now thousands of people are using it against viruses and bacteria in the nose and on the skin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It worked!" he exclaimed. "The

cold never got going. That was September 2012. I use copper in the nose every time and I have not had a single cold since then."



New device puts copper right where you need it.

"We can't make product health claims," he said, "so I can't say cause and effect. But we know copper is antimicrobial."

He asked relatives and friends to try it. They reported

the same thing, so he patented CopperZap® and put it on the market.

Soon hundreds of people had tried it. The feedback was 99% positive if they used the copper within 3 hours after the first sign of unwanted germs, like a tickle in the nose or a scratchy throat.

Early user Mary Pickrell said, "I can't believe how good my nose feels."

"What a wonderful thing!" exclaimed Physician's Assistant Julie. Another customer asked, "Is it supposed to work that fast?"

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

Frequent flier Karen Gauci had been suffering after crowded flights. Though skeptical, she tried copper on travel days for 2 months. "Sixteen flights and

not a sniffle!" she exclaimed.

Businesswoman Rosaleen says when people around her show signs of cold or flu, she uses copper morning and night. "It saved me last holidays," she said. "The kids had crud going round and round, but not me."

Attorney Donna Blight tried copper for her sinus. "I am shocked!" she said. "My head cleared, no more headache, no more congestion."

A man with trouble breathing through his nose at night tried copper just before bed. "Best sleep I've had in years!" he said.

In a lab test, technicians placed 25 million live flu viruses on a CopperZap. No viruses were found surviving soon after.

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

Some people press copper on a lip right away if a warning tingle suggests unwanted germs gathering there.



Dr. Bill Keevil: Copper quickly kills cold viruses.

The handle is curved and textured to increase contact. Copper can kill germs picked up on fingers and hands after you touch things other people have touched.

The EPA says copper still works even when tarnished.

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- Special chair-side evacuation system (DentAirVac) captures mercury vapors to protect patients

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