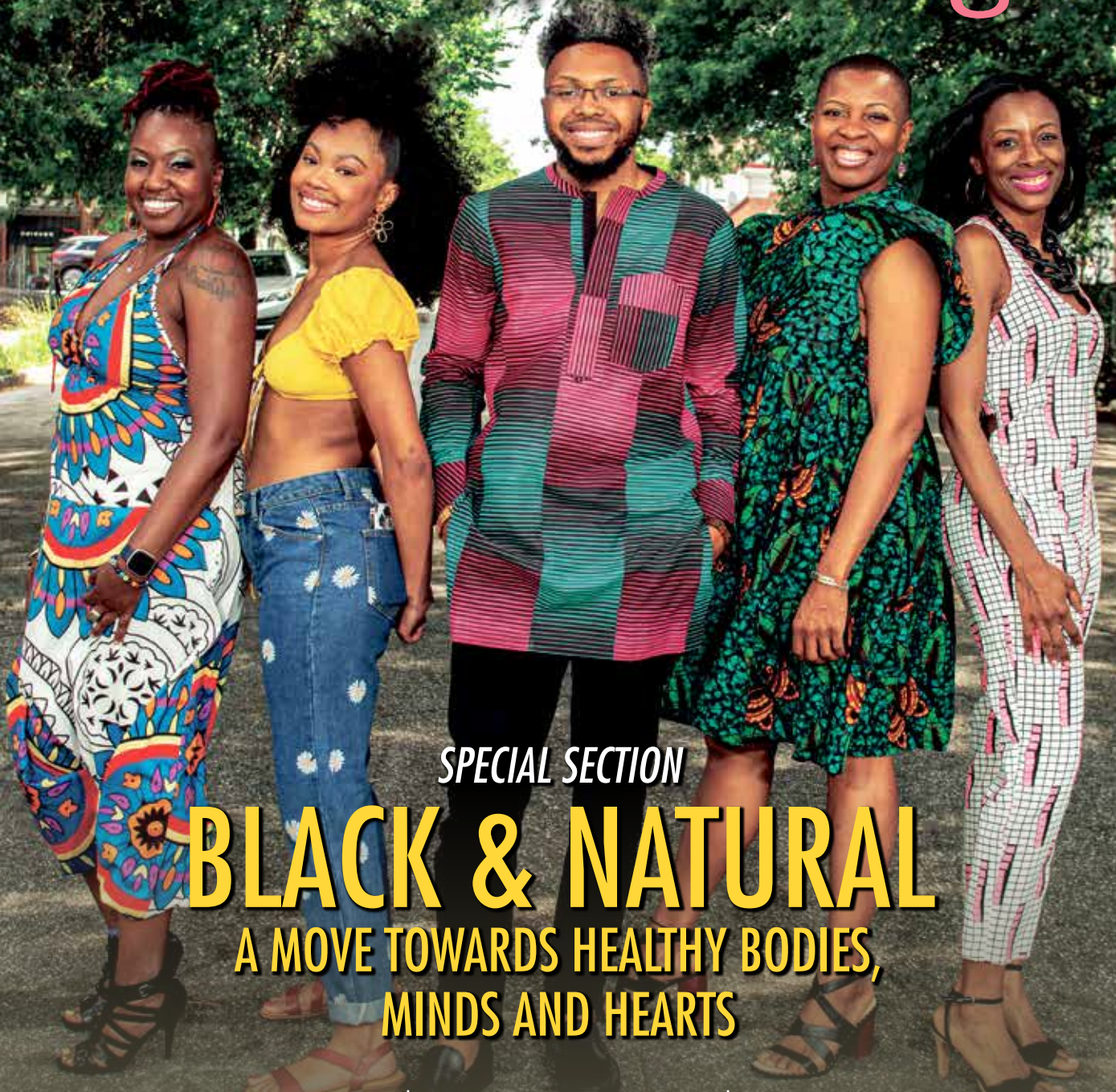


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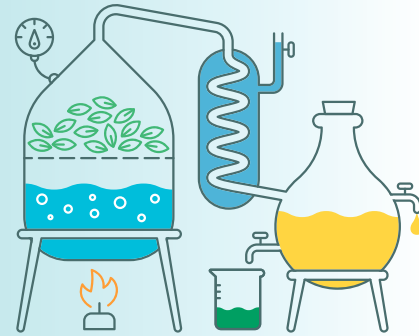


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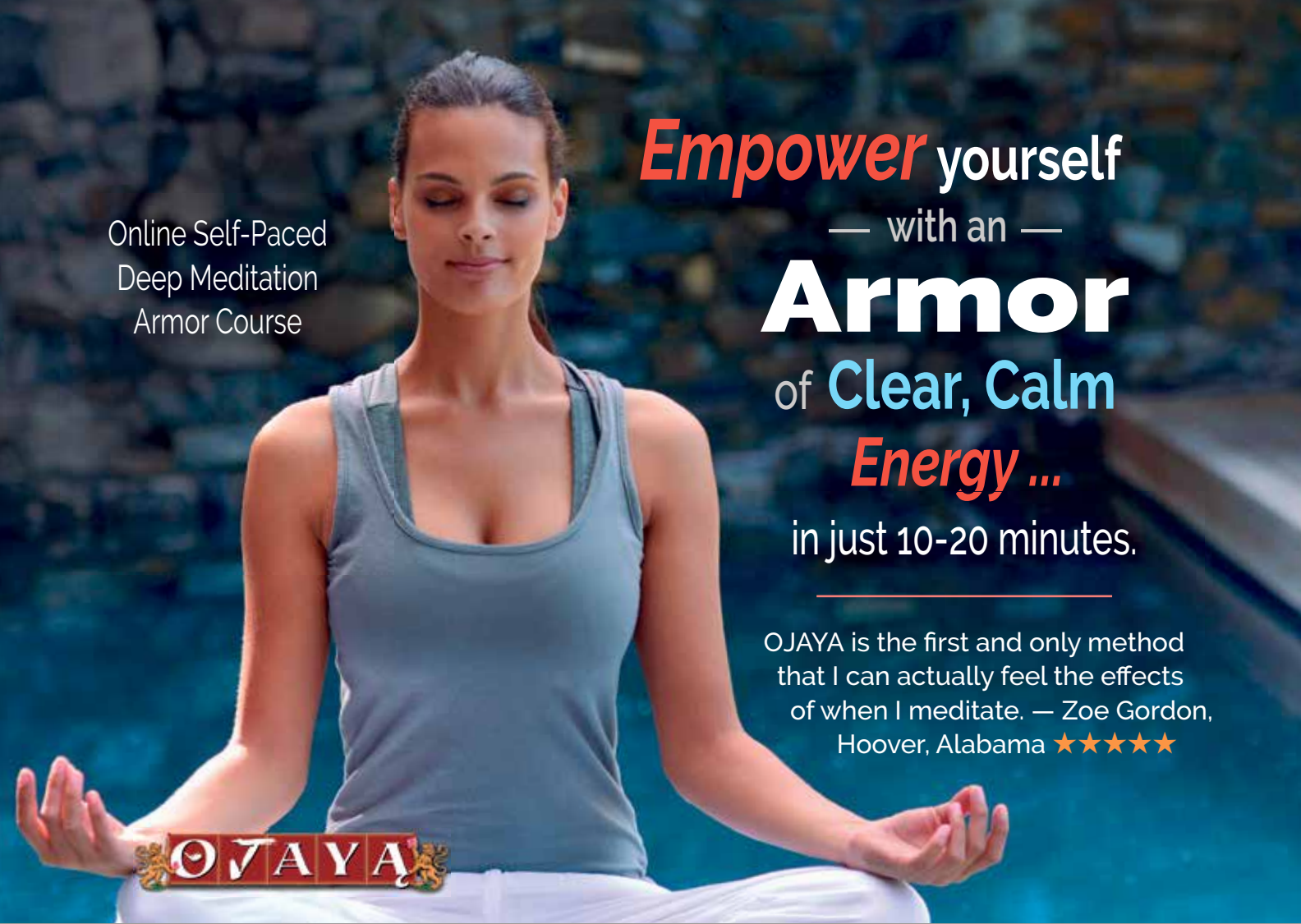


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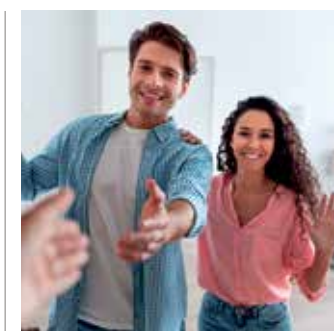
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BLACK COVERAGE

This month’s special section marks the third time we’ve dedicated significant editorial resources focused on an African Americans issue. Here are the two previous special sections, and a few other articles of note.



HEALING THE TRAUMA OF SLAVERY

A 12-page, four-article + sidebar + resource page exploration of the ongoing trauma experienced by African Americans as a function of centuries of servitude, humiliation, and neglect.

bit.ly/naa-trauma-of-slavery

BLACK & VEGAN IN ATLANTA

A two-article, three-recipe offering from August 2019. Why does veganism seem to be a trend among African Americans? How is Black veganism different from white veganism? And, who are some of the pioneers in the area?

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT

Our cover subjects were selected by Trish Ahjel Roberts, our editor for African American issues, to demonstrate five different African American hairstyles. They are, from left to right, Tsani Merriweather (www.tantrablue.com), Mona Swain (www.instagram.com/monaswain), Sam Inyang (ideafragments.com), Natasha Brewley (aka Chef Beee), and Ebony Dixon.



Lending his creative talent to his fifth cover for us is Jason Dennard, above. He also receives credit for the photo of Swain on page 13. Check him out at jasondennard.com and @jasondennardphoto.

Natural Awakenings would also like to thank Robin Groover, co-owner of Too Groovy Salon at 265 Ponce de Leon Ave. Suite E, for allowing us to shoot indoor photos at her location. While none of those shots made it in to the magazine, we are grateful to her for her kindness.

Natural Awakenings is a family of 50-plus healthy living magazines celebrating 27 years of providing the communities we serve with the tools and resources we need to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

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Celebrating

JUNETEENTH, ALIVE! EXPO 2022

We're pleased to present our third special section on an African American issue: "Black & Natural Hair: A Movement Toward Healthy Bodies, Minds and Hearts." This follows last year's epic effort—our "Healing the Trauma of Slavery" special section—and 2019's "Black & Vegan in Atlanta."

This year, we made a significant change in how we do things. First and foremost, editorial direction came from someone other than me—our editor for African American affairs, Trish Ahjel Roberts. We also solicited input for this year's topic from last year's sponsor, Sevananda Natural Foods Market's Ahzjah Simons, as well as avid supporter Tassili Ma'at, owner of Tassili's Raw Reality Café.

As the magazine has become better acquainted with the Black holistic community in Atlanta, Trish and I shared views about the difference between Black and white holistic communities. Trish made a keen observation that I believe to be true: when African Americans journey down the holistic path, they tend to reach back in time to their indigenous roots in Africa, the Caribbean and America; the ancients knew what the deal was way back then. Blacks don't use the term "New Age;" as Trish says, "New Age isn't new."

Trish suggested that there could be a socioeconomic divide within the white community when it comes to the holistic lifestyle; whites who practice a holistic approach are generally better educated and more affluent than whites who don't, whereas Black holistic practitioners come from all parts of the socioeconomic spectrum. That observation has a ring of truth to my ears, but neither of us has research to back it up.

Another change: we decided to switch the month we focus on an African Ameri-

can issue from February to June each year from now on. We published "Healing the Trauma of Slavery" in February of last year to coincide with Black History Month, but June seems more appropriate, thanks to Juneteenth. Speaking of which, this month's Conscious Eating story and recipes for Juneteenth celebrations are written by Atlanta's Natasha Brewley, aka Chef Beee, who offers four plant-based recipes for the holiday.

Alive! Expo 2022

I am writing this two days after the two-day event, Alive! Expo, Atlanta's largest consumer trade show focused on holistic health and green products. Circumstances conspired to put us in a very interesting situation: our previous 10-by-10 booth space exploded into a 30-by-50 pavilion that featured a small speaking area and space for nine customers and contributors to exhibit!

I share this with you not to boast about the size of our space but to look back in appreciation of an experience that I've not had before, which is a gathering of many customers in one place. I've always said that the best part of my work is getting to know a lot of really wonderful, talented, well-meaning people, every one of them trying to make the world a better place in their own way.

I knew that several of our peeps knew each other, so camaraderie was expected, but to see and experience the warmth and good feelings that abounded was a treat. I particularly enjoyed witnessing customers considering partnership potentials and making arrangements to meet after the expo. Connecting people to each other is one of my favorite things to do and Alive! Expo proved to be a terrific environment for customers to meet and connect.



Trish Ahjel Roberts [Photo: Karen Halbert]

For me, the expo experience brought to life something I dreamed of even before buying the magazine—an in-person educational forum, similar to TEDx, that we would hold every month. We would host a couple of speakers at each event, have them speak for 20 minutes, and then spend 10 minutes in Q&A—one hour of programming. But the events would double as socials; the official event time includes at least half an hour beyond the speakers for people to talk and get to know each other.

Building a sense of community for those who are consciously evolving is a dream and a goal of mine. Publishing great content is Job #1, but the support of one's community along one's journey is not only essential, it is enormously gratifying on its own. Community is the home of love and hope.

One day it will happen! I can't wait for the inaugural Natural Awakenings Live!



Publisher of Natural Awakenings Atlanta since 2017, Paul Chen's professional background includes strategic planning, marketing management and

qualitative research. He practices Mahayana Buddhism and kriya yoga. Contact him at paul@naAtlanta.com.

Rashid Nuri, Doctah B Sirius to Speak at Wonderful Wizards of Raw



Rashid Nuri [Photo: Tom Brodnax]



Doctah B Sirius

Urban farming pioneer, Rashid Nuri, and herbalist and medicine man Doctah B Sirius, Ph.D., are among a host of speakers and entertainers that will appear at the upcoming Wonderful Wizards of Raw June 3 through 5 in the backyard of Tassili's Raw Reality Café in the West End.

Other speakers include Rizza Islam, Queen Yenn, The Pills (Blue Pill and Red Pill), and the festival's host, Tassili Ma'at.

The festival's theme is Return to the Garden; Nuri will speak on urban gardening, and Sirius will speak on the detoxification of parasites in all realms physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Islam will talk about the politics of food; The Pills will speak on natural remedies; Yenn will discuss the use of crystals to improve health; and Ma'at will explore the topic of her latest book, *Journey to Selflessness*, in which she talks about finding the sweet spot between being selfless and selfish.

In its ninth year, The Wonderful Wizards of Raw is a spring festival that takes place during the first weekend of June. The event's kickoff, called "The Libation," takes place on Friday June 3 from 4 to 8 p.m. at Cascade Springs Nature Preserve. Festival hours on Saturday and Sunday are from 1 to 11 p.m.

For more information, visit Bit.ly/wwr-2022.

THE CBD JOINT Offers The CBD Experience

The CBD Joint, an Atlanta-based cannabidiol (CBD) retailer with stores in Marietta and Smyrna, will host The CBD Experience in the lobby of the Aloft Hotel for one Sunday each in June, July and August.

The four-hour event will be held from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on June 19, July 17 and August 28. With a focus on education, it will feature talks, products, live music and more.

Roz Grigger, the owner of The CBD Joint, says, "The main goal of this event is to show that cannabis can be helpful for individuals with chronic pain, anxiety, depression and other conditions. CBD is your friend. Come experience the difference."

Grigger is offering the events to counter what she considers misinformation about CBD. "[CBD] is not new, but it is very foreign to most people due to its previous inaccurate history," she says. She discovered the benefits of CBD in 2017 and says it has had a tremendous impact on her quality of life. Her positive experience with CBD products now drives her to help normalize the use of cannabis.

For more information, visit TheCBDCollective.com or call 678-932-6912 for the Marietta store or 678-472-8344 for the Smyrna store. The Aloft Hotel is located at 950 Battery Ave. SE in Atlanta.



Roz Grigger owner [Photo: Roz Grigger]

TREE OF LIGHT HEALTH RELOCATES

Martin Van Lear's integrative/functional medicine practice, Tree of Light Health, has moved from its former downtown Decatur office to 2545 Lawrenceville Highway, Suite 150. While his previous office was within a traditional office building, his new location is a building built for medical practices, and consequently, his practice has better access to third-party services such as IV therapy.

It also happens to have better patient parking, says Van Lear.

Demand for Van Lear's services has expanded and wait times for appointments are two to three months out. Within the last year, he has begun offering two new services: immunotherapy and peptide anti-aging therapy. The former is based on homeopathy and offers treatments for mold, dust and food issues, among others. The latter is injection-based and addresses chronic illnesses. People often seek out Van Lear for help with brain fog and/or fatigue.

Tree of Light Health has been in operation for about five years. Van Lear holds a Masters of Science degree in nursing, is a family nurse practitioner and an advanced practice registered nurse. He has received training in a wide variety of modalities and holds a certification in anti-aging medicine from the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

For more information, visit TreeOfLightHealth.com, call 404-877-2385 or email Martin@TreeOfLightHealth.com.



Martin Van Lear





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WHY THE Black and Natural Hair Movement IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

From the big afros of activists like Angela Davis during the Black Power Movement of the 1970s to the dreadlocks popularized by Bob Marley in the '80s, natural hair for Black people can make a powerful statement. But is natural hair about more than activism, cultural pride or fashion? Does it also make a difference to one's health?

The Cambridge dictionary defines "natural hair" as "thick and curly hair, especially like that of some Black people, that has not been made straight with special chemicals." According to Del Sandeen in an article for the beauty website, Byrdie.com, "Pressed hair may still be considered natural because once washed, the texture usually returns to its unaltered state (as long as no heat damage has occurred)." Popular natural hairstyles include afros, dreadlocks—or

"locs"—braids, cornrows, twists, twist-outs, wash-and-gos, blow-outs and buzz cuts. There is some disagreement in the African American community over whether wigs worn over natural hair, sometimes referred to as "protective styles," or synthetic or human hair extensions added to braids qualify as natural. However, there is agreement that any untreated tresses are "natural."

Many Products Marketed to Black Women are More Toxic

Current research reports that many products marketed to Black women are more toxic than those marketed to white women. In a 2018 study of Black hair-care products by the Silent Springs Institute, it was discovered that 80 percent of the 18 products

tested contained high levels of chemicals that affect the endocrine system, which regulates reproduction and metabolism. Products tested represented six categories: hot oil treatment, anti-frizz/polish, leave-in conditioner, root stimulator, hair lotion and relaxer.

Recent research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) says hair products used by Black women and children contain many chemicals associated with endocrine disruption and asthma. According to a 2019 study from the Department of Health and Human Services, African Americans are 40 percent more likely to have asthma than whites and three times more likely to die from asthma-related causes.

Cancer, Hormone Disruptions, Asthma and Fibroids Linked to Chemical Relaxers

Permanent hair straightening with chemical relaxers came onto the market in the 1920s. Today, nearly 75 percent of Black women use relaxers on their hair, according to BreastCancer.org. They are widely used because of their convenience and long-term results as compared to other hair straightening techniques using heat or tension. A report from social services organization Black Women for Wellness reveals that the products haven't changed from their original formulations much.

Frequent and long-term use of lye-based hair relaxers can increase the risk of breast cancer among Black women, according to Boston University's Black Women's Health Study (BWHS), which followed 59,000 African American women for more than 25 years. Ninety-five percent of participants reported having used the products, indicating a potentially significant impact on Black women's health.

The results? Using hair products containing lye at least seven times a year for 15 or more years increased the risk of estrogen receptor positive breast cancer by 30 percent. The study found minimal risk for moderate users. According to BWHS, Black women are also more likely to develop highly aggressive breast cancers than their white counterparts.

The study highlights disparities in the health of Black and white women. Black women are 40 percent more likely to die from a breast cancer diagnosis than white women despite a lower incidence rate. While some of that difference is attributable to delays in diagnoses and less access to health care, it doesn't fully explain the survival gap between the two groups of women. According to a 2019 study by the American Cancer Society, this disparity is even higher among Black women under 50, who have a death rate two times that of white women.

According to a 2012 study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, chemical exposure through scalp lesions and burns caused by relaxers are linked with high fibroid tumor rates. Approximately 80 percent of Black women will be impacted by uterine fibroids over their lifetime. The study interviewed more than 23,000 premenopausal Black women from 1997 to 2009 and found two to three times higher rates of fibroids among Black women than their white counterparts.

Wigs, Weaves, Extensions Linked to Hair Loss and Allergic Reactions

In a 2020 article for *InStyle* magazine, hair historian and psychologist Dr. Afiya Mbilishaka explains that during the desegregation movement of the 1960s, "wigs had been used to address employment. There were actually certain hair requirements when a Black woman had to integrate her job, and she had to comply with a style that her natural hair maybe couldn't do. So, whether it was a flight attendant or a nurse, it was a part of the uniform to wear the wig. It justified the respectability of that person."

According to anti-racism educator, Gahmya Drummond-Bey, Black women wear wigs and weaves for a variety of reasons: to protect natural hair, to appear "professional," to have fun or to deal with a lack of confidence with their hair. "Protective styles are hairstyles that keep your real hair tucked away or untouched. These styles help our hair to grow, as well, because we are not pulling or manipulating our hair with heat."

The technique for hair weaving was patented in 1951 by Christina Jenkins, an African American woman. In her technique, hair is attached to a netting that is sewn to the hair on the scalp. Since then, additional techniques were developed including "bonding and fusion," which uses adhesives to attach hair extensions, and "pinch braids," which involve tying extensions to the hair by braiding it in. Weaves gained popularity in the 1980s and have been worn by celebrities from Lindsay Lohan, Victoria Beckham and Paris Hilton to Diana Ross, Zendaya and Keke Palmer.

If a woman is pressured to change her hair for employment or to appear "professional," it can impact not only confidence and mental health, but physical health as well. According to dermatologist Crystal Ugochi Aguh, M.D., in an article for Johns Hopkins Medicine, almost half of Black women will experience some form of hair loss. Because most doctors are unfamiliar with Black hairstyling practices, they cannot adequately provide guidance.

Alopecia is a medical term for hair loss. While there are many types of alopecia, some related to genetics and autoimmune disorders, two varieties appear to be a direct result of hair treatment: traction alopecia and central centrifugal cicatricial alopecia (CCCA).

Traction alopecia is caused by weaving, braiding, tight ponytails, heavy dreadlocks or any technique that pulls hair tightly for extended periods of time. Ballerinas, gymnasts, military personnel and other professionals who are required to wear their hair pulled back might be more at risk for traction alopecia. Hair loss typically occurs at the hairline.

According to research published by the Skin of Color Society, the exact cause of CCCA is unknown, however it is very common in Black women. It was previously believed to be caused exclusively by excessive heat and hot oils on the scalp, tight braids, hair rollers, weaves, extensions or chemical relaxers. Multiple processes, such as hair relaxers coupled with excessive heat from hair dryers, hot rollers and curling or flat irons can compound damage, as can double processes, such as applying hair dyes or bleaches on top of relaxers. Hair loss from CCCA occurs primarily at the crown of the head and radiates outward in a circular pattern.



Glue adhesives used to keep hair extensions and lace-front wigs in place can also impact health. According to beauty expert, Jacqueline Tarrant in an article for BlackDoctors.org, “They can cause damage that is often permanent. The glue can block your scalp pores and damage your hair follicles as well as burn and dry out your hair. Heavy extensions pull on your scalp resulting in thinning hair. It is difficult to clean your scalp with glue extensions in it creating unhealthy hair. Sometimes hair extensions can cause headaches and bald spots.” Risk of allergic reaction to the latex in glues is also a concern for users. According to Tarrant, “The reactions to these items go beyond contact dermatitis, and may cause asthma, or even anaphylactic shock.” Damage can be irreversible.

Permanent Hair Dyes Linked to Cancer

According to Harvard Health, hair dyes come in four categories: permanent, semi-permanent, temporary, and natural. Most hair dyes used in the U.S. are permanent. They undergo chemical reactions to create pigment that deposits on hair shafts and may pose the greatest cancer risk. Options for completely chemical-free hair color are limited to the application of henna or pure plant juices.

According to senior reporter Nina Lakhani, in a 2020 article for *The Guardian*, “A landmark study that tracked almost 47,000 American women over eight years found that using permanent hair dye increases a Black woman’s risk of breast cancer by 45 percent, compared to an increased risk of 7 percent in white women. The more frequently women colored their hair, the greater the risk, rising to 60 percent for black women who used permanent dyes at least every five to eight weeks. Prior studies on the link between hair dye use and cancer had been inconsistent.”

Recommendations for Hair Health

Clearly, toxicity in hair products should be of paramount concern to Black women. According to Atlanta celebrity hairstylist and Aveda Institute Instructor Angel Johnson, “Healthy hair



Angel Johnson [Photo: Angel Johnson]

is balanced, moisturized and undamaged, with a healthy curl pattern.” She offers some tips for women who want to achieve and maintain ideal hair health:

- Understand your hair type and texture, what your hair can do and what products you need to get desirable styles.
- Get a professional who specializes in your hair type and desired style.
- Establish a maintenance routine for between visits, get educated on products and try to stay within one product line.
- Take care of your physical health by drinking enough water, eating healthy and understanding how your medications, hormones and surgery side-effects affect your hair.
- Wrap your hair with silk or satin at bedtime to prevent hair breakage.

Recipes

Founder and CEO of CentreSpringMD in Atlanta and host of the podcast Super Woman Wellness, Dr. Taz Bhatia offers the following recipes to keep tresses in tip-top shape:

- **Scalp Massage.** When we notice more hair falling or thinning, it’s tempting to resolve to touch the hair and scalp as little as possible—not wanting to cause more hair to fall out. But this can have the opposite effect. Massaging the scalp increases blood flow to hair follicles, which means they have access to more nutrients with which to grow. The best way to do this is with an essential oil massage. Bhatia’s favorite recipe for a healthy hair massage is:

3-5 drops lavender essential oil

3 drops peppermint essential oil

4-6 oz carrier oil, such as coconut or jojoba

Mix ingredients together. For thicker hair, try adding 3-5 drops of cypress or rosemary essential oils.

• Homemade Hair Mask or Conditioner.

Some of the best hair-care remedies come straight from nature. Simple ingredients contain nourishing proteins and protective fats that promote strong and thick hair. Bhatia’s go-to hair-growth mask contains:

½ avocado

1 Tbsp honey

½ cup yogurt

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Apply to damp hair, paying special attention to dry ends. Twist hair in a bun and let the mask sit for 15-30 minutes. Afterward, rinse out with lukewarm—not hot—water. These ingredients are great for healthy hair. Yogurt contains strengthening proteins, avocado provides fatty acids, and honey serves as a humectant to protect moisture within the hair.

Options for Atlanta’s Black Women

Black women in Atlanta have a wide variety of hairstylists and options to care for their natural hair. Access the resource sidebar and find your favorites!

Black women in Atlanta have a wide variety of hairstylists and options to care for their natural hair. Virtually all hairstyles can be achieved in a healthy way by discontinuing or limiting the use of toxic products and taking care when applying tension to hair. 🌱



Trish Ahjel Roberts is a self-actualization and diversity coach, happiness expert, founder of Mind-Blowing Happiness, a coaching business, and creator of the brand Black Vegan Life. For more information, visit TrishAhjelRoberts.com.

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The CROWN Act
World Afro Day

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THE IMPACT OF Hair Shaming

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

In 2016, a federal appeals court ruled that banning employees from wearing their hair in dreadlocks is legal based on a discrimination lawsuit brought by Chastity Jones in Alabama.

In 2018, 16-year-old Andrew Johnson was given an ultimatum by a white referee before a wrestling match at his New Jersey high school: cut your locs or forfeit the match. The video of a white female trainer cutting off Johnson's hair went viral.

In 2020, Texas teenager DeAndre Arnold was told he couldn't walk in his high school graduation unless he cut his locs to meet the school's new dress code.

In 2021, high school athlete Nicole Pyles was forced to cut her hair during a softball game to remove her beaded braids.

In April 2022, Diamond Campbell, a powerlifter and high school student in Bruce, Mississippi, was moments away from being disqualified in the middle of her school's state championship competition because of a newly imposed policy banning hair beads. An Instagram video of several young female powerlifters scrambling to remove Campbell's beads quickly went viral.

African Americans are being given the message that their hair must be altered to be acceptable in American society.

The Roots of Hair Shaming

Merriam-Webster defines shame as “a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety,” and the verb “to shame” means “to cause to feel shame.” So, “hair shaming” can simply be defined as “making someone feel shame because of their hair.”

According to a 2018 *New York Times* op-ed by Ria Tabacco Mar, “When it comes to hair, only Black people and multiracial people of African descent are punished when they choose to wear styles consistent with their natural hair texture. It's unthinkable that a court would uphold a policy that effectively required white workers to alter their hair texture through costly, time-consuming procedures involving harsh chemicals.”

Policies regarding hair beads, dreadlocks, and hair length impact African Americans disproportionately. Enforcement of these policies in the middle of active sporting events—as was the case for Nicole Pyles after she hit a double and for Diamond Campbell after her first powerlift—has an even more disruptive effect. Both students were required to respond to new policies introduced mid-competition, even though coaches and judges had seen them prior to start time.

Is Hair Shaming Racist?

Most hair-shaming incidents don't see the light of day among other newsworthy headlines, such as those pertaining to policies of academics, sports and employment. It is part of a larger pattern of racism and oppression. According to the Junior League of Atlanta's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, racism is the practice of discriminating against people based on their race or ethnic background and operates on levels commonly referred to as the “Four I's of Racism:” ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized.

Ideological racism deals with the core belief that the majority group is somehow superior and it has the right to control another group. *Institutional racism* comes into play when this ideology of “better

than” becomes embedded in institutions such as schools, businesses and courts. *Interpersonal racism* empowers individuals to disrespect, humiliate and harass oppressed people. *Internalized racism* presents itself as feelings of inferiority and suspicion among members of the oppressed group and superiority in the dominant group.

Internalized racism is the reason some people in oppressed groups actively fight and speak out against their own interests. For example, some African Americans label more tightly coiled hair “bad,” while looser curls are deemed “good.” Atlanta music artist India Arie's song, “I Am Not My Hair,” released in 2006, became an unofficial anthem to Black women's hair liberation. And in 2009, comedian Chris Rock released *Good Hair*, a documentary addressing the topic of internalized racism.

What is the Impact on Health?

In her book, *Transforming Ethnic and Race-Based Traumatic Stress with Yoga*, Gail Parker, Ph.D., asserts, “Researchers have made a clear connection between actual and perceived ethnic and racial discrimination and negative health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, insomnia, hypervigilance, headaches, self-blame, self-doubt, shame, body aches, inability to focus, poor memory, and guilt.”

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According to Mental Health America, “Racism is a mental health issue because racism causes trauma. And trauma paints a direct line to mental illnesses, which need to be taken seriously.” Hair shaming is a manifestation of racism, which impacts mental health.

Countering the Impact

Develop a Self-Validating Mindset and Practice Self-Care

“In order to properly care for ourselves in an anti-Black cultural environment, it is important that we expose ourselves to our own Black culture, aesthetic and heritage,” advises Atlanta therapist Oronde Yero. “As we immerse ourselves in the beauty of Black hair, we can learn to move away from Eurocentric beauty standards. When we can become self-validating, we will develop the strength to overcome the negative messages of our society.”

“Understanding that it’s okay to care for ourselves is one of the biggest things Black people struggle with,” says Atlanta therapist Latisha Woods. “We put our value in what we can produce and what we can do. We feel that if we are not producing something, we are not valuable. Changing our mindset changes how we view ourselves and how we show up in the world. Caring for ourselves is a necessity, not an option, so we must release the guilt about taking care of ourselves. Spend time with friends and family; take time off work if you need it. Get your hair and nails done, work out, drink water. Learn to win the internal battle and put yourself first.”

According to Dr. Gail Parker, “Restorative yoga and meditation, in combination with affirmations and therapeutic journal writing, offer opportunities to step away from repeated experiences of ethnic and race-based wounding while building the necessary resilience to develop effective coping strategies, and to support post-traumatic growth.” Many Atlanta businesses offer these healing practices.

Boost Your Understanding

Hair shaming shows up in big, bold ways—like those described in national news stories—but it also occurs in countless smaller incidences, or *microaggressions*. Stepping up your knowledge of the topic can help you avoid awkward situations. In a 2021 article in *The Insider* news publication, Darian Dozier notes, “When it comes to someone else’s body and hair, you never should feel entitled to touch it.” According to Janice Gassam Asare, a Sr. Contributor for *Forbes*, “By asking to touch a Black person’s hair, you are feeding into the narrative that white hair is the norm and anything outside of it is abnormal.” Dozier says, “Be mindful of how hair policies can affect different populations ... and why they are necessary in the first place. Buzzwords like ‘distraction’ and ‘professionalism’ are rooted in European norms and anti-Blackness.”

Singer/songwriter and sister to international superstar Beyoncé, Solange Knowles, immortalized the topic of hair boundaries in her 2016 song, “Don’t Touch My Hair.” Touching—or asking to touch—another person’s hair can be interpreted as an invasion of personal space.

So, what can one do? African American dermatologist Dr. Crystal Aguh says, “Stop telling women how to wear their hair. How a woman wears her hair is a reflection of one of many variables—the time needed for upkeep, the ability to maintain a certain hairstyle and just flat-out preference.” Hair maintenance has a price tag, which impacts decision-making.

Be an Advocate

There is a movement underway to facilitate greater acceptance of African hair textures. The CROWN Act—its acronym expressing its intention to “Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair” and to end hair discrimination—has become law in 14 states and is pending in 16 others. July 3 is now observed as National Crown Day to celebrate hair independence. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the federal CROWN Act in March 2022, but it has been held up in the U.S. Senate.

Changing your mindset, practicing self-care, growing your understanding and engaging in advocacy can help women and men of all backgrounds embrace and enjoy the beauty of all hair types, whether their hair blows in the wind or defies gravity and reaches for the stars. ✊

Trish Ahjel Roberts is a self-actualization and diversity coach, happiness expert, founder of Mind-Blowing Happiness, a coaching business, and creator of the brand Black Vegan Life. For more information, visit TrishAhjelRoberts.com.

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putting things on it to make it grow, but getting it to the point that it won't break."

Another ingredient that's important—not as much for maintaining hair strength as for increasing shine—is silica. "Any food that has a high silica content is going to be good for your hair," says Tassili Ma'at, owner of Tassili's Raw Reality in Atlanta. Ma'at was a hair braider and loctician—someone who specializes in caring and styling dreadlocks, also known as "locs"—for over 35 years.

"Shiny foods—like apples, oranges, plums, cherries," she says. "Beets are also excellent." Beets are helpful for hair health for a multitude of reasons. Silica aside, they are also full of nitrates like iron, which increase circulation, and which, in turn, improve hair follicle health and growth.

Iron deficiencies can be common in women, especially those of African or Asian descent. If beets aren't for you, yams can fill a similar role as they are high in

copper and vitamin C, both important for iron absorption.

Ma'at also points to foods full of vitamins A, B, C and E, all of which help circulation and are good for the nervous system. She suggests people be on the lookout for leafy greens like kale and collards. Greek yogurt, avocados and sunflower seeds are also great sources of these nutrients.

While Ma'at points to the value of certain foods to the nervous system, Larese Dockery, owner of IAMOH Herbals, describes it further.

"Our hair and nervous system are connected," says Dockery. "You know, when you're having high levels of stress, that causes inflammation, which can damage your hair follicles. Of the B vitamins, B6 is going to be good for the nervous system."

These vitamin recommendations are echoed by Dr. Taz Bhatia, an integrative medicine expert and media personality. She also suggests foods high in omega-3

fatty acids to reduce inflammation around hair follicles. Omega-3s can be found in vitamins as well as fish and chia seeds.

When trying to find specific nutrients such as B6 or omega-3, it might be valuable to turn to herbs and supplements. Herbs and supplements can be an easy way for people to make sure they are getting the right doses of certain vitamins; they can be especially helpful for vegetarians and vegans whose diets limit meat and fish.

Zinc is one mineral that vegetarians and vegans can struggle to get enough of. "Zinc, for one, will help with hair growth and help prevent hair loss," says Dockery. Zinc vitamins aside, Dockery recommends the natural herbs nettle and sarsaparilla.

What we eat and consume impacts every facet of our lives and health, and eating healthy and taking supplements can go a long way to help those luscious locks be their best. And, as Waithe would remind you, don't forget to drink enough water. 🌿

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CURLS AND COILS

DIET FOR HEALTHY, NATURAL HAIR

by Noah Chen

"You are what you eat."

While the literal interpretation of that phrase is debatable, its implied meaning is not. Our diet plays a significant factor in determining our mood, our health and our quality of life. And it has an equally sizeable impact on our hair.

Diet is a key component in natural hair maintenance, which is becoming more important in American culture, especially among Black Americans. Women especially face social and professional pressure to straighten their hair unnaturally. The methods for doing so are often harmful. While this pressure has existed in America for centuries, so too has the resistance to it.

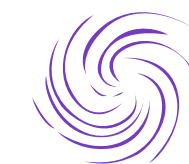
"There are a lot of companies out there that will be misleading and say, 'If you put this on your hair, your hair will grow,'" says Kuumba Waithe, owner and CEO of Grand Tressa Natural Hair Care. "But if you want your hair to grow, it's not necessarily what you put on your hair—but what you put in your body."

For Waithe, the most important dietary step to take for maintaining natural hair is to drink water. "Water hydrates your skin, but it also hydrates your hair follicles." This is important for all hair, but Kuumba points out it is especially important for Black people.

"African American hair tends to break because the way curly and coily hair is constructed, it dries out naturally. So if you want your hair to grow, it's not as much as

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Lucky Black-Eyed Peas [Photos courtesy of Chef Beee]

It's Juneteenth!

A TIME TO REJOICE AND FEAST

by D. Natasha (Chef Beee) Brewley, PhD, MBA, HHC

Juneteenth is a time of celebration for many African Americans, commemorating the official end of slavery in the United States. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, issuing the declaration that all enslaved persons were deemed free—but this great news was not shared in all areas of the South. It would take two and a half more years before Union General Gordon Granger would bring the news of freedom to the enslaved Africans of Galveston, Texas. The date was June 19, 1865. Officially named Juneteenth National Independence Day, the day was signed into law as a federal holiday on June 21, 2021. The ending of slavery created the possibility for a new and better life.

Juneteenth provides an opportunity for Black people to come together and celebrate their freedom, family and strength. Juneteenth also gives Black people a space to reflect on past struggles and spotlight current issues. The day is marked with food, music, fellowship and education. For many, the Juneteenth celebration has become a holiday just as important as July Fourth's Independence Day.

In the culinary space, many of the foods that are eaten during Juneteenth have roots in the Black American diaspora. They are easily transportable and comforting to the soul. Foods such as fried chicken, sandwiches, pickles, greens, okra and macaroni and cheese are crowd favorites and often seen on the tables of Juneteenth family gatherings. The color red is an overall theme seen in many desserts and beverages. Red foods include red drinks, fruit such as watermelon and strawberries, and red velvet cake and pound cake. Red honors the memory of fallen ancestors and signifies the blood that was shed on the road to freedom. Representing resilience and strength, it has strong symbolic meaning

in African and Caribbean cultures and traditions.

In keeping with the themes and traditions of Juneteenth, the following plant-based recipes are certain crowd-pleasers and are great for celebrating the holiday. While black-eyed peas are not traditionally seen at many Juneteenth celebrations, they are fitting to add to any menu. A legume indigenous to Africa and the Middle East, black-eyed peas represent abundance, prosperity, love and good luck. Many traditions offer them at feasts at the start of the new year to usher in good fortune and hope.

Consider making these delectable plant-based dishes for your Juneteenth gathering! 🌱

Spicy Fried Oyster Mushroom Bites

½ cup water
3 lb oyster mushrooms
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp all-purpose seasoning
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¼ cup corn starch
2 cups panko breadcrumbs
peanut oil

Making the Batter

Combine flour, cayenne pepper, all-purpose seasoning and baking powder in a bowl and mix well.

Slowly stir in water, making sure to combine well. The consistency should be loose but not too runny.

Place in refrigerator until ready to make the oyster mushroom bites.



Spicy Fried Oyster Mushroom Bites

Making the Oyster Mushroom Bites

Remove the batter from the refrigerator.

Cut oyster mushrooms into bite-sized pieces.

Coat mushrooms in corn starch and reserve.

Fill a small bowl with panko breadcrumbs.

Dip mushroom bites in batter and then in breadcrumbs. Deep-fry until golden brown.

Set mushrooms on a plate and lightly sprinkle with all-purpose seasoning.

Serve mushrooms with hot sauce, ketchup, sriracha or other favorite sauces.

Lucky Black-Eyed Peas

16 oz black-eyed peas, soaked 1-2 hours
4 cups spring water
2 Tbsp coconut oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium red pepper, finely diced
1 large tomato, finely diced
1 cup organic coconut milk
1 bunch fresh thyme
1 tsp Himalayan salt

Rinse the peas.

Put peas in a pot with water over medium heat and cook until tender.

Remove peas from heat, drain and let cool in a bowl.

Put coconut oil in a large pan over medium heat.

Add onions and garlic and sauté until translucent.

Add red pepper, tomatoes, salt and thyme and mix well.

Add coconut milk to the pan.

Add black-eyed peas to the pan, mix all ingredients well and let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.

Let cool for 5 to 10 minutes.

Plate with rice or favorite greens and serve.



Butternut Squash Mac & Cheez

Butternut Squash Mac & Cheez

4 cups water
1 Tbsp salt
1 box ziti pasta
½ butternut squash, peeled and cubed
1 cup organic cashews
1 cup cashew milk, unsweetened
3 cloves garlic
1 cup nutritional yeast
1-2 pinches Himalayan salt
1 tsp nutmeg
½ Tbsp black pepper, ground
1 pack plant-based cheddar cheese shreds, optional

Making the Ziti Pasta

In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.

Add the pasta and salt to the water.

Reduce heat and cook until pasta is al dente—still firm but a bit chewy.

Reserve some of the pasta liquid before draining the pasta through a colander.

Set aside in a baking dish.

Making the Butternut Cream Sauce

Preheat oven to 400° F.

In a high-speed blender, add cashews, cashew milk, garlic and nutritional yeast, and blend on high until smooth, creamy and thick. Set aside.

Put butternut squash and 1 cup water in a large pot and cook until very soft.

Place cooked butternut squash and cashew sauce in a blender and blend until smooth.

Fold the butternut cashew sauce into the pasta in the baking dish.

If desired, sprinkle the plant-based cheddar cheese shreds on top.

Place pan in oven and bake for 20 minutes.

Let cool before eating.

Watermelon Hibiscus Lime Coolers

1 cup dried hibiscus leaves
4 cups water
1 small Sugar Baby watermelon, cut into small pieces
1 cup agave or a sweetener of choice
¼ cup lime juice
Zest of 2 limes
1 cup ice

Place hibiscus leaves and water in a large pot.

Bring water to a rolling boil and then turn the heat off and let stand.

Add lime zest and let the tea steep for about 4 hours.

Once the tea has cooled, strain the liquid into a large pitcher.

Juice the watermelon pieces, including the rind, in a juicer.

Strain the watermelon juice and add it to the hibiscus mixture.

Add lime juice and agave to sweeten.

Add a little more agave or sweetener if tanginess does not suit your palate.

Pour into a glass with ice. Garnish with pieces of watermelon if desired!

Recipes adapted from Let Plants Nourish You: 36 Simple Plant-Based Recipes Using Essential Oils by Chef Beee.



Watermelon Hibiscus Lime Coolers

The Healing of the Modern Man

Men Redefine Their Emotional Power

by Marlaina Donato



For generations immemorial, men have been builders of culture, solid providers and inspired adventurers, but gender roles and sometimes-conflicting cultural expectations have taken a heavy toll on both the individual and community. The pervasive “tough guy” paradigm has denied half the human race its full emotional expression, resulting in amplified stress levels, compromised physical health, toxic aggression, broken families and a higher risk for addiction. According to research published in the *American Journal of Men’s Health* in 2020, death by suicide among men is almost four times higher than that of women and is partly attributed to the stigma of seeking treatment for depression. African American men carry the additional burden of racial and economic inequality, and their depressive symptoms are often more persistent and incapacitating.

Contrary to common myth, men are deeply emotional and responsive beings by nature. Centuries overdue, restrictive cultural definitions are slowly shifting to a broader psychosocial view of authentic manhood. Thanks to guy-friendly mental health resources, virtual and in-person support communities and diverse options in the alternative health field, more men are taking responsibility for their well-being and learning how to embody emotional freedom. They are stepping up to the plate as strong, sensitive leaders, something our world needs now more than ever.

Breaking the Chains and Choosing Authenticity

The masculine expectation and requirement have been for most boys to “buck up and tough it out” during childhood and adoles-

cence, and this overt or sometimes very subtle conditioning can promote disproportionate power plays, homophobia and resistance to emotional intimacy well into adulthood. “Every society has ‘feeling rules’ that govern how emotions can be expressed publicly,” says psychologist Michael Reichert, executive director of the Center for the Study of Boys’ and Girls’ Lives at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *How to Raise a Boy: The Power of Connection to Build Good Men*. “Research tells us that boys are born as emotionally expressive as girls, but in a short time receive constant messages from their loved ones, schoolmates and TV shows that only certain emotions are okay for boys.” Such emotional restrictiveness has a profoundly negative impact on male development, he says.

For Todd Adams in Elmhurst, Illinois, cofounder of *MenLiving.org* and a Tony Robbins-certified life coach, recognizing societal trappings is key. “The first step is to have the awareness that we have been lied to for as long as we can remember about what it means to be a man. We have been conditioned to stay in the ‘man box,’ which means if we show any type of vulnerability, our value from the outside, as well as from the inside, plummets.”

Reichert concurs. “My belief is that tragic outcomes—addictions, violence, suicide and premature mortality—are a reflection of how men’s human natures are thwarted by cultural norms. Being confined to a man box is hazardous. We humans, including men, are built to express our hearts in close connections to others we love and who love us.”

The notion of going the distance solo is discouraged by Adams, whose organization helps men from all walks of life find support and connection through online meetings and adventure outings. “Once the awareness is there, I would invite family, partners, et cetera, to invite us to show up in a more authentic and human way,” he says.

Stress and the Physiology of Feelings

For many men, emotions—other than “socially acceptable” anger and irritation—rarely see the light of day and instead morph into physical maladies such as digestive trouble, headaches, chest pain and high blood pressure. Unmanaged stress can also zap any zing in the bedroom. “I’m certainly not a doctor, but I’m sure there is a correlation for some about their emotional/mental/financial well-being being related to erectile dysfunction. The men that I work with often have a habit of not taking good care of themselves, and that lack of self-care ripples into other parts of their life, including their sexual life,” observes Adams. In spite of the fact that many others are struggling with the same condition, out of shame, it is often kept in the shadows. “My advice is that men find safe spaces to discuss these challenges with others. My hope is that men can discuss sexuality and intimacy as openly as women do.”

Josh Beharry, project coordinator of *HeadsUpGuys.org*, in Vancouver, Canada, an online resource hub for men battling depression, has spearheaded online stress assessment tests for more than 26,000 men over the age of 18 and found surprising consistency. “The results suggest that the two most common stressors faced by the men are a lack of meaning

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and feelings of loneliness, followed by financial strain, relationship difficulties and problems at work,” he says.

According to data gathered by Tulane University, human connection boosts immunity and wards off cardiovascular disease, anxiety, depression and cognitive impairment. For men especially, social bonds are critical in coping with life stresses. Forging new alliances and maintaining old ones can be challenging with or without a pandemic, but online communities offer additional support, camaraderie and nonjudgmental sharing, which can be especially helpful for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), addiction and depression.

Beyond Talk Therapy

Male depression can be hidden in plain sight, disguised as hitting the bottle to “relax”, or by working compulsively, engaging in high-risk behaviors or easily flying off the handle at loved ones. Beharry knows firsthand how insidious the disease can be and why seeking help sooner than later is vital. After miraculously surviving a horrific suicide attempt, he unexpectedly found hope and the will to live through walking, breathwork and human connection.

Being honest with others, as well as himself, was a turning point in his recovery. “For a lot of men, talking about dealing with depression feels like an admission of weakness or something to feel guilty about,” he says. “Try to think of emotional pain like physical pain. If you get cut, you bleed; that’s part of being human. Then you do something to treat the wound. Or if it’s deeper, you go to a

doctor or a hospital. Denying painful emotions is like trying not to bleed when you get cut or trying to pretend you’re not bleeding.”

For family members or friends concerned about a man’s mental health, he advises, “Vague assertions like, ‘You seem depressed,’ can make a guy feel attacked or put on the spot. Instead, it’s helpful to start by pointing out specific observations you’ve had about changes to his mood or behavior, such as, ‘You seem stressed out,’ or, ‘You haven’t been eating much,’ or, ‘You’ve been isolating yourself from friends or turning down plans more than usual.’”

It is estimated that 4 percent of men suffer from the physical and psychological consequences of trauma, and PTSD is certainly not reserved for combat veterans. While traditional therapies like cognitive behavioral therapy and exposure therapy are excellent for treating depression, other modalities offer light at the end of the tunnel for men plagued by traumatic overwhelm.

Somatic Experiencing, developed by PTSD psychologist Peter Levine during the last 50 years, targets trauma stored in the nervous system and gently helps a person to increase their tolerance for difficult physical sensations and buried emotions. It is also highly useful in addiction recovery. Therapeutic massage, yoga and regular exercise are all allies for men to combat stress, anchor into their bodies and access unconscious feelings.

In the end, little things add up to a whole lot of change for a man. “You are not alone. Take your responsibility in how you experience life. Empower yourself with resources—podcasts, books, therapy, coaching—whatever support might look like for you,” advises Adams.

There is no better time than now for the masculine to rise to a new level of greatness. “There is ample evidence that we are in a paradigm-shifting moment in the history of manhood,” says Reichert. “When I speak with parents, I say that there has never been a better time in all of human history to raise a son.” 🌱

Marlaina Donato is an author and multimedia artist. Connect at WildflowerLady.com.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

MenLiving, MenLiving.org

A national program of virtual and in-person opportunities for men to forge healthy and nourishing connections.

EVRYMAN, Evryman.com

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Good Men Project, GoodMenProject.com

Includes articles on many topics including relationships, dads and families, advice and confessions, and ethics.

HeadsUpGuys, HeadsUpGuys.org

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CYCLES OF LIFE

Tuning Up Your Health with Sound

by Jonathan Adams



Relaxing with sound and using “singing bowls,” gongs and other exotic instruments might seem like fairly recent developments when it comes to healing, but the practices have their roots in nearly every sacred musical tradition around the world. Whether it be shamanic drumming, Indian classical music or Gregorian Chant, the practice of using sound as therapy is thousands of years old. Now science is beginning to piece together how relaxing sounds can affect us profoundly on physical, mental and spiritual levels.

I first became interested in the therapeutic role of sound and vibration following my own experience with anxiety and insomnia. For years as a professional classical musician, I had panic attacks. They occurred at the most inopportune times and didn't seem to be necessarily connected to a stressful event.

As unpleasant as the anxiety was, both physically and mentally, it was also a blessing because it taught me so much about my mind and body. It also inspired me to begin a deeper exploration into the therapeutic uses of sound and into understanding its key role in the process of relaxation.

Everything in Life is Vibration

As Einstein famously said, everything in life is vibration. In fact, the word “cycles” is just another way of saying “frequency,” referring to how frequently something happens. Frequencies can occur externally, on a macro level, and internally, on a micro—or “subtle”—level. For example, the sun rising every morning, the phases of the moon and the number of times a guitar string vibrates can all be considered cycles.

The study and use of sound and frequency are essential to fully understanding and practicing yoga and its sister science, Ayurveda. Both yoga and Ayurveda observe the cycles of the body and the earth and explore how these cycles affect our well-being. Both disciplines have the perspective that all of life is composed of moving and vibrating energy. Yoga aims to help us recalibrate our minds and bodies to be in harmony with nature and the universe. Yoga practices are designed to restore balance to the cycles and frequencies within us. Ayurveda classifies certain times of the day—portions of the daily cycle—as having certain energetic qualities, while Indian classical music even specifies which musical scales are to be used for certain times of the day.

Our bodies are composed around rhythm-based systems; we recognize this in the heartbeat, the breath, digestive rhythms, circadian rhythms and other bodily cycles. Even our brainwaves are measured by frequency. Our bodies are rhythmically designed to function in harmony with nature around us.

But, as we know, stress, modern life and traumas of all sorts can pull our systems out of sync, and, over time, the new way of being becomes our new norm. Habit patterns of stress get ingrained in our breath patterns, muscle tensions, thought patterns and more. Sound therapy, yoga and meditation can help us to break these unconscious cycles and habit patterns and can help us restore harmony.

Entrainment

Certain rhythms, frequencies and oscillations have the ability to *entrain*, or synchronize, our brainwaves and physical systems, helping us regain healthy rhythmic patterns. They give our body the chance to reharmonize, rebalance and find deeper states of relaxation. We can hear these entraining rhythms in the repetitive, “wah, wah, wah” of a singing bowl, the cascading overtones of a gong and the powerful drumming within a shamanic ceremony.

The first mention of entrainment, defined as when two or more systems come into synchronization with each other, was by Christiaan Huygens, the inventor of the pendulum clock. He noticed that the pendulum clocks in his shop would always “fall into synchrony” when hung on the same wall. The phenomenon has been observed and studied in psychology, neuroscience, engineering and meteorology.

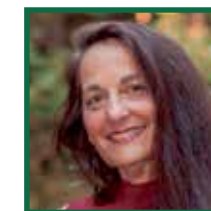
But entrainment also happens in biological systems, including brainwaves. Our brains have built-in frequency-following responses (FFR), so listening to sounds designed specifically to entrain can help move the mental and physical rhythms toward relaxation and meditative states.

Our brainwave states are literally frequencies with associated *hertz* (Hz), measurements of frequency. The known brainwave states are:

Delta < 4 Hz	Associated with deep, dreamless sleep. Brains of Buddhist Monks and advanced meditation practitioners have also measured in this state during meditation.
Theta 4-7 Hz	Associated with deep relaxation, meditation and entering the subconscious mind. Sometimes referred to as the “waking dream.”
Alpha 8-13 Hz	A relaxed and calm state of light meditation.
Beta 13-38 Hz	Our active, waking, problem-solving brainwave state.
Gamma >40 Hz	Associated with mystical experiences.

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Switching Gears

Like the gears of a car's engine, the four main states of consciousness—beta, alpha, theta, and delta—can be used efficiently or inefficiently. If someone had a car with four gears but only uses the first and fourth gears, the car wouldn't drive as smoothly, and the engine would experience more wear and tear. Similarly, most people tend to over-use some states of consciousness and underuse others.

Our culture has conditioned us to think we should be in full beta mode—when we're actively engaged in mental activities—as soon as possible after waking up. Then, at the end of the day, we think we should just switch it off and go right to sleep. Unfortunately, that approach doesn't work very well and can result in imbalances that lead to insomnia, anxiety and stress.

In my own healing journey with anxiety, I realized that I had pulled myself "out of rhythm." I realized that by giving myself time for relaxation and time to sync with the natural ebb of the day, and by dedicating time to meditative practices, I was better able to return to balance, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Being able to access and understand the other "gears" of the mind is critical to functioning well. Accessing the meditative alpha and theta brainwave states invokes our innate relaxation response, which helps to counteract stresses that have built up. Sound therapy music, via entrainment, can help the mind move towards these meditative states. And because the mind, heart and breath are connected, when the mind relaxes, the body can also.

Using meditative sounds like singing bowls can go a long way to help us "drop into" meditative spaces. In deep meditation we often have the space to perceive where we may be unconsciously perpetuating stress.

Simple Practices to Reharmonize

- Listen to sound therapy tracks daily. I recommend listening to relaxing sounds, such as singing bowls, for at least an hour before going to bed to allow your mind and body relax and get into a lower gear for sleep. Listening in the morning is also helpful.
- I recommend listening to one certain track to help your brain sync to the hertz range of the track. Doing this repetitively can help your brain get used to those brain states which makes it easier to access them even when not listening to the track.
- Try playing with an instrument like singing bowls. They can be very relaxing to play, listen to and sing with.
- Singing or humming a basic vowel sound like "ooohhh," "ahhh" or "oohhmm" can help reset breath patterns and develop healing and relaxing vibrations in the chest and head.
- Practice yoga and/or meditation.
- Work with an Ayurvedic practitioner to tune up your diet and address lifestyle issues relating to cycles of the seasons, sleep patterns or daily routine.
- Eat living, probiotic foods to make sure your gut is producing good levels of serotonin. In addition to being our "feel good" neurotransmitter, serotonin helps to set and support many rhythms and cycles in the body. 🌱



Jonathan Adams, aka Sonic Yogi, has been a speaker at TEDx and the National Spiritual Living conference, among others. He offers courses on Insight Timer app and leads meditation and yoga classes in Atlanta. For more information, visit SonicYogi.com.

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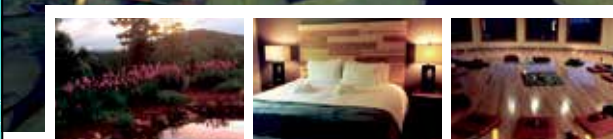
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Healing Trauma

EMERGING THERAPIES OFFER FRESH HOPE

by Ronica O'Hara

Refugee children with tear-stained faces, the frail elderly being wheeled away from floods or fires, the sobbing families of gunshot victims—the faces of trauma are seen in every heartbreaking newscast. And the faces are even closer to us than that, walking down the street: a woman that recoils from touch, a child that has withdrawn into himself, a man with incoherent bursts of anger.

The trauma of death, cruelty and destruction has always been part of the human experience. In the U.S., surveys show that as many as 60 to 70 percent of people report being traumatized by sexual assault, accidents, violence, war combat or other causes, and as many as one in 11 may be diagnosed in their lifetime with the more severe post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The encouraging news is that in the last few decades, a revolution has occurred in the recognition of how widespread trauma is and how deeply embedded it can be, not only in our behaviors but in our bodies. That, in turn, has led to effective and ever-evolving approaches to heal what's been broken.

"Although trauma and PTSD are visible in the culture everywhere now, from films to popular literature and from legal to mental health fields, until 1980 the topic was virtually non-existent," says San Francisco psychologist, PTSD researcher and author Harvey Schwartz, Ph.D., who has treated trauma clients in clinical practice for 35 years. "After it became a legitimate diagnosis in 1980, long-overdue research and development of clinical protocols occurred, and today, almost every tradition and sub-culture within the mental health field has its own model of how to treat trauma."

Shaping the ongoing dialogue has been the research of Boston psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, whose 2014 book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, has occupied the top rung



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of *The New York Times* bestseller list for three years. In magnetic imaging studies, he found that when a person is thrust into a terrorizing incident, the cognitive functions in the brain's temporal lobe shut down and activity shifts to the self-defense mode of the amygdala. When the person responds by fighting, fleeing or freezing, physiological reactions kick in, which armor the body and trap emotions and thinking in that fraught moment, distorting future perceptions and experiences. He argues that any true healing of trauma must include "bottom-up" modalities focusing on the body rather than only mental "top-down" insights. He also insists that no single treatment alone is likely enough and no combination of treatments will be the same for every person.

Christine Songco, a Los Angeles dental hygienist and wellness coach, used cognitive therapy, journaling and meditation to relieve the trauma of a grueling bout with cancer, but hearing loud and angry voices still made her panic. What ultimately proved healing was an hour-long session of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), in which she followed a therapist's prompt to move her eyes back and forth while memories surfaced. "It got to the root of my fear and anxiety and the source of my trauma without hours of therapy talking sessions, but I do think the other work I did set the stage for EMDR to be effective for me," she says.

Schwartz says that two major approaches to treating PTSD have emerged: cognitive and experiential. Cognitive, or "talk therapies," supported by academic research and insurance companies, emphasize mentally processing painful memories to manage such symptoms as nightmares, flashbacks and explosive anger, often using anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications. They can include such strategies as narrative recall, slowly increasing exposure to the traumatic material, mindfulness training and deep breathing exercises.

"Cognitive approaches help survivors learn how to become an expert of themselves so that they can respond to their trauma in a healthier way," says psychologist Sabina Mauro, of Yardley, Pennsylvania, author of *The Mindfulness Workbook for PTSD*. This type of therapy can take months to years and effectively treats about half of PTSD sufferers.

Experiential approaches, which have been researched less, but have engendered substantial therapist enthusiasm, do a "deep dive" to work through traumatic patterning embedded in a person's mind, body and psyche. "They help people restore not only their nervous systems, but their capacity for self-trust and self-forgiveness and their capacity for connection to their bodies and others," says Schwartz.

These modalities mostly focus, at least at first, on physical sensations rather than intellectual comprehension. For example, Somatic Experiencing defuses deeply held, fear-based contractions in the body by integrating those sensations with peaceful alternatives. EMDR, once an outlier but now practiced globally and endorsed by the World Health Organization, uses eye movements to lower the emotional charge of a traumatic memory. Internal Family Systems repairs a wounded psyche by relating a person's deeply felt, damaged "child parts" to their essential goodness.

To re-inhabit parts of the body frozen in the past by trauma, patients may be encouraged to use somatic meditations, trauma-informed yoga, acupuncture, massage and martial arts, as well as art, music, dance and other forms of expression. Psychedelics, which if used carefully can open a trauma sufferer to a larger sense of purpose, may become a legal option in a few years. In a recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved Phase 3 clinical trial on MDMA (previously called ecstasy), 67 percent of participants no longer met the criteria for PTSD after three therapist-guided sessions.

Says Schwartz, "It can feel like a supermarket of options out there, so people need to read, become informed consumers and combine treatments at times. We have to think of the mind, the body and the spiritual as all needing attention and integration."

Health writer Ronica O'Hara can be contacted at OHaraRonica@gmail.com.

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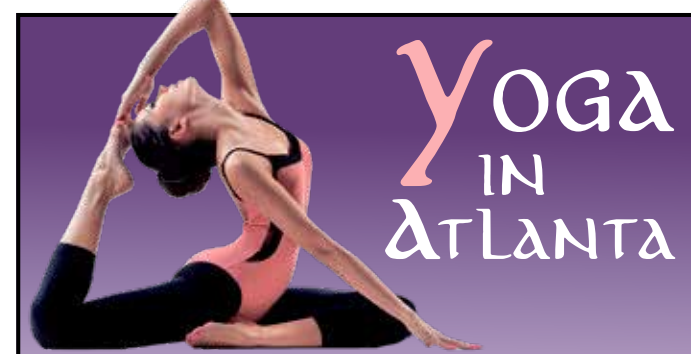
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SATURDAY, JUNE 4

Flying Colors Butterfly Festival – June 4-5. 9am-3pm, Sat; 12-5pm, Sun. Visit with live butterflies at the Butterfly Encounter. Meet with pollinator experts and educators. Take part in the Migration Game throughout the festival and learn about monarch migration. Enjoy tasty food and live entertainment. \$15/general, \$12/members, free/children 2 and under. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChatNatureCenter.org.

Reiki Level One Certification – 10am-5pm. With Allison Rozzel. Get a comprehensive overview of reiki level one. Receive level one attunement and certification. Also receive access to the online version of the class to assist you in your growth, skills and confidence. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

Free First Saturday: Reptile Rally – 11am-12pm. Learn everything you need to know about our scaly friends. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5

Fit Mom Community Health Fair – 12-4pm. Enjoy a day of fitness, fun and fellowship. Grab the family and participate in onsite workouts, support local vendors and more. Free. Hugh C. Conley Recreation Center, 3636 College St, College Park. Tinyurl.com/2pusmzwa.

From Burn Out Workshop – 2-4pm. With Health and Wellness Coach Dani Green. Workshop will cover the 12 stages of burnout, how to recognize if you have dealt with the 5 causes and how they could be affecting you. \$15. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

Phoenix Rising Guided Meditation & Healing – 1pm. In this session, Lexie will guide you through burning away what no longer serves you and rising from the ashes anew. \$15. To register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9

The Dance of Life – 7-8:30pm. With Miera Gans. Introductory class combines belly dance movements, sensuous music, conscious breath and chakra awareness. Learn

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SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Change Your Interiors, Change Your Life with Feng Shui – 2-3:30pm. With Roberta Grant. Join this informative, interactive and fun workshop to learn about the history, principles, Bagua Map, The Five Elements, Ch'i Enhancers, Clutter Clearing and more. Free; love offerings gratefully appreciated.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

Goat Yoga – 12-1pm. With GGA Dwarf Goat Yoga. Perform breathing exercises and various yoga positions. While doing so, dwarf goats can hop around you, climb your back, sit on top of you, even nap on you or your yoga mats while you let go of all your stress. \$35.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21

Channeling Practice Group – 7-9pm. With Vicki Evans. Meet monthly (3rd Tues) and have a chance to share where we are in our channeling and celebrate any breakthroughs you may have had. Then will go into various channeling exercises. \$20.

how to move through life effortlessly, healthier, happier and grounded. All welcome. \$20. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Journaling in the Park – 1-3pm. Enjoy an afternoon of reflection with a guided thought-provoking journaling experience, open dialogue and fellowship. Free. Piedmont Park, 1320 Monroe Dr NE, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/5n85w69w.

TUESDAY, JUNE 14

Online: Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Eventbrite. Info: 770-302-2208 or Info-SE@Share-International.us. Register: Tinyurl.com/4hd9p22u.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15

Online: How to Talk to Your Body – 7-8pm. Join Licensed Unity Teacher, Larry Bergmann,

for this powerful healing service. Learn techniques for connecting your mind and body together for healing, empowerment and more. Love offering. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

THURSDAY, JUNE 16

Editor's Choice Full Moon Meditation & Healing: Expand – 1pm. Shine a light on the places within you that are playing small, and gentle transform them. Also connect with your inner intelligence about the next right steps for your life. Donation. To register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

The Black Music and Entertainment Walk of Fame Juneteenth Celebration – 5-11pm. This arts and culture experience will celebrate the magic of black culture, including art, live entertainment, music, food, dance and fun for all ages. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way NW, Atlanta. TheHomeDepot-Backyard.com.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 19

The CBD Experience – 5-9pm. Hosted by The CBD Joint. The CBD Experience is a fun, interactive evening that includes educational talks, CBD-focused products and services, live music and more. Aloft Hotel Lobby at The Atlanta Battery, 950 Battery Ave SE, Atlanta. 678-932-6912. TheCBDJointCollective.com

TUESDAY, JUNE 21

Crystals & Astrology: Best Crystals for Cancers – 1pm. Join Lexie for an interactive class where she'll cover Cancer characteristics, which crystals best support this sign, the benefits of the crystals, and how to use them for healing and balance. \$10. To register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23

The Nature Club Dine and Discover – 7-9pm. In-person or online. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChattNatureCenter.org.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

Pollinator Party – 10am-1pm. Enjoy a family celebration of the bees, butterflies, birds and other animals that pollinate plants and are responsible for many fruits and vegetables. Atlanta Botanical Garden, 1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta. AtlantaBG.org.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

Summer Birding – 8-10am. Join Master Birder Rose Guerra as she guides you through the Nature Center trails and help you to identify the birds present at this time of year. Free/member, \$10/nonmember. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

THURSDAY, JUNE 30

Crystal Healing for Birds: Stressful Interactions with Animals and Humans – 3pm. Join Lexie for an interactive class where she'll break down 3 layers of interactions, supportive crystals, and techniques to soften the edges around contentious encounters, and heal emotional distress. \$15. To register: WithLoveAndLight.com.



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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/yjzutj4.

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: uuca.org/live.

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.

Meditation Classes – 4-5pm, Level I; 5-6pm, Level II. All religions, all ages and all people. Learn how to meditate for spiritual enlightenment. \$15. 5161 Brook Hollow Parkway, Ste 220/225, Nor-

cross. Register, Andrea:404-557-4306. MeditationWellnessClub@gmail.com. MeditationWellnessClub.com.

Mondays

Online: Monday Night Meditation – 7-8pm. A live, instructor-led meditation and discussion. Develop a meditation practice by maintaining a moment-to-moment relaxed awareness of our surrounding environment, bodily sensations, thoughts and emotions. All levels. \$10. Register: TheOpenMindCenter.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.

Online: Joy of Breathing Class – 1-1:30pm. Learn the Joy of Breathing technique, practice a deep Pranayama session and enjoy the benefits. Free. Register: Tinyurl.com/muwwanm9.

Decatur Farmers Market – Thru Nov 16. 4-7pm. Local farmers, artisanal food makers and crafts. First Baptist Church of Decatur, 308 Clairmont Ave, Decatur. 404-373-1653. cf-matl.org/Decatur.

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

Tai Chi & Qigong – 9:30am. For beginners. \$7/at door. Meets in The Jefferson Parks and Recreation Dept, 2495 Old Pendergrass Rd, Jefferson. 678-510-9573. CarolOsborne.org.

The First Georgia Dowsters – 6pm. 1st Thurs. Discuss all things dowsing. Host guest speakers each month teaching new and exciting developments within the dowsing community. \$5/nonmember, free/member. Heart Soul and Art,

1470 Roswell Rd, Marietta. Pre-registration required: Heart-Soul-And-Art.square.site.

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.

Meditation Classes – 6pm, Level I; 7pm, Level II. See Sun listing. 5161 Brook Hollow Parkway, Ste 220/225, Norcross. Register, Andrea:404-557-4306. MeditationWellnessClub@gmail.com. MeditationWellnessClub.com.

Drum Circle – 7-9pm. 2nd Sat. With Rhythm Healer Eric Olson. No experience necessary. \$10. Unity North, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: UnityNorth.org.

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. 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.

Earth Care Sangha Gathering – 10am-12pm. 1st Sat. Rain or shine. Meet in the back parking lot and then carpool to a nearby park for a meditative walk in nature. In case of inclement weather, meet in Holy Grounds Cafe. Unity North, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: UnityNorth.org.

Reiki Share Group – 3:30-5:30pm. Last Sat. A gathering of like-minded reiki practitioners who participate in group healing treatments on each other. \$21. Healing Hands Reiki & Spiritual Development, Inc, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/2rykarft.

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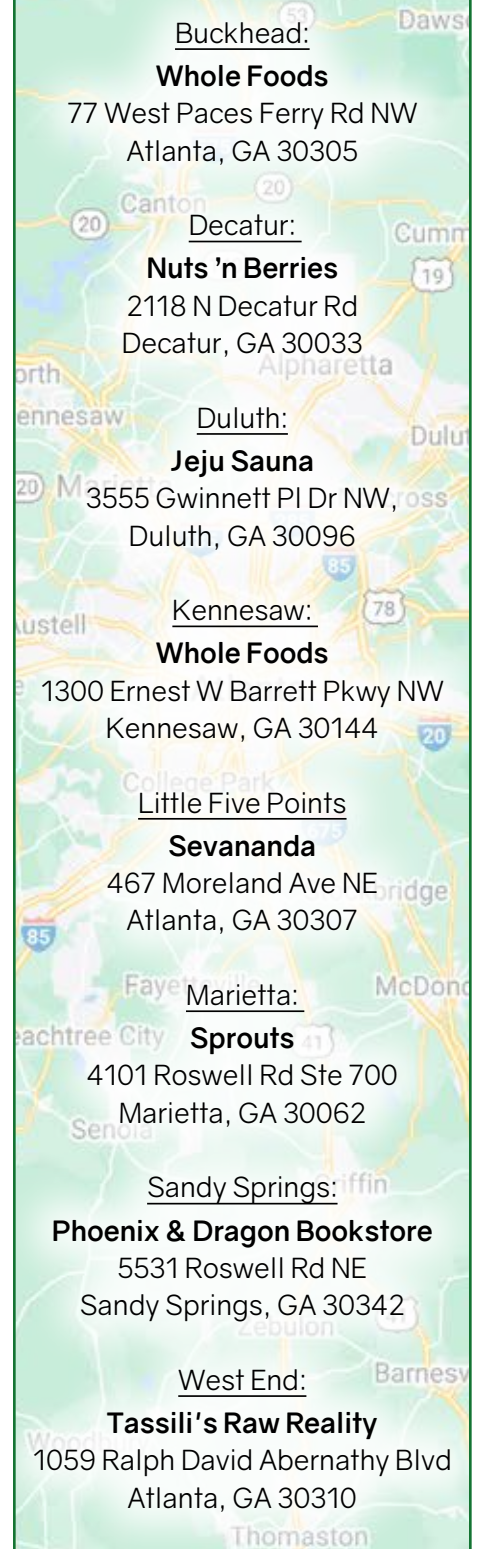
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From Dark and Lovely to Happy and Nappy

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

My mother was married to a Portuguese guy before she married my Jamaican father. French-speaking and born on the Caribbean Island of St. Lucia, she always referred to my father as “shabeen.” The word was French *patois*—the local dialect my mother spoke when she was growing up—and she used it to describe a light-skinned Black man with coarse hair.

I grew up hearing references to the “grade” of one’s hair, as if it had to pass a cultural exam. My mother’s hair was what we called “good” hair back in those days; she had only soft curls. Even so, she was intent on her monthly visits to the hair salon to get her hair chemically relaxed. Sometimes she couldn’t even wait a month. With only three weeks of new growth, she was off to get her hair straightened.

In my Brooklyn neighborhood in the ‘70s, playground references about whose hair had undesirable “naps” or “peas”, further contributed to my ideas of what desirable hair looked like. I will never forget the look on my mother’s face when I told her I wished she had stayed with her first husband so that I could have had “good” hair. I was only six, but the fact that my young mind had combed through so much thought about hair shows how pervasive the topic was in our community.

My mother was not amused. “If I stayed married to him, *you* wouldn’t be here!” Her anger startled me, but even at such a young age, I knew she was right.

I was delighted to get my first relaxer two years later. It was a source of both pride and shame. Pride, because adults always praised my “full head” of straightened, flowing hair. I felt pretty. My hair could blow in the wind just like Farrah Fawcett’s in *Charlie’s Angels*. Shame, because when asked if my hair was “permed”—we didn’t call it “relaxed” back then—I had to admit, yes, it was. It wasn’t the natural texture of my hair.

I used to think that all Black people had the same hair texture because, after a couple

of years, I couldn’t remember mine. As soon as my curly roots grew in, I was taken to have them chemically straightened. The occasional chemical burns to my scalp were better than getting my hair pressed, and the straightening lasted longer. They also beat the misery of sitting perfectly still next to the stove, waiting for the hot comb, and holding my ears down for fear of getting burned.

By high school, I was buying my own “Dark and Lovely” kits and hair color at the pharmacy. I bleached a blonde streak in my hair and watched it crumble and fall out. I quickly learned bleaching and relaxing are not a good mix.

When I was 21, I shortened my hair into a Salt-n-Pepa bob, where the hair is relaxed on top but natural in the back. I discovered I *liked* the natural curls at the nape of my neck and wondered what the rest of my hair was like. I went to a hair salon and let them shorten my bob again and again until I finally had the nerve to take it all off. It was liberating! The breeze blew and the sun shone on my scalp, healing it from dryness caused by years of chemical damage. I wore my hair natural for many years, occasionally “texturizing” it by using a light relaxer. It wasn’t until 2000— when I moved to Atlanta—that I fully relaxed my natural hair out of fear of not being able to land a job in the new city.

My beautiful mother died of breast cancer in 2011. I don’t know what caused her cancer, but I’ve since learned that the relaxers she loved so much and used for decades were toxic. Since her death, I’ve made the lifetime commitment to natural hair. I’ve been enjoying a full head of dreadlocks since 2019, and I couldn’t be happier or healthier. I like to think that I make it just a little bit safer for my daughter and other young Black women to embrace their natural beauty. 🌿



Trish Ahjel Roberts is a self-actualization and diversity coach, happiness expert, founder of Mind-Blowing Happiness, a coaching business, and creator of the brand Black Vegan Life. For more information, visit TrishAhjelRoberts.com.

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