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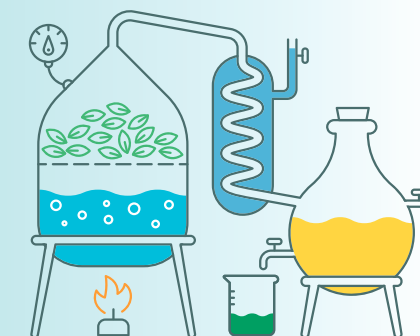


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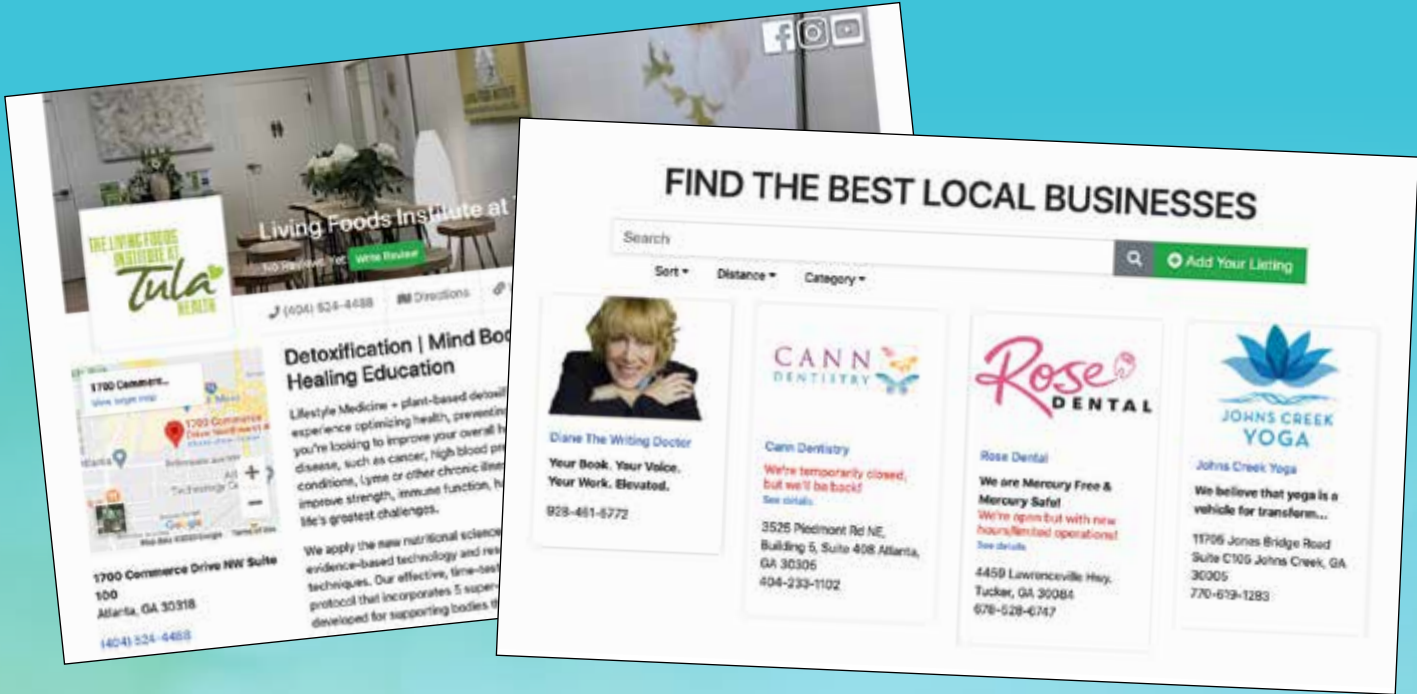


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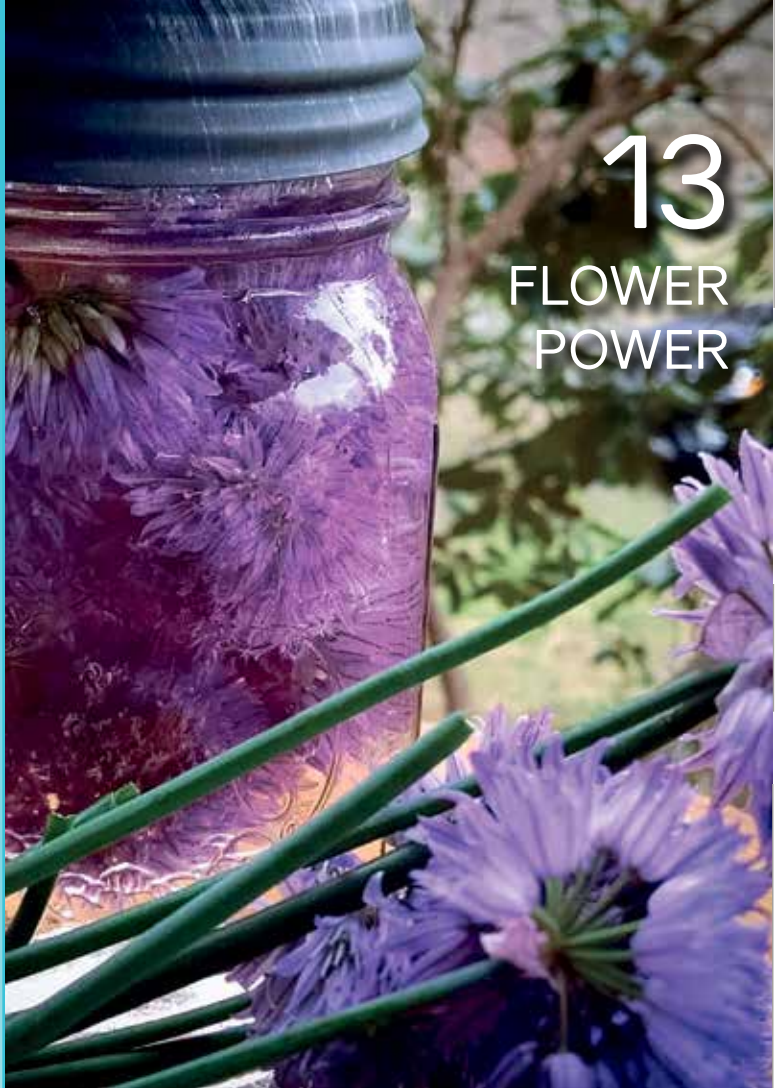
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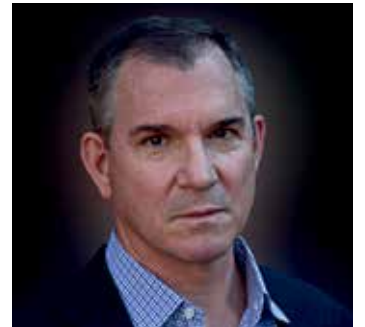
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This month life coach Terri Kozlowski addresses a question that seems applicable to many, if not most of us: *How do I build my self-confidence?* Visit the URL below for this exclusive web content!

bit.ly/aac-0722

2022's FIVE MOST POPULAR ARTICLES, SO FAR

Here are the five most-read online articles that we published from January through June 2022, not including news briefs. Topping the list: a poignant story about parental love by our former yoga editor, Sheila Ewers.

- 1 THE ART OF LETTING GO
bit.ly/art-letting-go-0522
- 2 TOP REASONS PEOPLE SEEK LIFE COACHING
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- 3 ATLANTA FARMERS MARKET DIRECTORY
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CORRECTIONS:

Mona Swain's last name was misspelled on page 13 of June's issue.

The year that Trish Ahjel Roberts moved to Atlanta was 2007, not 2000, as printed in June's "Walking Each Other Home" column.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



GIVE YOURSELF
Permission to Explore

It's summer! Time to explore! After two and a half years of virtual hibernation and shutdowns, this summer beckons us with an abundance of opportunities to shake off lethargy and laziness, wake up our senses, kick through the walls of our familiar comfort zones, and venture into new territories. In all sorts of ways!

Consider your food-buying habits, for example. Is it time to unearth old patterns and plant new ones for how you get your food needs met? You'll learn in "Healthy Food Movement" on page 17 that the food-delivery landscape has changed a lot over the past couple of years. Many "innovative solutions are [now] being pursued by e-commerce entrepreneurs and food-equity advocates to get healthier local food" into our homes.

It's definitely happening right here in Atlanta. Take a look at our May issue's directory of 36 Atlanta-area farmer's markets in print or online and see what's new and better than ever!

Or, if you're looking for something to elevate your yoga practice, try aerial yoga! In "Defying Gravity," on page 30, our yoga

editor, Mila Burgess, tells us how and why these popular classes literally bring a third dimension to the yoga experience. I've taken these classes and found them invigorating, joyful and surprisingly doable. Check it out!

Or maybe it's time to consider new, healthier options to use in caring for your skin. "That Radiant Glow" on page 23, reveals the risks of using chemical-laden personal care products and the genuine advantages of switching to natural.

How about expanding your culinary palate and discovering the surprising beauty and flavor that flowers can bring to your meals? See "Flower Power" on page 13.

Is it time to try a new meditation practice? A new holistic healer? Time for some life coaching or energy work? Journey through our articles, discover new products and services and give yourself permission to explore! 🌸



Diane Eaton is the managing editor of *Natural Awakenings* and editor, ghostwriter and writing coach at Diane the Writing Doctor.

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Winners of The Wonderful Wizards of Raw Cook-Off

Ginger and Drexel Jones, owners of Naughty Bites, captured first place at the ninth annual Wonderful Wizards of Raw competition for raw chefs with their Raw Asian Basil Spring Rolls served with home-made Thai chili and peanut sesame sauces.

The cook-off was held the first weekend of June in the backyard of Tassili's Raw Reality Café.

"I am excited to take home first place seven days before my 50th solar return on June 12," said Ginger Jones.

Blue Pill came in second with his 7 Heaven Seamoss smoothie. Third place was given to The Godhead Eatery, founded by Solomon Obadyah Yisrael, for his version of raw tacos.



Ginger Jones, Blue Pill, Solomon Obadyah Yisrael (Photo: Shee Squared)

More information about these Atlanta-based businesses—Gingerlicious and The Godhead Eatery—can be found at Gingerlicious4u2.com and TheGodheadEatery.com, respectively. Blue Pill resides in New York; attempts to find a URL to order his products were unsuccessful.

The theme of this year's Wonderful Wizards of Raw was "Return to the Garden." Tassili Ma'at, The Café's founder and owner, says, "The most revolutionary thing we can do right now is to choose life. What does that look like? It is as

simple as an apple instead of a bag of potato chips; juice instead of soda; water instead of juice. Not only does it not cost you more, it probably costs less. We must begin to heal our bodies using food as medicine deliciously!"

DR. ROBERTA CANN RETIRES

Dr. Roberta Cann, a holistic dentist who took over her father's practice in the early 1990s and sold it to Dr. Cale Jackson in 2019, has retired from Atlanta Dental Wellness, formerly Cann Dentistry.

"My dream has come true to retire with complete confidence that my friends and patients will continue under the care of extraordinary doctors," says Cann. "I was touched by Dr. Jackson's passion for the science of dentistry. He quickly connected to my vision that patients' healthcare preferences are unique and should be uniquely respected and supported."

Jackson was equally complimentary. "While dental school taught me the skills needed to be a good dentist, Dr. Cann's mentorship helped me become a great dentist," says Jackson. "She introduced me to a way of practicing dentistry I dreamed about finding and welcomed me



Dr. Roberta Cann

with open arms into her practice."

The practice's third dentist, Dr. Matthew Giordano, says: "Although I'm sad Dr. Cann won't be sharing Wednesdays in the office with me anymore, we should instead be celebrating her almost 40-year career in which she touched so many people's hearts—including mine! I am so grateful she took me under her wing, taught me her philosophy and allowed me to grow into my own version of her vision."

Cann was attracted to dentistry early in life. In a February 2020 interview about the sale of Cann Dentistry, she said, "From the time I was 12, I'd spend time at the dental office, file charts or X-rays or do whatever I could to be helpful. And it was very exciting for me when they decided I was old enough to enter the treatment room and learn to be a dental assistant—I could be where the fun was."

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HEALTH BRIEFS

Eat Grains to Reduce Inflammation and Liver Disease Risk

Although most Americans eat only one-third of the recommended amount, nutrient-rich, whole grains already have been shown to play a key role in safeguarding against obesity and metabolic syndrome. Two new studies establish their positive effect on cardiovascular and liver health, as well. Researchers from Columbia University that followed 4,125 older adults for 25 years found that lower inflammation and fewer cardiovascular incidents were correlated with higher amounts of fiber in the diet— particularly from wheat, barley, oats and other grains—rather than from fruits and vegetables. And a Chinese study in *The Journal of Nutrition* Researchers tested the blood of 1,880 people, half of which had nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, to look for markers of whole grain consumption. The subjects that ate more whole grains had a significantly reduced risk of developing the liver disease.



Polina Tankilevich/Pexels.com

Recover from a Stroke with Sitting Tai Chi

Tai chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, typically involves moving the arms and feet in intricate, slow patterns, but a new study in the American Heart Association journal *Stroke* found that doing the hand and shoulder movements while sitting in a chair produced significant physical and mental benefits for stroke survivors. Researchers at the Yunnan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, in China, found that after 12 weeks of performing sitting tai chi, 69 stroke patients had better hand and arm function, better sitting balance, a wider range of shoulder motion, less depression and a better quality of life compared to 65 people in a standard stroke rehab program. More than half of those doing the sitting tai chi continued to practice it after the study ended, with continued improvement.



sasirin pama/EyeEm/AdobeStock.com

Try Music and Muscle Relaxation to Lower Surgery Anxiety

Surgery often activates high levels of anxiety in patients, but a Chinese pilot study of 116 women undergoing operations for gynecological cancer found that simple strategies dubbed “expressive arts therapy” can help. In the study group, women were encouraged to dance and do handicrafts while listening to music the day before the surgery. They practiced progressive muscle relaxation and listened to music immediately after the surgery, and on the day before their release, they were invited to write and draw to express their emotions. The researchers found that women in the therapy group experienced significantly less anxiety during their operations than women in a placebo group, although the effects didn’t continue after discharge. Ninety-eight percent of the women found the therapy beneficial.

CONSCIOUS EATING

Flower Power

EDIBLE BLOOMS ADD FLAVOR AND
COLOR TO SUMMER FARE

by April Thompson

Fruits, leaves, stems and roots are commonly eaten as part of a plant-based, farm-to-table diet, but until recently, the only flowers on the table were in a vase. Today’s health-conscious foodies are finding edible flowers to be a fantastic way to eat the rainbow, adding fun flavors and colors to all sorts of dishes.

Urban homesteader Holly Capelle turned her family’s backyard in the Portland, Oregon, suburbs into expansive edible gardens, enjoyed by their flower-eating chickens and children alike. “We grow everything from seed, including 15 to 20 edible flower varieties, from spring through fall,” says Capelle. “I love to grow edible flowers for two reasons: one, to eat, and second, for the natural pest control they provide. I think of flowers as a beautiful army that I can eat along the way.”

Capelle’s favorite edible flowers are pansies and violets, as they “pop up again and again all growing season and make a beautiful garnish without overpowering flavor.” The home gardener likes to freeze the fresh flowers in ice cubes, press them on the outside of herb butter or dry them between pieces of wax paper to later add to the tops of homemade chocolate bars, along with dehydrated strawberries, lemon balm, mint or other botanical flavors.

The family’s fowl get in on the flower fun, too. “We make frozen treats for the chickens out of edible flowers, corn and strawberries, which they love in summer. We also add dried flowers like marigolds to their nesting boxes,” she says, adding that marigolds, with their bright orange hues and distinct flavor, are great in scrambled eggs or as a substitute for saffron.



photo courtesy of Marie Wiloen

For larger blooms like sunflowers, Capelle recommends pulling off the often-hard centers. “I often see whole zinnias on edible cakes, but no one wants to eat an entire zinnia. With daisies, for example, I will pull off the petals and recreate the flower on top of a dish, using peppercorns or chocolate chips in place of the center,” she says.

Capelle also loves chamomile for its distinctive, apple-like flavor that has the “feel of fall,” and dianthus, with a slightly spicy taste like cloves. “Nasturtiums are another super defender in the garden, with a delicious peppery flavor and nice orange pop of color in a salad,” she adds.

“Flowers brighten any dish up, especially hors d’oeuvres, omelets and soups. Pea soup is an ugly soup, but sprinkle some microgreens and a viola on top and it’s beautiful,” says Jan

Bell, of Gilbertie’s Organics, in Easton, Connecticut. The 34-acre farm, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, grows herbs, vegetables and microgreens in 24 greenhouses, including a micro-green blend with nasturtium and viola flowers. “If you pick the flowers on herbs, the plant will grow better and last longer,” Bell adds.

Flowers like wild violets, chive blossoms and common milkweed can add bold color and flavor to vinegar with pinkish purple hues that power up salad dressings. Bell also likes to dry chive flowers to use year-round. “They are a nice purple sprinkle to add to dishes when things are boring in winter,” she says.

Marie Viljoen, a New York City forager, chef and author of the cookbook *Forage, Harvest, Feast: A Wild-Inspired Cuisine*, incorporates numerous wild and cultivated flowers, including tree flowers like magnolia and black locust, into her hyperlocal, seasonal meals.

Even common garden roses can add a delicious dimension to dishes and drinks, according to Viljoen. “I like to ferment roses into a simple soda, using organically grown rose petals, honey or sugar and tap water. It’s ready within a few days, or else you can leave to ferment a few months to make a sipping vinegar,” she says. “You can also combine really fragrant rose petals with a neutral honey like clover, then strain after a few days for a rose water essence you can add to yogurt or other dishes.” Viljoen also uses rose petals as edible garnishes for deviled eggs or as edible plates for goat cheese balls on her gourmet picnics.

Some flowers are for the eyes only, however. Many can be poisonous, so it’s important to ensure a particular species is edible before digging in. Viljoen also advises carefully distinguishing between poisonous lookalikes when foraging: A delicious daylily and a toxic true lily look similar, but are in different plant families, for example. She also says to look for organically grown flowers that haven’t been sprayed with pesticides. 🌱

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

FLOWER SPRING ROLLS WITH TAMARIND AND PEANUT SAUCE

by Tara Lanich-LaBrie

Spring rolls are a great way to eat all the fresh veggies, flowers and fruits of the season, and they look like little paintings with flowers on the outside and different colors and textures throughout. In the summer months, our bodies naturally gravitate toward eating more raw vegetables and fruits to cool our system and attune to the season of lightness. The grounding aspect in these petal rolls comes from the root veggies and the piquant, velvety peanut sauce. They are easy to make with whatever veggies and fruits we have on hand and are a great meal to take on the trail. Gather whatever ingredients sound delicious at the local market or farm, forage some delicacies if you have the time and put on your favorite music to inspire making these rolls.

Package of spring roll wrappers/rice wrappers
2-3 cucumbers or summer squash, cut into lengthwise strips
Edible flowers (optional) such as scarlet begonias, nasturtiums, rose petals, calendula, dandelion petals, sweet alyssum, radish flowers, bachelor buttons, violets, violas or pea flowers
1 bunch mint (about 1 cup)
1 bunch cilantro (about 1 cup)
Combination of fresh root vegetables in

an assortment of colors, such as turnips, radishes and carrots, sliced in thin sticks
Spinach, nasturtium leaves or other tender green leaves to create a background for your petals
1 avocado, sliced thin (optional)
Asparagus, sliced in thin sticks
Red pepper, sliced thin, lengthwise
10-oz pack of thin rice noodles
Snap peas, purple or green, sliced lengthwise

All of these ingredients are recommendations or suggestions meant to inspire, but they are merely ideas. Use what is available. Spring rolls are excellent with almost any combination of fresh ingredients. I use a general framework of one-third each of crunchy or harder ingredients, like cucumber, squash, radish and carrot; softer ingredients like avocado, peach, mushroom and iceberg lettuce; and flowers, herbs, leaves such as rose petals, calendula, basil, mint and squash blossoms.

First, prep all the ingredients and set up a space to roll and see all of the ingredients. It isn’t necessary to cut everything perfectly, and tearing lettuces or other leaves is a great way to save time and create texture. I like to have my ingredients separated by type or color to create the rolls like a painting, using a palette.

Have a bowl with water that is large enough to dip the spring roll wrappers. Next to this, have a plate that is large enough to hold the wrappers. Have bowls or plates or a large cutting board with all the ingredients laid out to access everything easily and quickly.



photo courtesy of Jan Bell

Quickly dip a rice wrapper into the water and place it onto the plate. Add flowers or individual flower petals to the wrapper. Layer the petals to about a half-inch of the edge of the wrapper. There is really no wrong way to create these rolls.

Starting in the middle of the roll, on top of the petals and background leaves, make a line of crunchier or “harder” veggies like carrot, cucumber or radish sticks. Add up to nine sticks about two to three inches long each to make a line in the center. They can be close together and on top of one another.

Next, add softer veggies or fruit (peach/mango/mushrooms/avocado) next to or on top of the line of harder veggies. Now sprinkle on the cilantro/mint/basil (roughly 1 to 2 tablespoons total per roll, unless you love these flavors and want to add more). Add leaves, lettuces, sprouts or spinach on top of this center line. It doesn’t need to be perfect at all, so let things spill out and over.

Try to work as quickly as possible while adding ingredients; it will get faster as you make them. Then begin to lift one side of the roll using both hands and carefully pull up into the center of the roll toward the line of filling. Use your thumb to tuck the ingredients under and your fingers to bring more of the wrapper across over the line and then roll it all so the top goes under. You will need a small amount of the wrapper clear of ingredients at the end so it can seal with the roll you have made. (I don’t tuck the sides at all because doing it this way is faster and generally holds together better.)



photo courtesy of Jan Bell

TAMARIND AND PEANUT SAUCE

1 cup crunchy peanut butter (no oils, sugar or additives)
1 can full-fat coconut milk
4 Tbsp maple syrup
2 Tbsp (heaping) tamarind paste
3 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp fresh ginger, grated
½ tsp sea salt, to taste
Sprinkle of cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients in a medium-sized saucepan. Heat on low and stir or whisk until all ingredients are blended well. If you like a thinner sauce, add water, a tablespoon at a time, but wait a few minutes until it is incorporated fully. Peanut sauce thickens more as it cools.

For more information, visit @themedicinecircle on Instagram or TheMedicineCircle.com.

SPICY MAGNOLIA SALAD CUPS



photo courtesy of Marie Viljoen

YIELD: FOUR APPETIZER SERVINGS

All magnolia petals have a strong, gingery flavor with a hint of cloves or menthol, depending on the variety. Blooming through summer, North American southern magnolia flowers (*Magnolia grandiflora*) are the size of dinner plates. Their substantial, fragrant petals make beautiful edible cups for assertively flavored salads or ceviche. Here, blandly creamy avocado, crisp peppery radish slices, quick-pickled onion and a kiss of high-quality soy sauce fill the luscious petals with complementary textures and flavors. Pick the whole petal up like a taco and bite to get the full effect in a mouthful.

1 ripe avocado, cubed
3 radishes, very thinly sliced
2-3 Tbsp quick-pickled red onion rings
2 pickled Japanese knotweed shoots (optional)
¼ tsp chili flakes
2 tsp soy sauce (like organic Ohsawa nama shoyu)
Roasted sesame oil

QUICK-PICKLED ONION

The heavy seasoning is important to make these pickles pop. Left-over pickles keep indefinitely in the refrigerator, and the flavorful brine is delicious in salad dressings.

½ cup white wine or rice vinegar
¼ cup water
1 tsp salt
2 Tbsp sugar
2 small red onions, thinly sliced into rings

In a Mason jar, combine the vinegar, water, salt and sugar. Close the lid tightly and shake to dissolve the seasonings. Add the onions. Allow the mixture to sit in the brine for a minimum of 30 minutes before using.

To assemble the magnolia cups, arrange the avocado cubes, radish and pickled onion between the four petals. Season lightly with chili flakes and soy sauce. Add a few drops of the roasted sesame oil. Serve at once and inhale.

Recipe courtesy of Marie Viljoen.

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THE HEALTHY FOOD MOVEMENT

Pandemic Trends are Shaping Better Local Food Systems

by Bob Benenson



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Like so much else on the planet, the two-year coronavirus pandemic turned the health food world upside-down. “I found myself thinking real dystopian and wondering if people would be able to survive if grocery stores crumbled,” recalls Diana Mondragón, of Rockford, Illinois. “That scary thought train reminded me that I want to learn how to be more self-sustainable.” Her once-occasional drop-bys to farmers markets are now an essential weekly ritual. “I want to support local farmers and food producers to help communities grow stronger and healthier,” she says.

When the long supply chains of the conventional food system became disrupted, many Americans found themselves feeling insecure about food availability for the first time in their lives. The industrialized food system that had operated so efficiently for many generations had relied on long and complicated supply links; when they broke down or became gridlocked, the result

was empty supermarket shelves and long waits for home deliveries. Add the economic repercussions and job losses, and about one in nine households lacked enough nutritious food to sustain a healthy life, report researchers from New York University.

Faced with the system's shortcomings, a noteworthy outcome has been a surge in demand for healthier food production using sustainable and humane practices. Unable to drop by a nearby grocery store and get whatever they wanted whenever they wanted it, many consumers began buying locally grown produce for both practical and environmental reasons. After two high-growth decades, farmers markets initially took a hit during pandemic closures, but they have since bounced back with renewed energy. A wide range of innovative solutions are being pursued by e-commerce entrepreneurs and food-equity advocates to get healthier local food into more hands and more neighborhoods.

Surging Concerns

Sales of natural and organic products in the U.S. grew by about 10 percent in 2020, the year of the COVID-19 outbreak, and by another 8 percent in 2021, reports SPINS, a Chicago-based data research firm, in *Nutrition Business Journal*. Sales growth in that sector was six to seven times larger than for conventional products, which experienced barely any sales growth at all.

Helping spur the trend, cheap food at supermarkets isn't so cheap anymore, making organic food look better by comparison. The research company Data Weave reported in March that

conventional food prices jumped by 11 percent in the previous 12 months of the pandemic, while prices for organic food increased by a relatively modest 2 to 4 percent.

The price pressures on conventional food “will continue to go up rapidly,” says Matt Tortora, co-founder of WhatsGood, a Rhode Island-based food e-commerce company. “The war between Russia and Ukraine is going to exacerbate that issue. And it seems like most of what's going on in the world is going to affect our global supply chains even further, and in more profound ways than just our gas pump.”

Food-to-Table Creativity

The dominance of supermarkets and big-box stores in the years following World War II greatly diminished supply and demand of farm-fresh local food. A back-to-the-future trend that started taking hold a generation ago spurred a five-fold increase in the number of farmers markets across the nation, along with a proliferation of farms selling community supported agriculture subscriptions that delivered weekly batches of fresh produce to members. These increased sales enabled many small farmers to offset the body blow from business lost due to pandemic-related restaurant shut-downs; a number of them thrived, with record sales.

The signs for the 2022 outdoor market season have been encouraging. Green City Market, widely regarded as Chicago's premier farmers market, reported more than 13,000 visitors in a six-hour

span on May 7, even though the weather was still on the cool side and few spring crops were in season after a chilly and wet April.

At the same time, a previously little-used conduit for local health food sales—e-commerce—shows signs of spurring long-term growth. Some individual producers nimbly built out their web-based product sales by also providing home delivery, previously a rarity in the local food scene. For example, the e-commerce site Avrom Farm (*Avrom-Farm.com*), of Ripon, Wisconsin, sells not only its own products, but also goods from other farmers, and Three Sisters Garden, of Kankakee, Illinois, which raises specialty vegetables, has converted entirely to e-commerce and home delivery.

Taking this concept to the next level is WhatsGood, which in 2014 began providing home delivery and pickup services for farmers markets in several cities. In the pandemic, the company became a lifeline to connect farmers with consumers at a time when stay-at-home orders and social distancing concerns hampered or closed farmers markets.

Late last year, WhatsGood introduced a new business model that bypasses farmers markets to allow consumers to order goods online directly from farmers for home delivery. *Source* WhatsGood.com now operates in 21 states. Tortora estimates that demand for local food is about 12 times greater than it was before the pandemic, even as supermarkets again start stocking more faraway-grown, conventional produce.

Even Better for the Planet

While the pandemic created a sense of urgency about healthier eating, it also elevated concerns about the health of the living environment. An April 2022 study issued by New York University's Stern Center for Sustainable Business found that products specifically marketed as sustainable had a 17 percent share of the market for consumer-packaged goods, up from 13.3 percent in 2015. Nearly half of all products introduced in 2021 touted sustainability benefits, up from 28 percent in 2017. Organic food sales in 2021 amounted to \$51 billion; 30 years earlier, that market was estimated at a mere \$1 billion, says the SPINS report.

Now there is growing support to take stewardship of the land to the next level through regenerative agriculture practices which focus on building and maintaining the health and biological vitality of the nation's soils, and in some cases, means restoring soils stripped of their vitality by conventional farming practices. It has been most heavily promoted by the Rodale Institute, based in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, which has developed standards for a Regenerative Organic Certified food label.

The sustainability issue resonates deeply with people like Katlin Smith, founder and CEO of Chicago-based Simple Mills, a 10-year-old company that's widely recognized as the preeminent natural baking mix brand nationally. “I started the company after seeing what a huge impact food has on all of our bodies, and I realized how much we had processed the heck out of our food.

And it was really undermining people's health,” she says.

In the last two years, the company has expanded its focus to work with farmers to improve soil health and biodiversity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It recently joined forces with the frozen smoothie company Daily Harvest and gluten-free frozen pizza maker Capello's to advance regenerative soil practices in almond growing. “Regenerative agriculture is really just growing food in a way that leans into nature and builds a healthy ecosystem for all who are involved,” says Smith.

Supplying Underserved Communities

Local food communities around the country are also playing an increasingly dynamic role in addressing food equity, access and security issues. Less than a decade ago, fewer than half of all farmers markets nationwide accepted federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for purchases.

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Today, backed by U.S. Department of Agriculture funding, most do, with many markets accepting state-backed debit cards. To further increase access to locally produced food for lower-income families, many states provide matching shopping funds up to a certain limit, as do programs run by nonprofit organizations such as California's Market Match and Double Up Bucks, run by the Michigan Fair Food Network.

To get healthy produce to people that live in urban "food deserts", nonprofits are pioneering creative approaches. The Urban Growers Collective operates eight farms on 11 acres of land on Chicago's Southside that combine education, training and leadership development with the growth of organic crops, which are then driven in a "Fresh Moves" bus to local community and health centers, and churches. Founded by food justice advocates Laurell Sims and Erika Allen, the Collective worked with a coalition of nonprofits during the pandemic to deliver boxes of free food to households in underserved neighborhoods across the city. The pandemic "forced us to do some of the things we'd been talking about, but said we don't have time yet. We just dived in," Sims says.

The dramatic impact of the COVID-19 crisis drove up local interest in the Collective's community gardens, with the number of volunteers jumping from 10 to 50. "It made a lot of people realize this ain't no joke. People close to us were passing away," says farm manager Malcolm Evans, who started volunteering for the Collective a decade ago as a teenager growing up in a nearby public housing project. "People wanted to really know how to grow food. We've been doing it for years, trying to bring this to folks' attention. Everybody needs to understand food and know where it comes from." 🌱

Bob Benenson is publisher and writer of Local Food Forum, a newsletter that covers all aspects of the local food community in the Chicago region. He can be contacted at Bob@LocalFood Forum.com.

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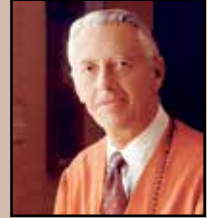
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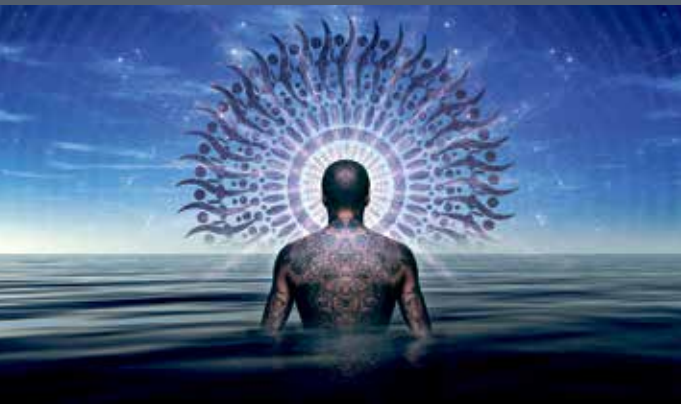
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RADIANT SKIN WITH FEWER HEALTH RISKS

by Marlaina Donato

For basic hygiene and improved appearance, we wash, slather, hydrate, scrub and cover up, often forgetting that our skin is our largest organ and much of what we expose it to can be absorbed and accumulated in the body over time. If we are using products with potentially toxic additives, we are putting ourselves at a higher risk for hormone disruption, reproductive cancers and allergic reactions.

Many chemicals that have been banned or controlled in Japan and some European countries are still being used on an unregulated basis in the U.S. Even products labeled "organic" and "natural" can have harmful elements alongside the good stuff. Recent research from the University of Vermont Cancer Center has linked phthalates, the "forever chemicals" used as bonding agents in many personal care products, to a higher risk of cancers in children. The encouraging news is that with a little savvy preparation, these hazardous ingredients can be avoided, and we can have glowing skin with fewer health risks.

Knowledge is Power

Being an informed consumer is important when it comes to what goes into the body, and reading labels is just as vital for what's applied on the outside. "The beauty industry can become fascinated with chemical-based 'quick-fixes,' but so often what you find is that these interventions can have long-lasting effects that may actually damage the skin," says Tammy Fender, founder of Tammy Fender Holistic Skincare, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Liver-compromising and potentially cancer-causing formaldehyde, phthalates and parabens are plentiful in shampoos (including baby shampoo), soaps, deodorants, antiperspirants, body lotions and moisturizers, and have been linked to breast cancer and other malignancies, kidney damage and depression. While some sources claim these substances to be low-risk due to minimal amounts in skin care products, looking at the broader picture can be disturbing when we consider long-term use and the number of products used daily.

On a superficial level, the skin just responds better when it is exposed to fewer toxins. "Our skin is our biggest organ and absorbs up to 60 percent of whatever you put on it. When you eat healthy, your body feels great. The same goes for your skin," says Shannon Reagan, owner of Glimmer Goddess Organic Skin Care, in Frisco, Texas. "Throughout my life, I've tried just about every product in the stores looking for something that wouldn't irritate my skin. I found that the cleaner the products, the better my skin looked and felt."



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What Our Skin Loves

An outstanding resource for information about a particular product's safety is the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database at EWG.org/skindeep, which evaluates and grades more than 88,000 personal care products for toxicity. When shopping online or in a store, nixing any that have long, difficult-to-pronounce ingredients is key. Any label that simply lists "fragrance" is also a red flag for hundreds of possible chemicals. Instead, opt for skin care products with Latin botanical names for herbal and essential oil-based scents.

"Natural products may cost a bit more than store brands, but the benefits far outweigh the incremental cost. They contain vitamins, phytonutrients, antioxidants and flavonoids that help heal, rejuvenate and protect skin," says Reagan.

Fender, a holistic aesthetician and pioneer of clean skin care, concurs, "There is so much care that comes through the plants. Nature is generous." Her favorite go-to ingredients in her organic skin care line range from white lily to citrus. "I love rose for its powerful rejuvenating benefits. I also love chamomile, an ancient calming and soothing remedy, which is so beneficial for sensitive skin."

Fun in the Sun

Chemicals found in conventional sunscreens such as avobenzone, homosalate, octinoxate, oxybenzone and PABA activate free radicals in the body, but natural sunscreens offer total protection without the elevated cancer risk. Reagan, whose products offer broad-spectrum sun protection, explains, "Chemical sunscreens are absorbed into the skin while natural sunscreens (mineral-based) sit on top of your skin, blocking the sun's rays at the surface. Natural sunscreens such as zinc oxide and non-nano titanium dioxide are usually thick like a body lotion texture. They work by reflecting UVA/UVB rays away from the skin and start to work right away."

Essential oils like red raspberry seed and carrot seed are also reliable ingredients to look for in any natural sunscreen, and may even be helpful for certain types of precan-

cerous skin lesions caused by UVA/UVB rays.

Overall, healthy skin comes from a well-balanced lifestyle. For Fender, it is truly a holistic approach. "I love how inspired and educated my clients are these days. They come to the treatment room with insightful questions, and they understand that caring for the skin is not separate from caring for the soul." 🌿

Marlaina Donato is an author, composer and painter. Connect at WildflowerLady.com.

HEALTHIER SUMMER SKIN

TIPS FROM SHANNON REAGAN, OWNER OF GLIMMER GODDESS ORGANIC SKIN CARE

Our skin needs hydration all year round, but most especially in the hot summer months. The keys to keeping our skin soft, healthy and hydrated is to drink plenty of water, wear lip balm with sun protection and apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen throughout the day.

For ultimate summer goddess skin, be sure to not over-wash your face, which would dry out our skin. Instead, use a gentle cleanser and lukewarm water in the morning and night. Use a sunscreen during the day and a body lotion or body butter at night.

Shea butter is a great moisturizer for all skin types and is packed with skin-nourishing vitamins. Almond oil is an all-around gem when it comes to skin health. As a child, my mom would melt down shea butter and mix it with almond oil to soothe my eczema. These two natural ingredients have become a staple in my line of natural and organic skin care products.

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DECADES OF HEALING WISDOM
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Cool Treats for Hot Days

DIY RECIPES EVEN KIDS CAN MAKE

by Sheila Julson



Many of us have fond childhood memories of cool confections from the neighborhood ice cream truck on sultry summer days. By creating homemade, hot-weather treats with our kids, we get to enjoy the delights of fresh, seasonal produce and inventive flavor combinations, while also providing our kids with kitchen fun, healthy fare without unwelcome additives and summertime memories of their own.

“There are plenty of frozen treats from the grocery store that are in the natural or organic categories, but sometimes those still have levels of sweeteners, sugar or other preservatives that we don’t want or need,” says Annie Wegner LeFort, a Milwaukee-based chef and founder of the healthy living business *EatMoveMKE.com*. She has been making frozen pops for her 13-year-old daughter Vera since she was a toddler. Anything that is homemade is more economical and has less packaging, Wegner LeFort says. Pop molds can be used over and over, and even cups can be used and reused as molds to reduce waste.

Crafting Cool Treats

Making frozen pops can be as easy as mashing fruits and other ingredients in a bowl, pouring the mixture into molds and freezing them. A blender or a food processor can be used to make a smoother mix, with parents supervising younger kids. Older children that know how to use small appliances can safely blend—and clean up—without supervision. Wegner LeFort notes that young kids might enjoy straightforward flavor combinations, but older kids with more developed palates can experiment with herbs or exotic concoctions.

Parents can deftly blend vegetables and herbs into frozen pops and refreshing summer smoothies without being detected by finicky eaters. She recommends adding spinach to fruit blends with berries or dark-colored fruits: “You don’t even really see the greens. They are overtaken by the blue and purple fruits.” Beets or beet juice, which is high in iron and vitamins, also add a beautiful color to berry blends. Cooked and mashed sweet potatoes lend a vibrant orange to red and yellow blends made with strawberries or pineapple.

Gwen Eberly, a Lancaster, Pennsylvania-based chef who teaches cooking to kids and teens through the Zest! cooking school, recalls making healthy, decadent, frozen orange cream pops with her mother and enjoying them on her farmhouse porch on hot summer days. “The original orange cream pops recipe came from a cookbook called *More With Less*, a compilation of recipes offered by Mennonite women in the 1970s,” Eberly says. She made them with her own children when they were young, and they became a family favorite. Now, as teenagers, they make the treats themselves all year long.

Other simple cool snacks include monkey tails—frozen bananas rolled in melted chocolate. “That’s a simple and healthy treat that can be topped with nuts or seeds. If you use dark chocolate, that helps cut down on sugar,” Wegner LeFort advises. Ice cream sandwiches can be made with either store-bought or homemade cookies and ice cream. “Those have endless options for creativity and different flavor combinations.”

Jessi Walter Brelsford, founder and “Chief Bud” at the cooking school Taste Buds Kitchen, based in New York City, recommends putting a fun twist on fruit salad with Rainbow Kabobs, which parents and kids can make together. “Our recipe uses fresh, summer favorites like strawberries, cantaloupe, kiwis and blueberries, but depending on your family’s preferences, you can easily make these with any fruit sturdy enough to go on the skewers,” she says. “Kids love helping out, so get them even more excited to be involved by using cool tools together, like a melon baller or crinkle cutter. It will help them practice fine motor skills and pattern recognition by threading the fruits onto the skewers in specific patterns.”

With a little encouragement and experimentation, kids will be proudly and happily creating their own delicious and healthy summer snacks.

Sheila Julson is a freelance writer and regular contributor to *Natural Awakenings* magazine.



ORANGE CREAM POPS

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

- 1 banana
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt, whole milk
- 1 cup fresh-squeezed orange juice
- 1 Tbsp honey

Combine all the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour blended mixture into molds, leaving ½ inch for them to expand. Freeze until hard, about 4 hours. When ready to eat, run under warm water and remove from the mold.

Variations: omit bananas or substitute milk with full-fat coconut milk.

Recipe courtesy of Gwen Eberly, adapted from *More With Less*.



VEGAN WATERMELON-BEET POPS

YIELD: 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

- ¾ cup vegan vanilla yogurt
- ½ cup non-dairy milk
- 2 heaping cups frozen or fresh watermelon cubes
- 1 red beet, cooked, peeled and chunked
- 1 small frozen or fresh banana
- ½ lemon, juiced

Add all ingredients to a blender and process on high until smooth. Pour into popsicle molds and freeze solid.

Recipe courtesy of Annie Wegner LeFort.

Canine Calm

ANTI-ANXIETY TIPS FOR DOGS

by Ronica O'Hara



When they signed the Declaration of Independence, little did our country's founders know that more than two centuries later, their revolutionary act would lead to millions of dogs trembling, cringing and running for cover. As many as 45 percent of American pet dogs are struck with "fireworks phobia", studies show, and more dogs run away over the July Fourth holiday than at any other time of the year, report animal control officials.

The kind of situational anxiety caused by sudden loud noises can affect almost any dog, but it happens most often to those pets predisposed to anxious behavior because of breeding or troubled pasts. A new study in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* from the University of California, Davis, has found that even common noises such as a vacuum, microwave or beeping smoke alarm can trigger anxiety in many dogs, and that many owners don't recognize subtle signs.

"Monitor your dog's behavior for anything unusual, such as excessive barking, panting, shaking, trembling, licking or drooling," advises John Woods, a New York City professional dog trainer and editor-in-chief of *AllThingsDogs.com*. "Also look for cues in your dog's body language, paying particular attention to their eyes, ears, mouth and tail for other

signs of anxiety or discomfort."

Happily, research shows that a number of strategies can help soothe anxious pooches both from immediate terror and ongoing anxiety.

TURN IT AROUND. Swiss scientists at the University of Bern's Companion Animal Behavior Group that analyzed the New Year's fireworks strategies of 1,225 dog owners concluded that the most effective method was what they called "counterconditioning"—turning a negative into a positive with treats. As the fireworks exploded, these owners played with their dogs, gave them chews and treats, and expressed positive emotions; their dogs were on average 70 percent less anxious. The method works best when a dog's calmness is reinforced on a daily basis, say the researchers.

Megan Marrs, an Austin, Texas, dog trainer and founder of *K9OfMine.com*, lowered her rescue pit bull's anxious behavior by giving him cold, chewable treats whenever he calmly sat on his bed and didn't cause trouble. "This did require keeping treats on me at all times, but it worked wonders," she says.

IT'S A WRAP. The Swiss study also found that 44 percent of dogs became calmer during fireworks after being wrapped in a tight-fitting pressure vest. Sold commercially under such names as ThunderShirt and Anxiety Wrap, the vests can also be easily improvised at home by following YouTube videos. A tight wrap helped soothe the trembling of Zed, the Japanese Chin of Amy Tokic, editor-in-chief of the

Toronto-based *PetGuide.com*. "He's still not comfortable with loud noises, but when he's snuggly swaddled, he doesn't get into a panic state over it," she says.

PLAY MELLOW MELODIES. Studies have confirmed that music can ease situational anxiety for up to half of dogs, but the genre matters: classical soothes, heavy metal agitates. Researchers at Pooch & Mutt, a British natural-health dog food maker, surveyed Spotify playlists and concluded that the ultimate calming songs for dogs were reggae and soft rock, because of their simple arrangements, minimal electronic orchestration and gentle beats that match the heartbeat of a puppy's mother. "The wrong music or music that is being played too loud has the potential to upset your dog," warns London veterinary surgeon Linda Simon.

THE SWEET SMELL OF SAFETY. The sense of smell in dogs is 10,000 times greater than that of humans, so the right scent—like of their lactating mother—can comfort them. Pheromones are synthetic or herbal formulations in sprays, collars, plug-in diffusers or wet wipes that replicate nursing scents, and studies have found them effective for many dogs during fireworks, thunderstorms, and for mild anxiety. Jeraldin Paredes, a New York City professional dog sitter at *TalkTheBark.com*, suggests simply using an old T-shirt to bundle up a pooch during a high-stress situation or to put as a "baby blanket" into their favorite hiding place. "That way, no matter where they hide, a piece of you is always with them," she explains.

SPEAK STRAIGHT. "Simply speaking with your pet can make a huge difference in their anxiety," says animal communicator Nancy Mello, in Mystic, Connecticut. "Don't just say goodbye to them, but tell them how long you will be gone and when you will be back. Use a visualization: 'I will be home at 7 p.m.,' while visualizing your house at dark. Or say to an anxious pet, 'You are safe,' on a daily basis. Even if your pet doesn't get the exact wording, they understand the connotation behind it." 🐾

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

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DEFYING GRAVITY

with Aerial Yoga

by Mila Burgess

What is Aerial Yoga?

One of the most popular bookings on yoga class reservation apps these days is aerial yoga. This unique practice combines traditional yoga poses and philosophy with aerial arts techniques. Practitioners use fabric, hung from above, to find their way into various shapes. Used as a prop for support, the fabric can cocoon the practitioner to fully suspend them in the air, or it can be wrapped around certain body parts while the rest of the body remains firmly rooted on the ground.

Two main fabric designs are used in the practice of aerial yoga. The yoga hammock is a single loop of fabric anchored to the ceiling. Similarly, the yoga swing has a single loop of fabric, but it also has handles, allowing practitioners to maneuver into even more shapes by providing additional support. Hammocks and swings allow students to get into poses that they might not otherwise attempt on a mat.

Aerial yoga gives students opportunities to not only strengthen and stretch but to flip and fly. Like traditional yoga classes, aerial classes are offered in a variety of styles, including yang yoga, which is strength-based, and yin yoga, which focuses on deep stretching. Aerial yoga classes can include elements of playful acrobatics, power movements, inversions, deep relaxation and even healing restoration. While some classes make use of the fabric from start to finish, others use it only for specific poses. Either way, the hammocks and swings improve practitioners' *proprioception*—their understanding and awareness of the body's movement, action and location—and their wellness.

How did Aerial Yoga Develop?

Practicing yoga with props is not new. B.K.S. Iyengar, creator of the Iyengar system of yoga, is known to have created the first yoga prop in 1937, when he used a wooden rod to assist an elderly student who had difficulty keeping his legs stable. Ultimately, Iyengar didn't only use what are now considered traditional props, such as blocks, straps and blankets; he used ropes attached to wall hooks or suspended from the ceiling to help his students with pose alignment.

Aerial yoga originated in New York City in the early 2000s. Called "anti-gravity yoga" at the time, it was created by Christopher Harrison, a yogi, gymnast, performer and Broadway choreographer. At first, it was a blend of dance, Pilates and traditional yoga. The name change and hammocks and swings as we recognize them today started appearing around 2011.

What are the Benefits of Aerial Yoga?

One of the reasons aerial is quickly gaining stride as a therapeutic style of yoga is that it provides many physical and mental benefits. It's also a very accessible practice, so it's appropriate for novice and veteran yoga students alike. Aerial is complementary to a traditional practice, so many experienced yogis enjoy incorporating it into their regular routine.

Because the fabric provides support and stability to the practitioner, aerial yoga improves balance and range of motion in addition to proprioception and increases flexibility, stability and core strength. Many poses, including inversions, become available to students who might otherwise not be able to access them on the mat, and students are often able to move deeper into stretches because of the anti-gravity effect.

Greater depth allows students to feel the alignment of postures more fully and better understand how those poses should feel on the floor. Because the person is suspended, aerial yoga reduces load on wrists and knees; with the full support of a hammock or swing, there is zero impact to joints. The practice also takes pressure off of the head, neck and shoulders when the practitioner is inverted, and it lengthens the spine, relieving spinal compression. This is especially beneficial for people who spend a lot of time seated.

For those with neck or back problems that prevent them from participating in traditional yoga classes, the traction provided by the hammock or swing provides greater freedom and joint decompression than might be possible on the mat. Aerial yoga promotes circulation, boosts the lymphatic system and reduces risk factors for heart disease. Similar to other forms of yoga, aerial improves students' breath awareness and releases endorphins.

Mentally, aerial yoga reduces stress, improves confidence and is a mood-boosting activity. It invites a sense of fun and play into the practice and improves overall mental health and well-being.

Are There Contraindications?

Although aerial yoga is widely accessible and beneficial to practitioners of any fitness levels, due to the potential for flips and inversions during class, there are a few contraindications of note. As with any form of exercise, it is prudent to consult a healthcare

provider prior to participating if there is an underlying condition that could be exacerbated by anti-gravity movement. Hanging upside down is not recommended during pregnancy or for people who suffer from vertigo. It is also not advisable for students with high blood pressure, glaucoma or any other condition for which suspension and inverting is not medically advised.

However, not all aerial classes include full body-weight suspension and inversion. For example, in restorative classes, the fabric is low to the ground, providing gentle support to students in deeply relaxing positions. There are gentle options available to all practitioners, even for those who need to avoid flipping in the air. If there are any concerns, it's advisable to speak directly with the teacher before taking a class to ensure that it is appropriate.

What Should You Expect from a Class?

Prior yoga experience is not necessary to participate in an aerial yoga class; there are many beginner-friendly options available. The teacher will offer modifications and progressions throughout the class to meet everyone's needs. As safety is of utmost importance, it is essential to seek out a certified aerial yoga teacher. Instructors should review with the class how to get in and out of the hammock or swing properly and safely and advise students on how to adjust the fabric. The length of the apparatus is not one-size-fits-all, and sometimes adjustments must be made during class to ensure the integrity of specific poses.

Aerial yoga students should wear comfortable, stretchy clothes that allow for a full range of movement. The aerial fabric is often placed in the armpits and behind the knees and can take time to get used to, so wearing a shirt with sleeves and leggings that come below the knees is recommended. Fabric placement in each pose is key; if something is painful or doesn't feel quite right, ask the teacher for assistance.

Moving too quickly too soon can cause students to experience a bit of motion sickness. Aerial yogis should start slowly to adjust to the sensations of the practice. As with all forms of movement, students should listen to their bodies.

Aerial hammocks and swings are sturdy and, depending upon the brand, can hold from 400 to 600 lbs. or more. Practitioners are encouraged to not only trust themselves and the process, but also the fabric!

Finally, students should expect to have a few laughs and a lot of fun as they allow themselves to enjoy the experience.

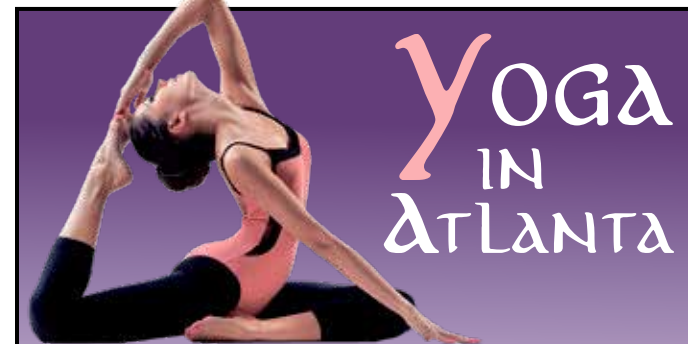
While aerial yoga won't take the place of traditional yoga classes, it is an innovative, playful and beneficial way to complement them by promoting greater strength, balance, flexibility and confidence. 🧘



Mila Burgess, E-RYT 500, 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.



See the web version of this article for a listing of yoga studios offering aerial yoga.



- A Focused Advertising Section -

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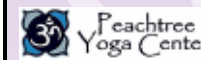


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yoga calendar

SUNDAYS

Sunday Evening Yoga in the Park – 6-7pm. 2nd Sun. Enjoy a weekend wind down by moving your body in the great outdoors and set intentions for the new week. With Dr. Krystal Fannin. Free. Blackburn Park, 3493 Ashford Dunwoody Rd, Atlanta. Register: Tinyurl.com/yaz3phza.

Yoga with Amador – 5-6pm. Also Sat, 10-11am. Free yoga and meditation. Bring own mat. The Interlock, 1115 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/2wkewr9t.

THURSDAYS
Yoga at The Avenue West Cobb – 6-7pm. An all-levels beginner friendly practice with Mia Yakei. Free. The Avenue West Cobb, 3625 Dallas Highway, Ste 470, Marietta. Register: Tinyurl.com/yck6ap26.

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

WEDNESDAYS
Atlanta Laughter Yoga Club – 12-12:30pm. 1st Wed. With Celeste Greene. Come as you are. Free. Trolley Barn, 963 Edgewood Ave NE, Atlanta. Celeste-GreeneLaughs.com.

Zen Sound Bath – 11:30am-1pm. 3rd Sat. With Gabriel Nelson Sears featuring crystal and Himalayan singing bowls, gongs, bells, flutes, drums and chimes. \$16. Trinity Center for Spiritual Living, 1095 Zonolite Rd, Atlanta. Registration required: TrinityCenterAtlanta.org.

Jeffrey Smith on the Threat of Gene-Edited Microbes

by Sandra Yeyati



courtesy of Duke University/Sanford School of Public Policy

When most people didn't know what a GMO (genetically engineered organism) was 25 years ago, Jeffrey Smith, the founder and executive director of the Institute for Responsible Technology, was one of the leaders of a global movement that helped consumers understand the dangers of genetically engineered foods. The success of these efforts prompted significant swaths of the population to reject GM comestibles, leading food manufacturers to develop non-GMO alternatives. His most recent efforts focus on gene-edited microbes.

Why do you believe that unregulated releases of gene-edited plants, animals or microbes could devastate our planet?

First, GMOs can persist forever in the gene pool. They're self-propagating. Second, the most common result of genetic engineering is surprise side effects. Third, gene editing is so inexpensive that virtually everything with DNA can be a target. You can buy a do-it-yourself CRISPR kit online for less than \$200. Already, it's being used in high school biology labs. Nature's gene pool is up for grabs with no real safety net, and the impact can last for thousands of years from a single release.

What are the world's most dangerous organisms to gene edit and why?

The microbial ecosystem known as the microbiome. It is a basis for human and environmental health. Experts say we've outsourced about 90 percent of our metabolic and chemical functions to our microbi-

ome, and imbalances in the microbiome are precursors to about 80 percent of diseases. The microbiome is essential for soil health and health in virtually every ecosystem. If you release a genetically engineered microbe, it might travel around the world, mutate and swap genes with thousands of other microbes. These, in turn, can travel and mutate with unpredicted side effects and changes in function. This can potentially damage or collapse ecosystems around the world.

How can we stop this threat?

We need to disallow any release of genetically engineered microbes through legislation and international treaties. Without such laws, we could see a million GM microbes released in this generation, which could destroy the nature of nature, and all future generations would be forced to grapple with our mistakes. We also should restrict access to these technologies and ban so-called gain-of-function enhancement of potentially pandemic pathogens, even in so-called bio-secure laboratories, because over 1,000 recorded accidents show that bio-security isn't reliable enough to create and house pathogens which, if released, could lead to another pandemic.

How did you help build a movement that led to wide-scale rejection of GMOs?

I've spoken in 45 countries, counseled politicians and leaders, written two books, made five movies, trained 1,500 speakers and helped organize over 10,000 activists in more than a hundred groups. We exposed the dangers of GMOs and the corrupt practices by the biotech industry

We need to disallow any release of genetically engineered microbes through legislation and international treaties.

and regulatory agencies. Now, 51 percent of Americans and 48 percent of global consumers correctly believe that GMO foods aren't safe. This was designed to influence purchasing choices to put economic pressure on food companies to remove GMO ingredients. The tipping point of consumer rejection is underway.

How are you mobilizing a movement against GM microbes?

Our choices in supermarkets won't stop the release of genetically engineered microbes, so we need to focus on enacting new laws in individual countries and international treaties. But we can't rely on consistency of government laws. We need to build a popular movement so that everyone in the world realizes we have now arrived at an inevitable time in human civilization where we can damage the streams of evolution for all time, and that we need to become far more responsible in our relationship with nature. We need to institutionalize the choices in academia so that everyone growing up, just as they now learn about climate change, also learns about the dangers of genetic technology and what we need to do as a civilization to protect nature's gene pool forever.

How can people help?

I invite people to visit ProtectNatureNow.com, sign up for our newsletter and watch the 16-minute film *Don't Let the Gene Out of the Bottle*. We post action alerts for people to reach out to elected officials and local papers, and we'll have plenty more opportunities for people moving forward, including training programs and a global advocacy network. 🌱

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

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Place yourselves behind Me in My Task and allow Me to take you on the Lighted Way.

— Maitreya

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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.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6

Editor's Choice Virtual Energy Exploration with Kids – 12:30-1:30pm. Learn 3 different approaches to explore subtle like energy and bring your kids to class. Ages 8 and up. The first approach will be about breath work, secondly about how energy feels and lastly aromatherapy. Register: JamieButlerMedium.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 9

Georgia Audubon Society Bird Walk – 8-10am. All welcome. Free. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

Free First Saturday – 11am-12pm. Summer in Nature. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

SUNDAY, JULY 10

Breakfast with Butterflies – 10am-12pm. A family-friendly morning with exclusive

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SUNDAY, JULY 3

Art of Breath Class – 12-1:30pm. With Noel Plaugher. Covers breathing techniques used in many disciplines to provide relaxation, focus and better health. Love offering.

SATURDAY, JULY 16

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, JULY 19

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.

access to CNC's Butterfly Encounter, where you can enjoy a light breakfast, experience several species of butterflies, and explore the grounds prior to opening. Ages 4+. \$25/general, \$15/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChattNatureCenter.org.

MONDAY, JULY 11

Editor's Choice Things That Matter Book Tour – 7pm. Join Joshua Becker on his latest book tour celebrating the release of his new book, *Things That Matter: Overcoming Distraction to Pursue a More Meaningful Life*. \$10. Georgia State University, Speaker's Auditorium, 55 Gilmer St SE, Atlanta. Tickets: Tinyurl.com/24j6kfay.

TUESDAY, JULY 12

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/2p97ft8v.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13

Remote Healing: Clearing Third Eye Chakra to Boost Psychic Energy – 12pm. Jamie will work with your guides, reiki healing, and crystalline frequencies to clear any congestion from your third eye chakra. \$15. Register: JamieButlerMedium.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

Ask the Life Coach – 12pm. Ever wish you could pick an Energy Healer's brain? In this session, get the opportunity to ask Tatiana Franklin any questions you might have about energy, healing, what you can do to address your emotional/physical symptoms, etc. Free. To register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

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.

SATURDAY, JULY 23

Editor's Choice 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: Dunwoody Nature.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 28

The Nature Club Dine and Discover – 7-9pm. In-person or online. \$20/general, \$5/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

FRIDAY, JULY 29

Editor's Choice Opossum Breakfast – 8-9am. Enjoy a light breakfast alongside an opossum, and chat with CNC Wildlife Staff about how they care for these unique animals. \$20/general, \$10/CNC Members. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChattNatureCenter.org.

SUNDAY, JULY 31

Past Life Regression Sound Bath – 2-4pm. With Denise Foster. Begin with a discussion about reincarnation, then be led into a Past Life regression followed by a Sound Bath. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

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/yjzutjf4.

OneWorld 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, Norcross. 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. cfmatl.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 Fri. With Rhythm Healer Eric Olson. No experience necessary. \$10. Unity North, 4255 Sandy Plains Rd, Marietta. More info: UnityNorth.org.

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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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Who Gets to DEFINE ME?

by Cassie Gaub



I have lived in big cities most of my adult life, but I grew up on a farm in a small town. It was a town with no gas stations, drive-thrus or grocery stores. It just had three churches, one bar and one paved road, which was the old highway that ran through town. There were no streetlights, gas stations or stores, either. And it's still a place where there is no anonymity, since everyone knows everyone and everything.

I don't get back there to visit as much as I'd like, but I do try to make the trip at least every other year, especially since my parents are getting older. Going back to visit is always a mix of emotions: excitement, dread, guilt, anticipation, giddiness, nostalgia. I get to remember how beautiful the state of Montana is; I get to experience the vast openness that it offers—it isn't called the Big Sky state for nothing. I get to take fun little trips down memory lane, and I have the unique experience of being both an insider and an outsider.

On my last trip back, my mom, dad and older sister went for a quick bite at our local hometown bar—the one and only restaurant in town. As expected, we knew everyone in the place and everyone knew us, so that quick bite turned into a reunion of sorts. I caught up with everyone I saw there and answered questions about my recent move to Atlanta.

Then, somebody commented that I seemed “different” and “grown up” now.

I am now heading into my fourth decade on this Earth, so the comment made sense. I definitely wasn't the 16-year-old who babysat his grandkids anymore. But I also felt that I wasn't all that different, either.

“How so?” I asked, and he described how “wild” I used to be and said he thought I'd calmed down so much. I listened and nodded my head.

But—as boring as it might sound—I have never been wild. I am and always have been a Type-A rule-follower. Even when I *was* breaking the rules, I did so in a somewhat calculated, socially expected and accepted way. I never got into trouble—yet somehow, I had been put into the role of rebellious wild-child. That was far from accurate. I don't know what the story was based on or why it got created. Maybe, without even knowing it, I lived up to those expectations in other people's minds.

I found myself annoyed, defensive and bewildered by the conversation. I wondered where else I was mindlessly or unknowingly put into a role by someone else. Where else in my life and in my relationships was I unconsciously fulfilling a role I didn't want, didn't choose or was unaware of? Who else was creating these stories and roles for me—or about me?

I also wondered if I was creating stories for myself. How do I want my role and my story to be defined? And, what am I doing to embody the definition, story and role that I *do* want?

In her book *Untamed*, Glennon Doyle writes: “Blessed are those brave enough to make things awkward, for they wake us up and move us forward.”

I don't have all the answers yet, and I imagine the answers might grow and change as I grow and change. That's the journey, I suppose. That's the fun. Without that awkward, bewildering (and annoying) conversation over dinner in my hometown, I might have never consciously started defining myself, my life

and my story on my terms.

Blessed are those brave enough to be awkward. 🙌



Cassie Gaub is an empowerment and mindset coach, energy worker, podcast host and speaker. Connect on social media @coachwithcassie and @bestuinstitute.



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