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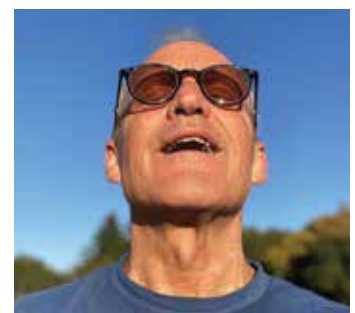
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Ask a Coach



Online

We're passionate about helping people awaken to their full potential. Life coaching is one way many people are getting the professional direction and support they need to live more authentic and joy-filled lives.

With this issue, we bring to a close the column Ask a Coach. We are grateful for the contributions of the three life coaches anchoring the column: Adele Wang, Diane Martinez and Terri Kozlowski (left to right).



Front-ending the column's first appearance was last January's special section on life coaching bit.ly/naa-coaching-0122.

The second article, *Top Reasons People Seek Life Coaching*, was the 2022 most-read article on our website!

Below are the questions that Adele, Diane and Terri answered last year and links to their respective columns. Enjoy reading February's new column from Diane and exploring the archives!

How can I keep other people from energetically draining me so much?

bit.ly/aac-0222

I feel pretty burned out from dealing with all the stress in my life. What can I do about it?

bit.ly/aac-0322

How do I stop being a perfectionist? When I was growing up, achievement was valued highly in our home. Doing "pretty good" was

frowned upon, and now I feel stuck. I want to make some changes in my life, but I'm afraid of making a mistake.

bit.ly/aac-0422

I feel like I'm always the one calling and reaching out to people to keep relationships going. But I'm afraid if I don't reach out, these relationships will end. I feel resentful because I know things are out of balance. What do I do?

bit.ly/aac-0522

How Do I Build My Self-Confidence?

bit.ly/aac-0722

It feels exhausting to be a woman. There are so many expectations of us—we're supposed to be sexy, successful, a great mom, supportive, all the while cooking nutritious meals and staying super fit! How can I be all that?

bit.ly/aac-0822

Am I Addicted to Fixing Myself?

bit.ly/aac-0922

I feel disconnected from those closest to me. How can I feel connected again?

bit.ly/aac-1022

Is there a way to celebrate the holidays without losing my peace—and sanity? Every year I tell myself I'll do a better job of managing holiday stress, but every year it's the same!

bit.ly/aac-1122

How Do I Find My Life's Purpose?

bit.ly/aac-1222



How Can I Reclaim My Power After a Traumatic Event?

bit.ly/aac-0123

When you keep hitting brick walls, how do you know if you should persevere or just give up and move on?

bit.ly/aac-0223



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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Can Heart Disease Be REVERSED?

The subject of heart disease is close to my heart, pun intended.

My father's side of the family has a long history of the disease. He passed away from a heart attack at the age of 58. Many other family members have had heart attacks as well. My youngest cousin suffered a heart attack in his 40s, and my second youngest cousin passed away from a heart attack a couple of years ago.

But my family is hardly alone; heart disease is the leading cause of death in America for both men and women.

Thus, our lead article this month is about improving heart health, and our Conscious Eating article also addresses the topic. The Fit Body piece introduces the concept of heart rate variability (HRV), a key measure of overall health. Heart Math Institute, a California-based nonprofit, has long studied HRV, and a former CEO, Bruce Cryer is the subject of our Wise Words article.

Conventional wisdom says one can slow the progression, and even stop the advancement, of heart disease. But can people reverse it? That's certainly implied in our lead article, which says, "There are natural ways to control and reverse heart disease..."

Dr. Dean Ornish and Dr. Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr. absolutely assert as much. The former published *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease* in

1992, while Esselstyn published *Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease* in 2007.

Esselstyn's program is all about diet, whereas Ornish's program also includes exercise, stress management, and loving, supportive relationships. Esselstyn's program gives me pause. He summarizes it this way:

- "You may not eat anything with a mother or a face (no meat, poultry, or fish).
- You cannot eat dairy products.
- You must not consume oil of any kind—not a drop.
- Generally, you cannot eat nuts or avocados."

That's a lot of "nots." Ornish's dietary guidelines are nowhere near as strict, but there are the three other aspects to his program. Then there's the American Heart Association's (AHA) Life's Essential 8, mentioned in our lead article. In addition to diet, exercise, and stress management, the AHA adds getting sufficient sleep and eliminating tobacco as significant factors in heart health.

The one factor that stands out to me, however, is love and support. "There isn't any other factor in medicine—not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery—that has a greater impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness and premature death from all causes than loneliness and isolation," says Ornish's website.

An article on the American Psychological Association's website states: "Strong social relationships increase the likelihood of survival by 50 percent regardless of age, sex or health status, according to a meta-analysis of 148 studies on mortality risk by Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Ph.D., of Brigham Young University, and colleagues (PLOS Medicine, Vol. 7, No. 7, 2010). They found social disconnection is at least as harmful to people as such well-accepted risk factors as obesity, physical inactivity and smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day."

While I do not believe that the physical heart is the source of our feelings of love, appreciation, and compassion, it is true that when we locate those feelings in our bodies, we point to our heart center. Our physical heart does not require our conscious mind to intercede on its behalf to continue beating, but our metaphorical heart, in most instances, does require conscious thought to generate loving feelings towards an individual or group, particularly towards those with whom we have antipathy.

As with all things that can be improved, practice is key. Though no reader should take the following as medical advice, I do "prescribe" exercising the metaphorical heart to enhance the physical heart. A simple and beautiful practice is metta, or loving kindness. To do that, recite the following prayer from the New Kadampa Tradition while imagining love, in the form of green light, pouring out of your heart in all directions, toward all living beings:

*May everyone be happy
 May everyone be free from misery
 May no one ever be separated from
 their happiness
 May everyone have equanimity,
 free from hatred and attachment*

Happy Valentine's Day, y'all! 🌸



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.

WELLSPRING DENTAL OPENS NEW FAMILY PRACTICE



Shannon Thorsteinson [Photo: Peter Brown]

WellSpring Dental is opening a new functional family dental practice and airway health center for infants, children and adults. To celebrate the opening, the practice is planning a family-friendly open house on March 6 from 4 to 7 p.m. Community members can tour the facility and meet the team at WellSpring Dental.

Owner and CEO, Shannon Thorsteinson, DMD, has been in practice for more than 10 years. "This practice is the realization of a dream I've had since I was 13 years old. Once I sought out a combination of traditional and biologic methods to treat my mother's dental health, I realized I should be offering the same standard of care to all my patients. That is the guiding principle for all my decisions."

The Myogrow Airway Center is also located in WellSpring's offices. Myogrow helps patients breathe, sleep, eat, communicate, grow and thrive through the use of myofunctional orthodontics and by releasing tethered oral tissues.

The WellSpring Dental team specializes in functional general dentistry and airway health. According to the company's press release, they "advocate for the well-being of their patients and make biocompatibility a high priority to reduce the impact they have on their patients' biological responses."

"We want WellSpring Dental to be an abundant source of connection, growth and healing for our families, team, patients, colleagues and community," says Thorsteinson.

For more information, call 404-806-7979, visit WellSpringDentalATL.com, or see them on Facebook and Instagram.



Natural Awakenings Publishing Corporation Acquired by KnowWEwell



The Natural Awakenings Publishing Corporation (NAPC), founded in 1994 in Naples, Florida, by Sharon Bruckman, has been acquired by KnowWEwell as of December 1, 2022.

NAPC is a magazine franchising group with just under 50 independently owned franchises. *Disclosure: Awakenings Atlanta, Inc., the company that owns and publishes*

this magazine, is one of those franchises.

A company that provides holistic health content and develops virtual communities around that content, KnowWEwell was founded in 2017 by Kimberly Whittle, who is now CEO of NAPC. Bruckman remains a *Natural Awakenings* publisher with her Naples franchise.

"This is a transformational moment for both companies," says Whittle. "Readers and consumers looking for trusted knowledge and education related to whole health, sustainable green living

and community connections locally and globally will surely benefit from this collaboration."

Whittle says that NAPC will continue as a franchisor with independent franchisees focusing on "local businesses and producing hyperlocal news reporting and feature stories about people and events in their hometowns." A story released by KnowWEwell highlighted the original NAPC mission statement: "to inspire and empower people to awaken to their highest potential, so together we can create a world that works for all living things."

Atlanta publisher Paul Chen echoes the sentiment of the mission statement. "The mission of helping awaken people to their highest potential is exactly why I bought the Atlanta franchise," he says. "I can't think of a higher calling for human beings than to help their fellow humans become self-realized."



18th Annual Alive! Expo CALLS FOR VENDORS AND SPONSORS



Live Talks at Expo 2019



2019 Alive! Expo attendees [Photos Courtesy Alive! Expo]

Atlanta's largest holistic health and green products consumer trade show, Alive! Expo, is calling for corporate sponsors, product sponsors, vendors, speakers and presenters for its 18th annual weekend event taking place on May 6 and 7 at Cobb Galleria Centre.

Every year, sponsors and vendors showcase products and services to consumers interested in leading a green, clean and healthy lifestyle. Attendance for the weekend averages 5,000 to 6,000 health-oriented consumers from all over the Southeast.

"This is our second post-COVID event and our 'comeback' year!" says owner Patrycja Siewert Towns. "We help educate people on all things natural, organic and eco. We are now beginning promotions for our May Alive! Expo on social media and other outlets to expand attendance and increase visibility for our supporters. We want to grow the show in every way—from the number of speakers we showcase to the number of companies we help connect to the number of consumer attendees that come by!"

Vendor participation starts at \$695, and sponsorships start at \$1,500. To learn more, email Info@AliveExpo.com, send a Facebook message at [Facebook.com/AliveExpo](https://www.facebook.com/AliveExpo), or call the Alive! Expo office at 770-806-7492.

The 18th Annual Alive! Expo will take place May 6 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and May 7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Hall A, Cobb Galleria Centre, Two Galleria Parkway, in Atlanta.

HOLISTIC & WELLNESS EXPO FEATURES REGIONAL SPEAKERS



Krishna Doniparthi

Dr. Krishna Doniparthi, founder of Alpharetta-based Functional Medicine Georgia, will be the keynote speaker at the second annual Holistic & Wellness Expo at the Valhalla Resort Hotel in Helen, Georgia, February 4. His talk, "Heart Health: Another Perspective," will cover the latest research on heart health and what one needs to do to stay healthy.

Other speakers include naturopath Gary Potts speaking on "New Beginnings, New Health;" Reiki practitioner Darlene Greene discussing "Healing with Sounds of Love;" Andrew Strickman, CEO of Age Advantage Brands, on "The ABCs of CBD;" and Psych-K practitioner and author Linda Minnick to speak on "A New Day, A New Life."

Strickman will explain the six to eight types of cannabinoids and how to use them for a variety of symptoms. CBD, he says, has become an acronym, which, in common use, represents just about everything derived from the hemp plant. But people should understand that cannabinoids perform differently depending on symptoms.

Minnick is a life coach as well as a practitioner of Psych-K, an energy-healing modality that helps change subconscious beliefs. Her book, *A New Day, A New Life*, describes her personal journey of transformation. She will share parts of her story with Expo attendees.



Andrew Strickman

The Expo will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on February 4. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at ValhallaResortHotel.com or at the door.

Local Artists' Works Exhibited AT THREE METAPHYSICAL SHOPS

Three Atlanta metaphysical businesses are exhibiting creative works by local artists this month.

The Well of Roswell, a wellness center that “brings the metaphysical to the main-stream” is exhibiting works of Miera Robin Gans through March 11.

“Miera’s art is whimsical and spiritually based. It speaks of a world not ruled by logic, fostering joy,” says Becky Arrington, co-owner of The Well of Roswell. “She sold over half of her pieces during a recent gallery reception.” A self-taught artist, Gans has explored several of the creative arts and studied with a shaman in her 20s to enhance her intuitive skills.

Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore is exhibiting works by Cynthia Groszkiewicz. An artist, photographer, author and poet, Groszkiewicz documented her worldwide travels with photography and, upon returning to her studio in Marietta, created artistic interpretations of the vibrant scenery and wildlife she encountered. Candace Apple, the owner of Phoenix & Dragon, says, “Cynthia is influenced by both her mathematical and historical view of life and her soulful connection to the world in her travels.”

A reception for Groszkiewicz will be held at Phoenix & Dragon on February 19 at 4 p.m. for members of the public to meet and chat with the artist.

Heart Soul and Art, a metaphysical shop, is holding an exhibition opening on February 11. The artists have yet to be chosen, but the theme of the show is the color red. Heart Soul and Art hosts four juried shows a year with cash prizes and ribbons.

The Well of Roswell is located at 900 Old Roswell Lakes Parkway, Suite 300, in Roswell. Call 770-778-2051 or email Becky@TheWellOfRoswell.com to arrange a showing. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore is located at 5531 Roswell Road NE in Sandy Springs. Heart Soul and Art is located at 1470 Roswell Road in Marietta.



Right three from top: Works by Cynthia Groszkiewicz; Bottom three: Works by Miera Robin Gans

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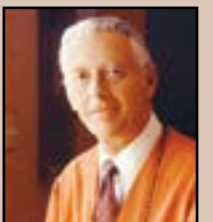
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Roy Eugene Davis
(1931-2019)

Nourish the Heart

FOODS THAT PROMOTE CARDIAC HEALING

by Steven Masley

The right food choices don't just prevent heart disease and help shrink artery plaque, they also nourish and heal the heart. For a healthy ticker, enjoy these five food groups every day.

Fabulous Fiber

Fiber is the roughage in vegetables, fruits, beans and nuts, and it is loaded with age-busting nutrients. Eating fiber suppresses appetite, promotes weight loss, improves blood sugar

and cholesterol levels, decreases inflammation and feeds a healthy gut microbiome.

The challenge is to get more fiber every day. Too often, people consume fiber from processed grains and flour, and the sugar load that comes with grain fiber has many adverse impacts on heart health. The best option is to enjoy daily fiber from the following sources: three cups of colorful vegetables; two pieces of fruit, such as one cup of berries and one apple; two handfuls of nuts and seeds; and one-half to one cup of beans.

Smart Fat

Clinical studies show that enjoying fats from seafood, extra-virgin olive oil and nuts decreases the risk of a heart attack and stroke without causing weight gain. Healthy fats improve cholesterol levels, assist with blood sugar control, are critical for the brain, improve hormone balance and reduce inflammation.

Fats enhance the texture of food, adding that smooth, creamy mouth feel to a meal that makes eating a pleasure. Enjoy healthy fats from avocados, seeds and dark chocolate daily.

Clean (Not Mean) Protein

Raising animals in large-scale conventional operations with cruel living conditions is not just mean, it also produces less nutritious meat that can be loaded with hormones, antibiotics and pesticides. Choose clean protein instead, which does not contain added hormones, pesticides and other toxins. Good sources of protein are organic dairy products and eggs, wild seafood and animal protein that has been grass-fed or organically fed while living on open pasture. Beans are also a great protein-packed choice that improves blood sugar and cholesterol profiles. They are the most powerful anti-aging food ever tested.

Beneficial Beverages

Start with at least four cups of water per day. It doesn't matter whether it's flat or sparkling, so long as it's pure. Pure water can be purchased or made at home or at work with a reverse osmosis filter system.

Except for people that are caffeine sensitive, one to two servings of caffeinated beverages can be enjoyed daily. In moderation, those tea and coffee pigments are good for us.

Don't forget a fiber- and protein-rich smoothie to stay satisfied and revved up all morning. A balanced and delicious recipe includes one serving of protein powder, frozen organic cherries or

blueberries, almond milk and chia seeds.

Take advantage of the option to enjoy wine with dinner—just be sure to limit wine intake to no more than two servings daily.

Avoid any beverage with added sugar or commercial sweeteners. Don't be fooled into drinking juice; without the fiber, fruit juice is much closer to drinking soda than to eating fruit.

Powerful Probiotics

Not only do probiotics help gut function—a healthy gut microbiome decreases inflammation and supports weight control. The latest research reveals that the microbes in the gut have a dramatic impact on the risk for heart disease, as well. Because healthy microbes feed on fiber, eating fiber is good for the gut microbiome, too.

The right gut microbes offer numerous benefits. They lower harmful cholesterol levels, improve blood sugar levels, lower blood pressure to normal levels, assist with weight loss, decrease inflammation and decrease production of trimethylamine N-oxide (also known as TMAO), a marker for heart disease. Support the gut microbiome by eating probiotic food sources daily, such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, pickled veggies and miso. 🍌

Dr. Steven Masley is a physician, nutritionist, trained chef, clinical professor at the University of South Florida and creator of health programs for public television. He is the author of The 30-Day Heart Tune-Up. Learn more at DrMasley.com.

FOODS YOUR HEART WILL LOVE



Africa Studio/AdobeStock.com

RATATOUILLE

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

1 medium eggplant (remove ends and any damaged skin), cut into 1-inch cubes
 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 1 medium sweet onion, diced
 ½ tsp sea salt
 ¼ tsp ground black pepper
 ½ tsp oregano, dried
 ½ tsp fines herbes (or Italian herb seasoning), dried

3 small zucchini, chopped into ½-inch cubes (about 2½ cups)
 2 small yellow squash, chopped into ½-inch cubes (about 2 cups)
 2 Tbsp white wine
 3 medium tomatoes, chopped (about 2½ cups)
 4 medium garlic cloves, minced
 1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
 1 tsp fresh rosemary, diced
 1 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped
 ⅓ tsp paprika or cayenne powder (or to taste)
 1 lb firm tofu, cubed, or 15 oz cooked cannellini beans (optional)
 Fresh herbs for garnish (parsley, basil, and/or thyme)

This fragrant side dish from southern France is packed with nutrients. It goes well with chicken or fish, and especially a soufflé. To convert this from a side dish to a complete meal, add 1 pound of cubed tofu or 15 ounces of cooked cannellini beans. Can be served hot or cold and usually

tastes better when served the next day.

Steam eggplant on the stove top for 6 minutes or microwave in a glass container for 4 minutes. Cook until tender.

Heat a pan on medium heat and add olive oil; add the onion, salt, black pepper, oregano and fines herbes. Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes or until onions are soft and translucent. Add zucchini, yellow squash, eggplant and wine; stir. Cover and heat for 3 to 4 minutes, until the vegetables soften, stirring occasionally. Add the tomatoes, garlic and fresh herbs; cover, reduce heat to low and simmer for 4 to 10 minutes, until squash softens and the flavors blend.

For a touch of heat, add paprika or cayenne pepper. Garnish with fresh herbs.

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CIOPPINO (ITALIAN SEAFOOD STEW)

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
¼ tsp sea salt
1 cup mushrooms, sliced
1 tsp dried Italian herbs (rosemary, thyme, oregano, basil)
¼ tsp ground black pepper
3 large carrots, chopped
1 medium fennel bulb, chopped into ½-inch pieces (or 3 celery stalks)
1 cup red wine

1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
1 cup chopped tomatoes or tomato sauce
2 cups low sodium vegetable or fish broth
1 lb mussels and/or clams in the shell, scrubbed clean
1 lb fresh whitefish, cut into 1-inch pieces (tilapia, cod, snapper, catfish)
½ lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
8 large sea scallops
½ cup fresh parsley, chopped

Heat a large stew pot over medium-high heat. Add oil, onions, salt, mushrooms, herbs and black pepper; stir for 2 minutes. Add carrots and fennel; cook another 2 minutes. Add wine to deglaze for 30 seconds while stirring. Add bell pepper, tomato sauce and broth; simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, unless the seafood is super fresh, soak fish, shrimp and scallops in orange juice or milk for 10 minutes. Rinse and drain when ready to add them to the pot.

Bring another pan with a steamer tray to a boil; add the mussels and/or clams; cook until they open, 5 to 6 minutes. Drain, saving 1 cup of the liquid for later use.

Increase the temperature under the large stew pot to medium-high and add the fish, shrimp and scallops. Heat 4 to 5 minutes until shrimp are pink and fish is cooked. Add the drained mussels and clams plus 1 cup of the reserved clam/mussel liquid; simmer another minute.

Ladle stew into bowls and garnish with parsley. This stew is fabulous accompanied with a tossed green salad on the side or as a second course. Be sure to set the table with additional large bowls for discarded shells.

Recipe excerpted from The 30-Day Heart Tune-Up by Steven Masley, M.D. Copyright © 2021 by Steven Masley, M.D. Used with permission of Little, Brown Spark, New York, NY. All rights reserved.



FRITTATA WITH SPINACH, MUSHROOMS AND CHEESE

YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

½ lb fresh spinach, washed and drained, stems removed, chopped
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
½ medium sweet onion, finely chopped
2 cups mushrooms, sliced
½ tsp sea salt

1 tsp Italian herb seasoning
2 medium garlic cloves, finely chopped
8 large cage-free, organically fed eggs
2 Tbsp organic, whole fat milk (or sour cream)
½ cup organic Comté (or Gruyère) cheese, grated
¼ cup Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Place spinach in a saucepan with ½ cup of water. Cover with a lid and allow to steam on high heat for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and drain; squeeze out excess water. Set aside.

Heat a sauté pan to medium heat; add olive oil, then onion; stir occasionally. After 1 minute, add mushrooms and continue heating for about 3 to 4 minutes until the onion is translucent and the mushrooms

have softened. Add garlic and Italian herbs and heat 1 minute, then remove from heat.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and milk together. Stir in the Comté or Gruyère cheese, steamed spinach and sautéed onions with mushrooms.

Grease a pie dish with extra virgin olive oil, then pour the egg and vegetable mixture into the pie dish. Sprinkle Parmigiano Reggiano cheese over the top.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until it has the texture of custard—trembling and barely set. For a golden crust, turn on the broiler for the last couple minutes of baking, but don't over-bake, or it will get tough. Check it 5 minutes before it's supposed to be done.

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Improving Heart Health

LIFESTYLE METRICS THAT CAN HELP PREVENT HEART DISEASE

by Sheila Julson

When it comes to preventing cardiovascular diseases, lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise are often mentioned. But a deeper dive into heart health shows other factors such as sleep, stress management and proper screenings are just as important.

Catch Those Zs

Dr. Randi Foraker is a professor of medicine within the Division of General Medical Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis (WUSTL), and the Deputy Director for WUSTL's Institute for Informatics. She helped co-author the American Heart Association's (AHA) Life's Essential 8, a prescription of eight lifestyle metrics for cardiovascular health. They include modifiable risk factors such as diet, physical activity, nicotine exposure, sleep duration, body mass index, blood lipids, blood glucose and blood pressure.

Last June, the AHA added sleep to their lifestyle recommendations.

"Poor sleep has been something we have suspected as contributing to poor cardiovascular health for some time," Foraker says. "Sleep has been identified recently as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases. Interrupted sleep is a problem, because our body isn't able to rebuild and recharge if we don't have adequate sleep. That's a recent finding, and the evidence around that is building."

In addition, research into how sleep patterns affect heart health is ongoing. Experts are looking at when people are sleeping, and if it's broken into three- or four-hour segments. The demands of one's occupation may lead to sleeping during the day instead of at night, or broken sleep that may or may not lead to a total of eight hours of sleep.

Stress Management

"Not managing stress well can be linked to insulin resistance, gut issues, high blood pressure and inflammation, which directly contribute to heart disease," says Charlotte Nussbaum, M.D., a functional medicine practitioner based in Medford, New Jersey. "That's a lifestyle factor that people need to address—and it can be the hardest one to address. Even if you're dialed in to a healthy diet and exercise routines, you're not going to keep yourself healthy if you have unresolved stress issues."

Nussbaum further notes that unaddressed childhood traumas can lead to unhealthy stress management techniques. She encourages people to consult with a

therapist or other practitioner to work through childhood traumas. Try to identify and eliminate the stressor. If a job is causing stress, we can't always change jobs, but using techniques such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness can help.

She also recommends bodywork and movement, breathing techniques, biofeedback and going outdoors and into nature as effective stress relieving techniques.

Foraker notes that the Life's Essential 8 framework has specifically called out mental health and social determinants of health. These underlying factors can be barriers to achieving ideal cardiovascular health. "Mental health can impact depression and be a proxy for nicotine addiction and poor diet," she says.

Social determinants may include living

in a food desert without access to healthy foods. Some people may not be able to achieve physical fitness because they might live in a high crime area, preventing them from being physically active outdoors. "Social determinants of health are often cost prohibitive to achieving health goals," Foraker reiterates.

Nationwide, nonprofits such as The Food Trust are helping to bring nutritious food to low-income communities. The National Youth Sports Strategy, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, strives to expand children's participation in youth sports and encourage regular physical activity.

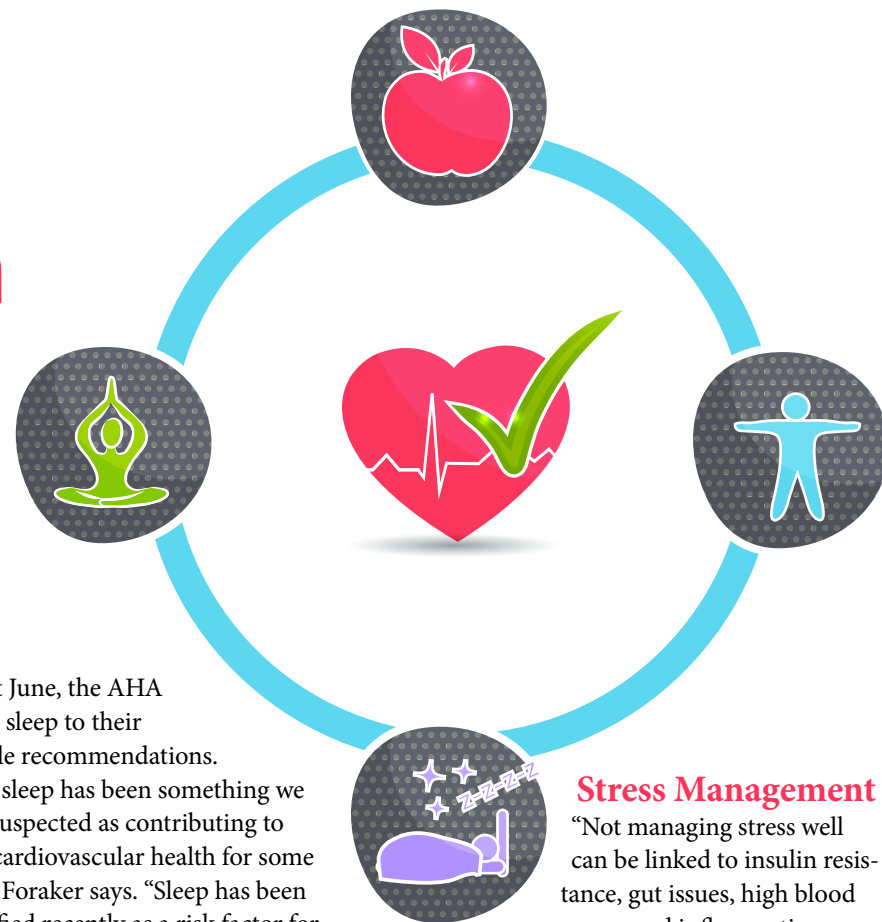
Looking Beyond Cholesterol

Nussbaum observes that while much


attention is placed on lowering fat and cholesterol for a healthier heart, what is more important is choosing fats that don't oxidize easily. When low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is oxidized, it can lead to atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque on the artery walls.

"Seed oils like canola oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil or corn oil have been promoted as heart healthy, but they are very easily oxidized because they contain linoleic acid, an inflammatory omega-6 fatty acid that can contribute to heart disease," Nussbaum says. "While omega-6 is an essential fatty acid, we only need a small amount in our diets. Our modern diet has become very high in omega-6."

Nussbaum advises increasing omega-3 intake to balance the omega-3s/omega-6



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ratio. Cold water, fatty fish that's low in mercury, such as salmon, along with shellfish, are good sources of omega-3s. For people that don't eat seafood, marine algae provide omega-3s.

Polyphenols are plant-based foods—that boost heart health and immunity. Polyphenol-rich foods include green tea, citrus fruits, hibiscus tea and turmeric. Nussbaum adds that organ meats such as liver are high in antioxidants such as retinol and vitamin A.

Red meat has gotten a bad rap, but Nussbaum notes how meat is sourced makes a difference. The nutritional quality of a fast-food burger is much different than a cut of beef from grassfed cows that are sustainably raised; the latter having a very different nutrition profile, along with omega-3s.

Nussbaum cautions that consuming a low-fat diet may not lower risk of heart disease because many low-fat diets substitute fat with carbohydrates. A high-carbohydrate diet can lead to obesity and insulin resistance, which are risk factors for heart disease.

Exercise: Less Can Be More

It can be intimidating to start a workout regimen, especially if time is limited. "What's more important is not being sedentary and finding ways to keep moving," Nussbaum reassures. "Even if you have desk job, there are ways to incorporate short bursts of movement into your day. Walking can be helpful."

She adds that high-intensity interval training—short bursts of intense exercise alternated with low-intensity recovery periods—can be effective for those with limited time. "Some of those workouts are only five to 10 minutes long but can have just as much benefit as a 90-minute cardiovascular workout."



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The American Heart Association confirms that practicing mindfulness and meditation may help manage stress and high blood pressure, improve sleep and help us feel more balanced and connected, which can help lower the risk of heart disease.

Meditation can be as simple as sitting quietly in a calm place and focusing on breath. Other types include relaxation, Zen, transcendental and mantra, mindfulness-based stress reduction.

For more information, visit Tinyurl.com/55nuk9dm.

Screenings and Advanced Testing Detect Underlying Issues

Dr. Yale (Yoel) R. Smith is a Melbourne, Florida-based physician who is triple board-certified and an Advanced Fellow in Anti-Aging Metabolic and Functional Medicine. "There are millions of people walking around with severe cardiac disease that do not even know it, because heart attacks and death from an acute coronary syndrome (ACS) can kill someone without warning," he cautions. "Thus, preventing such an event with specialized testing can allow people to live long lives with loved ones."

Smith emphasizes the importance of a complete lipid profile. "I see many patients that come to me with incomplete lipid profiles," he notes. They do not include sensitive biomarkers that go beyond just total cholesterol, LDL, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and triglycerides.

There's a misconception that if one's cholesterol is within normal range, they need not worry about heart disease. "But someone could have 'unstable plaque' just waiting to burst in a coronary artery that kills the patient," Smith explains. "When an unstable plaque ruptures in a major vessel,

the body senses it as bleeding and sends clotting factors to stop the bleeding, thus creating the heart attack and death. We can look for this with cutting-edge testing."

Such testing includes Cleerly, which uses artificial intelligence to look within the coronary arteries. It provides actual visualization of the patients' vessels and pinpoints locations of stenotic lesions, total plaque volume and unstable plaque locations. "This is revolutionary and allows me to provide information to the patient and the interventional cardiologist vital information before catheterization," Smith says.

The Protein Unstable Lesion Signature

test looks for cellular markers for high-risk patients and determines risk for plaque rupture. The Vibrant Health CardiaX allows doctors to look at 22 different genes that can contribute to various heart disease issues.

"Family history is a look into the future of your chance of developing heart diseases," Smith shares. "The genetics of a patient's family is quite important, and genes can jump a generation. Thus, the patient could have their grandfather's or grandmother's genes that can put them at risk and lead to an early death."

There are natural ways to control and reverse heart disease, Smith reiterates, but he

cautions against over-the-counter, unregulated supplements marketed toward improving heart health. A comprehensive workup and cardiovascular health plan should be monitored by a qualified medical doctor.

"Meditation and massage are beneficial to lower stress," Smith concurs. "Stress and high cortisol levels create a pathway to heart disease, elevated blood pressure and other issues. Thus, anything that can lower stress and create a happy lifestyle will help with heart health." 🌱

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

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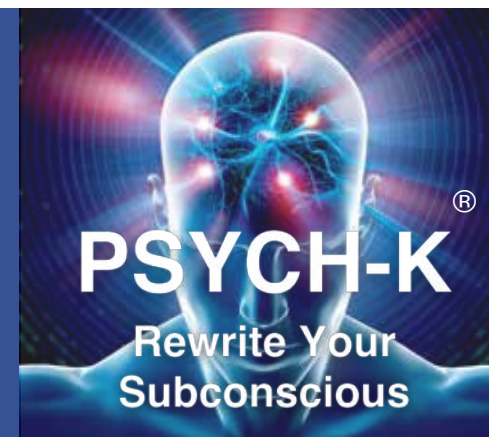
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Natural Virus Killer

Copper can stop a virus before it starts

By Doug Cornell

Scientists have discovered a natural way to kill germs fast. Now thousands of people are using it against viruses and bacteria that cause illness.

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



New research: Copper kills viruses in seconds.

Hundreds of studies confirm copper kills viruses and bacteria almost instantly just by touch.

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

"The antimicrobial activity of copper is well established." National Institutes of Health.

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

The EPA recommended hospitals use copper for touch surfaces like faucets and doorknobs. This cut the spread of MRSA and other illnesses by over half, and saved lives.

The strong scientific evidence gave inventor Doug Cornell an idea. He made a smooth copper probe

with a tip to fit in the bottom of the nostril, where viruses collect.

When he felt a tickle in his nose like a cold about to start, he rubbed the copper gently in his nose for 60

seconds.

"It worked!" he exclaimed. "The cold never happened. I used to get 2-3 bad colds every year. Now I use my

device whenever I feel a sign I am about to get sick."

He hasn't had a cold in 10 years.

Users say:

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"I can't believe how good my nose feels."

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"Sixteen flights, not a sniffle!"

"Cold sores gone!"

"It saved me last holidays. The kids all got sick, but not me."

"I am shocked! My sinus cleared, no more headache, no more congestion."

"Best sleep I've had in years!"

After his first success with it, he asked relatives and friends to try it. They all said it worked, so he patented CopperZap® and put it on the market.

Soon hundreds of people had tried it. 99% said copper worked if they used it right away at the first sign of germs, like a tickle in the nose or a scratchy throat.

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- Fever blisters**
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- Nasal drip**
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- Warts**
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- Other microbial threats**

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The EPA says copper works just as well when tarnished.

Dr. Bill Keevil led one of the science teams. He placed millions of viruses on a copper surface. "They started to die literally as soon as they touched it."

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Love in the Present Moment

MINDFULNESS FOR COUPLES

by Marlaina Donato

Jam-packed schedules and answering the demands of everyday life can trip us up and break the spell of even the most solid intimate partnership. With dulled senses, it is easy and all too common to go on autopilot. Like abandoned gardens, heart-unions can become casualties of neglect and the absence of joy.

Mindfulness—awareness and cultivation of the present moment—has been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety and depression and deepen our appreciation of what we have. Relationships can expand and strengthen when couples practice the art of being in the "now". A 2021 study involving 1,360 heterosexual couples published in the *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* indicates that gratitude and forgiveness also contribute to satisfaction, both relational and sexual.

Conscious Hearts

"Mindfulness practice comes in many forms: journaling, meditation, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, tai chi or breathwork, to name just a few. By routinely practicing mindfulness, we are able to deepen our own awareness of what we are feeling and how we want to respond to someone we care about," explains Moraya Seeger DeGeare, in-house relationship expert for Paired, an app for couples.

Maci Daye, the author of *Passion and Presence: A Couple's Guide to Awakened Intimacy and Mindful Sex* says, "Even a few minutes a day of mindfulness practice can rewire the brain, build new habits and help us dis-identify from our limiting beliefs, stories and intense emotions." This is a critical factor in transcending personal triggers and promoting conflict resolu-



tion. She emphasizes that couples often go into fight-or-flight mode because they feel threatened by their partner's non-verbal behavior or are triggered by old, painful wounds.

Daye, a licensed professional counselor and certified sex therapist, notes, "Mindful couples are less attached to being 'right' and explore their own sensitivities instead of blaming their partners." Once "awakened intimacy" is put into practice, couples become interested in each other's perspectives and team up to heal and grow. In addition to formal training, she suggests bringing presence to all aspects of life. "Couples can engage their senses when they hug, touch or hold hands," Daye explains. "They can pause to look at each other when they say hello and goodbye. They can slow down and taste their food, savoring every bite. These behaviors also make sexual experiences more sensual, intimate and connecting."

Taking a few moments for eye contact, the brush of a hand or compassionate interaction can strengthen bonds. DeGeare, who is also a couple's therapist at BFF Therapy, in Beacon, New York, recommends slowing down together to get in sync. "This could be going for a walk, cooking or listening to the same podcast and talking about it later. It helps the body tune into your partner a bit and connect. The time you spend doing this outside of the bedroom will deepen your connection in the bedroom." She suggests bringing movement like a shared dance or yoga class into the mix to foster connection, as well as setting "dedicated times to check in through the week or month, uninterrupted."

A Deeper Dive

Daily verbal exchanges beyond the mundane can amplify resonance between two people. "Asking questions is vitally important, as it cultivates curiosity—but not the day-to-day questions, such as, 'What are you doing today' or 'What do you want for dinner?'" says Debbie Lambert, co-author of *The Mindful Couple*. The Del Mar, California, couples counselor and life coach encourages people to ask, "What scares you today? What is the most important thing that you would like to create today? What was one thing that made you grateful today, and what is one thing that disappointed or frustrated you today? What is one thing I can do for you today? These types of questions scrape the surface of knowing and create intimacy and connection."

Lambert compares the practice of mindfulness to a beautiful dance—flowing, loving and creative—that can change future generations. "The energy from such a dance extends far beyond the couple," she says. "It can be felt intimately by anyone in its presence. When parents dance this dance, their children are bathed in a high-vibrating energy. They feel safe and loved. Most importantly, they learn a model for how to be in a loving relationship."

Marlaina Donato is an author, visionary painter and recording artist. Connect at WildflowerLady.com.

MINDFUL TIPS FOR DEEPER SEXUAL INTIMACY

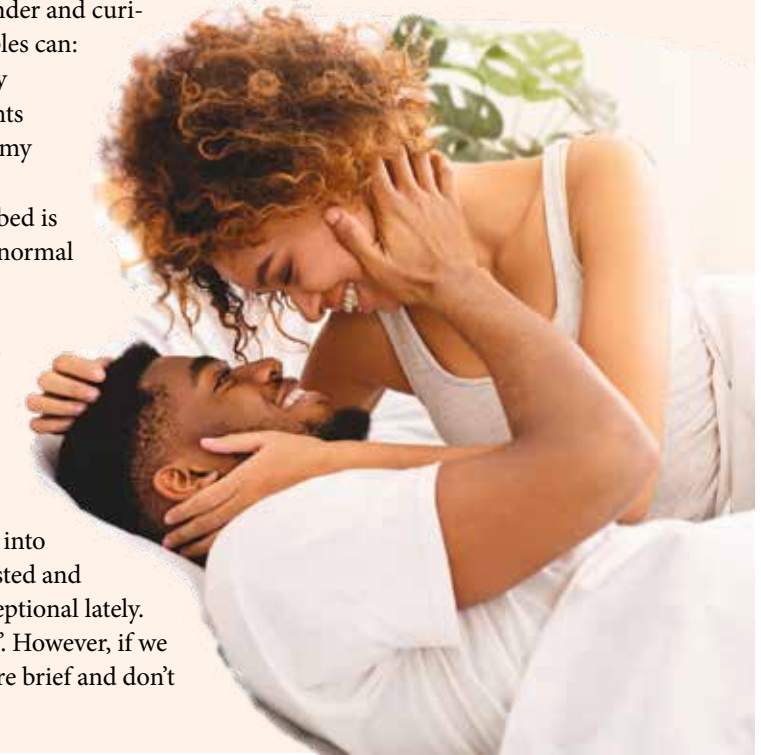
FROM DEBBIE LAMBERT

Couples get too familiar with each other over time, and the wonder and curiosity leave the bedroom. To deepen the sexual experience, couples can:

- Shift from knowing to curiosity. Ask yourself, "What does my partner need in this moment?" Be in tune with subtle movements and embrace them in the moment, versus thinking this is what my partner likes.
- They say the eyes are the windows to the soul. Eye-gazing in bed is a deeply spiritual activity that allows us to connect beyond our normal experiences with each other.
- Smile, laugh and embrace the moment with some lightness. When we smile and laugh, we are out of our heads and into our hearts. This is where we want to spend more time in general.

FROM MACI DAYE

While most couples think they must do more to experience novelty, the best sex results from simply being there and tuning into bodily sensations. Knowing this relieves couples that are exhausted and pressured by the demands of modern life, which have been exceptional lately. They may avoid sex because they fear they must "go all the way." However, if we are fully present, we can have magical, erotic experiences that are brief and don't necessarily involve the genitals.



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RHYTHMS OF THE HEART

IMPROVING MOOD WITH VAGUS NERVE TONING

by Kirby Baldwin

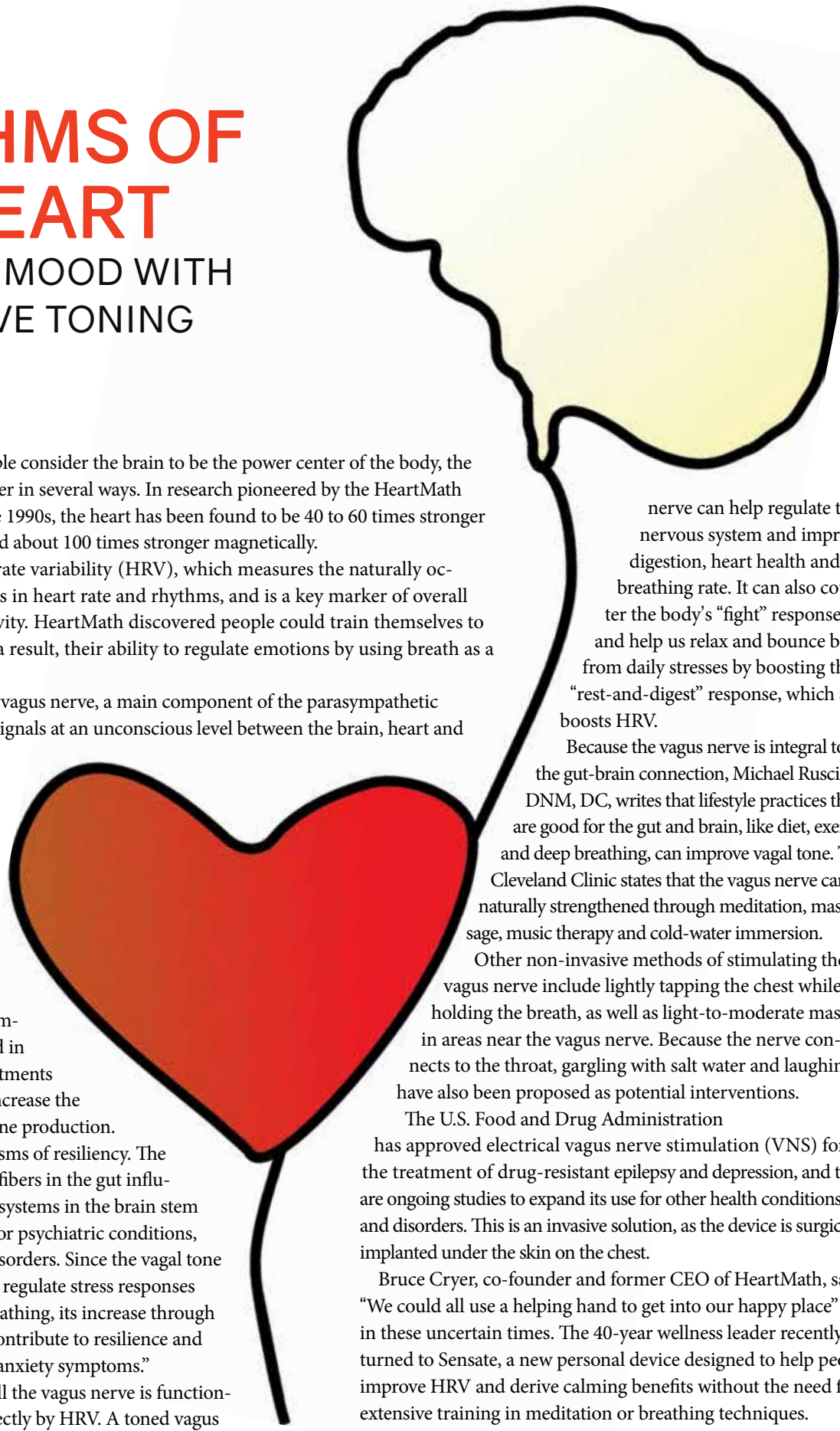
While most people consider the brain to be the power center of the body, the heart is stronger in several ways. In research pioneered by the HeartMath Institute in the 1990s, the heart has been found to be 40 to 60 times stronger than the brain electrically and about 100 times stronger magnetically.

HeartMath studies heart rate variability (HRV), which measures the naturally occurring beat-to-beat changes in heart rate and rhythms, and is a key marker of overall health, resiliency and longevity. HeartMath discovered people could train themselves to improve their HRV and, as a result, their ability to regulate emotions by using breath as a type of biofeedback.

Central to this work is the vagus nerve, a main component of the parasympathetic nervous system that carries signals at an unconscious level between the brain, heart and digestive system. Due to its many functions, particularly controlling mood, researchers have targeted the vagus nerve in treating depression, anxiety and other psychiatric disorders.

According to a 2018 study, "Vagus Nerve as Modulator of the Brain-Gut Axis in Psychiatric and Inflammatory Disorders," published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, "Treatments that target the vagus nerve increase the vagal tone and inhibit cytokine production. Both are important mechanisms of resiliency. The stimulation of vagal afferent fibers in the gut influences monoaminergic brain systems in the brain stem that play crucial roles in major psychiatric conditions, such as mood and anxiety disorders. Since the vagal tone is correlated with capacity to regulate stress responses and can be influenced by breathing, its increase through meditation and yoga likely contribute to resilience and the mitigation of mood and anxiety symptoms."

Vagal tone tells us how well the vagus nerve is functioning, and it is measured indirectly by HRV. A toned vagus



nerve can help regulate the nervous system and improve digestion, heart health and breathing rate. It can also counter the body's "fight" response and help us relax and bounce back from daily stresses by boosting the "rest-and-digest" response, which also boosts HRV.

Because the vagus nerve is integral to the gut-brain connection, Michael Ruscio, DNM, DC, writes that lifestyle practices that are good for the gut and brain, like diet, exercise and deep breathing, can improve vagal tone. The Cleveland Clinic states that the vagus nerve can be naturally strengthened through meditation, massage, music therapy and cold-water immersion.

Other non-invasive methods of stimulating the vagus nerve include lightly tapping the chest while holding the breath, as well as light-to-moderate massage in areas near the vagus nerve. Because the nerve connects to the throat, gargling with salt water and laughing have also been proposed as potential interventions.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved electrical vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) for the treatment of drug-resistant epilepsy and depression, and there are ongoing studies to expand its use for other health conditions and disorders. This is an invasive solution, as the device is surgically implanted under the skin on the chest.

Bruce Cryer, co-founder and former CEO of HeartMath, says, "We could all use a helping hand to get into our happy place" in these uncertain times. The 40-year wellness leader recently turned to Sensate, a new personal device designed to help people improve HRV and derive calming benefits without the need for extensive training in meditation or breathing techniques.

Developed by Stefan Chmelik, a physician, Sensate is a palm-sized device that is simply placed on a person's chest as it emits stress-relieving sound waves directly to the nervous system using bone conduction. Similar to the comfort a person experiences when a purring cat lies on their chest, Sensate causes the chest to resonate sound, which signals the vagus nerve to relax. When used over time, the device can train (or retrain) the vagus nerve to default to this calming state.

In a 2022 study, adults with and without anxiety and depression disorders used Sensate for an average of three and a half months, five to six days per week. After the test period, more than 70 percent of the participants reported low, mild or normal stress levels. More than 65 percent of the participants with anxiety disorder and over half of those with a depressive disorder reported an improvement in their condition.

Chmelik says, "Stress is a 'global catastrophe,' and with a chronically stressed public, there is no will or ability to address all the other issues facing us. My goal in developing Sensate was to enable people to self-regulate more efficiently. I want to create a tipping point to create a more conscious world. As more people become aware of their breath and its connection to stress, and take advantage of the powerful tools of meditation, breath and other tools like Sensate, hopefully that tipping point is reached."

Kirby Baldwin writes and edits for KnowEwell, the Regenerative Whole Health Hub and the parent company of Natural Awakenings Publishing Corp.

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THREE ATLANTA COUPLES ON RUNNING A STUDIO TOGETHER

by Diane Eaton

Launching and managing a business can be a tall order. But what if it's with your romantic life partner? And what if the business is a yoga studio? *Natural Awakenings* spoke with three Atlanta-area couples who are partners in running yoga studios to get their perspectives on the challenges and the rewards of the venture.

Marty and Marti Yura VISTA YOGA VistaYoga.com

"Yoga has been a context for living for us," says Marty Yura, E-RYT 200, who, with his wife Marti, co-owns Vista Yoga in Decatur. "It's a way for us to express ourselves, to earn a living and to touch people's lives."

Marti Yura, E-RYT 500, was a personal trainer and taught group fitness classes in corporate settings all over Atlanta for many years, but her passion for yoga grew.

She began to envision opening up her own studio—"a sacred place dedicated to yoga," as she described it—and was inspired to establish a yoga community in her area. Having an extensive business background, Marty doubted the viability of the idea at first, but after a business investment went bad, they revisited the idea.

That's when Graham Fowler, then-owner of PeachTree Yoga, and David Aukamp, owner of Springs Yoga, stepped up to help. "They were very encouraging and supportive and became mentors in a wonderful way," says Marty, a kindness he's found is not typical for yoga studios in urban areas. "And we, in turn, have done the same with those who have approached us."

Both trained in the Prajna yoga lineage, they wanted to offer practices steeped in the wisdom of yoga and the teachings of the Buddha. They opened their doors a year later, in November 2009.

The couple has a natural way of dividing up their responsibilities. "I'm the structural part of it," says Marty. He monitors the concerns of viability and profitability to "shore things up, so we stay open." Marti, on the other hand, "has a wonderful capacity to see what we might want to add or take away and how to introduce new offerings."

Their personal relationship nourishes their business partnership, they say. "We trust each other implicitly," says Marty. "It's the background of how we relate to one another." And they're cheerleaders for each other. "If either one of us senses the other is doubting, we uplift each other," says Marti.

Of course, their own yoga practice supports them as business owners. "You could say that *asana* [the yoga postures] gives us the stamina—physical stamina and mental stamina—to do the work," says Marti. "Meditation gives us the capacity to hold space for people. And the *yamas* and *niyamas* are very important, helping us keep our minds, bodies, and hearts in line with Spirit."

Their favorite times are when, after an intense week, they go out for a late dinner and talk about everything. "We love sharing with each other about seeing our students and our teachers soaring and expanding," says Marti. "It's very sweet times."



Photo: Ed Jenkins

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

300-Hour Yoga Teacher Training

8am-6pm

One Sat & Sun, Feb 25-Oct 15.
Registration for the 2023 course is officially open. Transcend your present understanding of yoga and take your career and personal practice to new heights
Peachtree Yoga Center,
6046 Sandy Springs Cir, Atlanta.
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To apply: Ilona@PeachTreeYoga.com.
PeachtreeYoga.com.

MONDAYS

Yoga with Angie – 6pm. Whether you're a beginner or intermediate yogi, we welcome you. Free. Neva Lomason Memorial Library, 710 Rome St, Carrollton. Tinyurl.com/2p9x5pn6.

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. CelesteGreeneLaughs.com.

FRIDAYS

Community Vinyasa Flow – 6pm. Pre-registration required. Donations welcome. Lift Dunwoody, 1705 Mt Vernon Rd, Ste E, Dunwoody. LiftYogaStudio.com.

SATURDAYS

Online Sunrise Yoga Meditation – 7-8am. Simple mantras, gentle asanas, pranayama and guided meditation. Love offering. Zoom. UnityNorth.org.

Yoga at Preston Ridge Community Center – 9am. Grab your mat and join our amazing instructors for a complimentary class. 3655 PrestonRidge Rd, Ste 100, Alpharetta. LiftYogaStudio.com.

Zen Sound Bath – 11:30am-1pm. 3rd Sat. With GabrielNelson 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.

Yoga means addition –
addition of energy, strength and
beauty to body, mind and soul.

~Amit Ray

LeNaya and Branden Crawford
SEVIIN YOGA
SeviinYoga.com

Early in their relationship, Branden and LeNaya Crawford recognized in each other a drive to become entrepreneurs—and they both loved yoga. So once LeNaya received her yoga teacher certification, the gears started turning. They noticed that none of the studios in the area seemed to have “the experience and vibe” that felt true to them, and they figured the same was probably true for others, too. In 2018, they opened Seviin Yoga in Atlanta.

But, as self-described “serial entrepreneurs,” Seviin wasn’t their first business venture. The two have also been running a private therapy practice for eight years, and Branden owns a landscaping company as well. “We’re multi-passionate,” says LeNaya, a licensed therapist and E-RYT 500 certified yoga teacher.

It’s clear that their relationship has been the glue as well the driving force behind their success. “We’re both entrepreneur-minded, and we have a really great



friendship,” says LeNaya. “It’s one of the things that really makes working together unique and working together work.”

That friendship is critical to getting through the challenges of the day, but they admit they have to be mindful and careful not to make everything about business. “At the end of the day, we know we have each other’s best interests at heart. And we like each other.”

To stay on an even keel, they love to do

breathwork together; they’re big fans of sound healing and sound baths. As for the business, they each have their own roles and understand them. Whereas LeNaya manages the studio and operations, Branden focuses on marketing and development.

Of course, the practice of yoga helps them through the challenges of life and of running a business. Yoga “helps us stay grounded and reminds us of the present moment. When our thoughts are racing, or we’re anxious or rushed, it’s great to spend time in the studio or at home and get grounded, get clarity and move through it,” says LeNaya. “We also love to do breathwork together.”

“I think the best part of owning a studio together is to create something authentic,” she says. “To see people really get it and resonate with our authentic vision is my favorite part.”

Branden loves the way they get to create community. “That’s the glorious part of entrepreneurship,” he says. “You’re able to just kind of call people in. I think that’s a gift for us.”



Photo: Handerson Gomes

John and Karina Carmichael
GIVING TREE YOGA + WELLNESS
YogaSmyrna.com

John and Karina Carmichael had very different professional backgrounds before they purchased Giving Tree Yoga + Wellness in December 2022. They originally met in Scotland 25 years ago, but after going their separate ways over the years, they reconnected on Facebook in 2019. “It’s been a crazy nonstop whirlwind—from getting married, moving to Atlanta and now buying a yoga studio,” says Karina. “But fate brought us back around.”

Karina, an E-RYT 500 certified yoga teacher, had owned a yoga studio in Scotland for more than 20 years before coming to the U.S. When COVID struck in 2020, she was forced to pivot to an online business, which turned out to be to everyone’s advantage in the long run. Her Scottish students were able to continue working with her online, and many of them continue to this day.

When Karina came to Atlanta, she wanted to find a studio that suited her, and there was something about Giving Tree Yoga in Smyrna that spoke to her. She and John loved the area, too, and were happy to find a new community. So, when the studio owner announced several months later that she was selling, the couple jumped in to purchase it. They saw that it was a healthy, well-run business with 15 teachers and many class offerings, and it felt right to them.

The two have clearly defined roles in the business together. John is a partner in a construction company, which has given

him expertise in outreach and operations. “Because John has a full-time job, he can reach people I wouldn’t be able to reach. He helps spread the word,” says Karina.

And the fact that they have different backgrounds seems to eliminate some potential conflicts. Similar to the Crawfords and the Yuras, trust is at the heart of their work together.

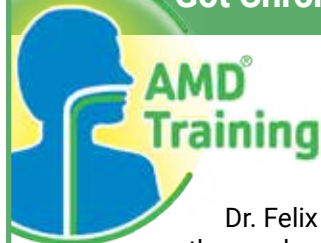
As the behind-the-scenes support guy, John has found the practice’s software to be a challenge. Their company inherited a database with 3,700 names in it, and much

of the data was out of date or not useful. “I call it a spider web because every time you find a thread, it goes deeper and gets more complex,” he says. “There have been tears,” admits Karina.

John started practicing yoga just three years ago, but he’s noticed profound improvements in his health, weight and flexibility. Karina relies on yoga to help her through the challenges of the day. “I call yoga my ‘toolbox,’” she says, “and I ask myself, ‘What do I need from my yoga toolbox today?’” 🧘

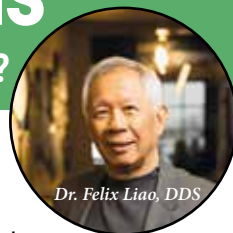
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WISE WORDS

BRUCE CRYER on
His Love Affair With the Heart

by Kirby Baldwin

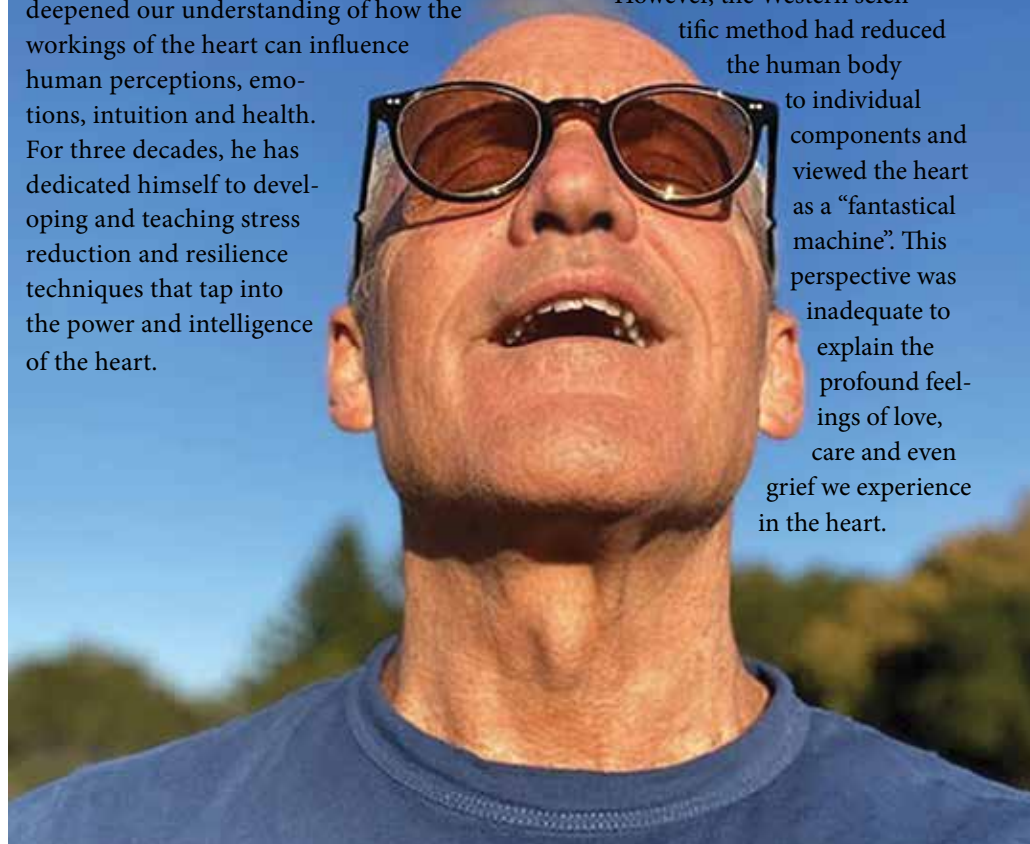
Bruce Cryer has been called a Renaissance man because of a varied, four-decade career as a singer, actor, dancer, publisher, author, marketing executive, teacher and coach. In New York City, he played The Boy for 800 performances in the world's longest running musical, *The Fantasticks*. He co-authored the book, *From Chaos to Coherence: The Power to Change Performance*, was lead writer of the *Harvard Business Review* article titled "Pull the Plug on Stress" and taught at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Cryer was part of the original leadership team and former CEO of the HeartMath Institute, which has scientifically studied heart-brain communications and deepened our understanding of how the workings of the heart can influence human perceptions, emotions, intuition and health. For three decades, he has dedicated himself to developing and teaching stress reduction and resilience techniques that tap into the power and intelligence of the heart.

As one of the leaders of HeartMath, what did you hope to achieve?

Part of what motivated me to join the original HeartMath team was the notion that the heart is much more than a pump. The values we associate with the heart—courage, wisdom, love, compassion—were being viewed as completely separate from the physical heart. Before founding HeartMath, Doc Childre discovered that anything he did in life that succeeded—a job, a diet, an exercise program, a relationship—worked better if he "put his heart into it". Childre also realized that every major religion, culture and civilization revered the heart throughout history.

However, the Western scientific method had reduced the human body to individual components and viewed the heart as a "fantastical machine". This perspective was inadequate to explain the profound feelings of love, care and even grief we experience in the heart.



How has HeartMath evolved through the years?

The core message of HeartMath has always been this: Human beings have a remarkably well-integrated system with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions. The heart's intelligence helps to coordinate all these aspects. The phrase "follow your heart" has actual scientific meaning.

HeartMath's work has been validated through more than 400 peer-reviewed studies. When we started in the early 1990s, we were a research, education and training organization. Our discoveries using heart-rate variability proved to a mainstream, scientific audience that individuals can regulate their hearts, minds and emotions to produce profound changes in health, well-being, brain function and performance.

How can HeartMath positively impact people's lives?

HeartMath is a beautiful and simple system that allows people to adapt to life's relentless change and uncertainty and find balance. The brain directly benefits from the heart's balancing capacity, which then facilitates expression, communication, listening, reaction times, coordination and emotional strength.

Having survived two life-threatening conditions and then rediscovering many sources of creative expression in myself, I've learned that our capacity to keep growing and learning is one of the greatest gifts of being human. Research is now confirming that the more we stay active, interested and curious in life, the more we continue to create a flexible, youthful brain. A childlike spirit of delight and wonder is something we can tap into our entire lives.

How do you practice HeartMath in your own life?

I use heart-focused breathing many times each day. The idea is to inhale for about five seconds and then exhale for about five seconds while keeping your focus in the area of the heart. This 10-second cycle is the optimal pace allowing our systems to find balance and coherence. Sometimes I sit and radiate love to someone I care about or a situation in trouble. Heart-focused breathing has been an integral part of my life for 30 years. I do this not only to maximize my own health physically, mentally and emotionally, but also to connect with humanity as one family, one heart.

Why do you encourage people to develop heart-focused coherence?

The heart is a key center of intelligence for our human system. The practice of breathing and focusing our attention on the heart is the first step to bring the heart and brain into coherent alignment. As we breathe in qualities we value—kindness, compassion, love—and then exhale worries, tension, anxiety or fear, a surprising power is unleashed. More than 30 years ago, I dedicated my life to this path of the heart. It's an incredible journey. 🌱

Kirby Baldwin writes and edits for KnowEwell, the Regenerative Whole Health Hub and the parent company of Natural Awakenings Publishing Corp.

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Remote Reiki Healing – 3-3:48pm. Jamie will invite Dr. Usui to come in with a supportive reiki team and work on physical, mental and emotional healing. The healing itself will take place for 33 mins and there will be a 15-min discussion and sharing afterward. Donation based. Register: JamieButlerMedium.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

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/2n5p4744.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Screening of Sacred Waters: The Okfenokee in Peril – 4pm. A free screening of the award-winning film. A brief roundtable discussion featuring leadership from the Okfenokee Protection Alliance and others will happen directly after the 30-min documentary. Tybee Post Theater, 10 Van Horne Ave, Tybee Island. GeorgiaConservancy.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Popsicles in the Park – 5-6:30pm. Coan Park Recreation Center, 1530 Woodbine Ave SE, Atlanta. ParkPride.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Sacred Chants – 6:30-8pm. Open to those who are familiar with Sanskrit chanting as well as beginners who want to familiarize themselves with the pronunciation, meter and melody of Sanskrit chants and want to know more about the meaning behind the words. Decatur Healing Arts, 619B E College Ave, Decatur. DecaturHealingArts.com.

Editor's Choice **Winter Family Night Hike** – 7-9pm. Listen for the sounds of winter in the woods and gaze up at the stars, while enjoying the crisp air of the season. \$12/nonmember, \$10/member. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Bird Walk with the Georgia Audubon Society – 8-10am. Look for resident and migratory birds of the river and forest. Free/member; nonmember: \$15/adult, \$11/senior, student, \$9/children, free/ages 2 & under. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Healing Circle – 5-7pm. With David Stample. Are you interested in healing for yourself and others. Join us for our healing circle, where we'll discuss and share different healing modalities amongst like-minded people. Will also practice grounding, mediation techniques and divination tools. Free.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Japanese Tea Journeys – 2-4pm. With Western Immortal Tea. Experience the wonderful world of teas that can only be described as "distinctly Japanese." Explore this rich tea culture, its history, and all of its major teas. Will also demo a traditional preparation of matcha, most famously prepared in the tea ceremony. Sample several Japanese teas. \$5.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

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

Editor's Choice **Lovebirds 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.

Twin Hearts Meditation and Pranic Healing Clinic – 5:30-7pm. We will join together to bless the earth with healing. Following this 21-min meditation, The Light Healer's Circle provide Mini-Pranic Healing Sessions for each attendee. \$10 donation. The Well of Roswell, 900 Old Roswell Lakes Pkwy, Ste 300, Roswell. 770-778-2051. TheWellOfRoswell.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Editor's Choice **Follow Your Heart: The Functional Approach to Heart Health** – 1:30-2pm. February is American Heart Health Month, so join CentreSpringMD's Dr. Stephanie Grossman to learn all about the functional approach to heart health. Free. Virtual. More info & to register: Tinyurl.com/5cfakvvnv.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Tai Chi Workshop – 10-11am. With Master Florin Szondi. Learn the basics and learn more about what our Tai Chi March series has to offer. \$20. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. Registration required: DunwoodyNature.org.

74th Annual Camellia Show – Feb 18-19. 1-5pm, Sat; 10am-5pm, Sun. Experience "the rose of winter" with dozens of cut specimens. Included with Garden Admission. Atlanta Botanical Garden, 1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta. AtlantaBG.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Editor's Choice **Wildlife Baby Shower** – 10am-3pm. Learn all about CNC's efforts to help injured wildlife as we celebrate a wildlife baby shower. Free/member; nonmember: \$15/adult, \$11/senior, student, \$9/children, free/ages 2 & under. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. ChattNatureCenter.org.

ONGOING

Sundays

A Course in Miracles: Practicing the Presence – 8:45-10:30am. This virtual weekly study group aims at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. Facilitator: Michael Wilkinson. An open and ongoing class. All welcome. Drop-in any time. New people are very welcome to join. Via Zoom. Unity Atlanta Church: 770-441-0585. Register: MWilkinson@leadstrat.com. UnityAtl.org.

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. Medita-

tion 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/yjzutf4.

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, 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.

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7:30-9pm. With Resident Teacher, Gen Kelsang Norden. Talks, guided meditation, discussion and Q&A. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Tuesdays

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

Twin Hearts Meditation – 7-8:30pm. A short, guided meditation blessing the Earth with loving kindness, peace and good will. Dona-

tion. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Unit A, Atlanta. 404-417-0008. Meetup.com/Twin-Hearts-Meditation.

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.

30-Minute Guided Meditation – 12:15pm. 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.

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.

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 Dowzers** – 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.

Prayers for World Peace – 6:30-7:15pm. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching and chanted prayers for world peace. No experience necessary. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.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.

Morningside Farmers Market – 8-11:30am. Year-round. Offers organic produce, bread, pastries, grains, meat, honey, along with chef pop-ups, prepared foods, coffee, in-season fruits, and locally produced crafts. Morningside Presbyterian, 1411 N Morningside Dr NE, Atlanta. MorningsideMarket.com.

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.

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/2rykarff.

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Lessons From My Younger Self

by Linda Minnick



The house I lived in as a child sat at the end of the street and had a good-sized backyard that extended into a city park. For my 10 siblings and me, the line between our yard and the park blurred, and we claimed that adjacent part of the park as our own. It felt like our kingdom, and at least one of us occupied it every day.

I spent a lot of time in that park. I'd ride my imaginary horse in circles, roll down the hill with my brothers or sisters, play on the swing set, lose my shoes in the sandbox or just sit braiding clover flowers together into a crown that I'd later wear as I watched over my realm.

Or I'd spend hours conversing with my invisible friend about that mysterious place we called "the future."

I've often thought of that little girl as I've matured through the years, either longing for her innocence or chastising her for her naiveté. Now, I simply admire her for her wisdom.

Many of my memories from those early years have faded, while some are still strong. I remember feeling safe and secure. I remember knowing my "friend" was always with me, so I was never alone, even if nobody else was around. And while I was curious about the future, I never feared it. I knew I was loved unconditionally, and I knew that everything was perfect just the way it was.

Unfortunately, after eventually leaving that home and the park, I temporarily forgot the life lessons I had learned and started ignoring the little voice inside me. Like many of us, I allowed my programming, other people, and situations to influence my beliefs and actions. I allowed myself to be brainwashed with the beliefs that life is hard, that I didn't have what I needed to be successful and that I always needed to strive for more. Of course, those beliefs manifested themselves into a life I considered complicated and lacking.

In the 1976 movie *Network*, the character Howard Beale reaches a frustration level so intense he screams, "I am mad as hell, and I am not going to take this anymore!" He then proceeds to throw a TV out of a window. The scene always comes to my mind when I think of the day I woke up and said, "Enough is enough." (But I didn't throw any televisions around!)

I had not been living a bad life. I had just reached a point where I had everything I was supposed to have, yet I wasn't happy. I had a wonderful husband and family, a beautiful home and a very successful six-figure job. But I felt empty.

I was looking around to find something to blame for the emptiness I felt inside when I realized I was just not living my life, at least not to the fullest. I spent more time following the external voices telling me what my life should look like than the inner voice that knew what my life should be.

From then on, I decided to start listening to and trusting my invisible voice, Spirit. It was a decision to embrace the lessons I learned as a little girl.

By following those lessons, I now live a life I know would make her proud. I accept that I am loved unconditionally, everything is perfect in its own right, I am never alone, and I should never fear the future. I wake up every day knowing that each day brings a new opportunity. I choose to bring my best to whatever I do, and I try to do it with love.

My days are no longer complicated and lacking. I am now grateful for each day, no matter what it brings. I look forward to tomorrow because I know it will be a new adventure.

And for this, I give thanks. 🙏



Linda Minnick is a speaker, author, life coach and Preferred PSYCH-K® facilitator. She lives in Roswell with her husband, John. Her most recent book, *New Day, New Life can be found on Amazon.*

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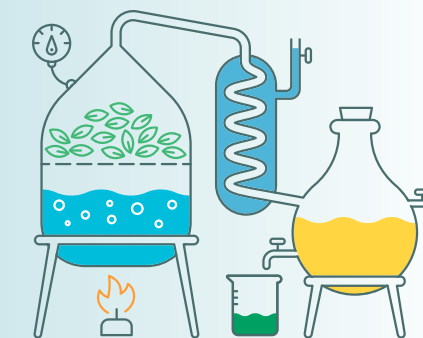


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