

Natural Living Journal

Well-being for Body, Emotions, Mind, & Spirit

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WHERE SIMPLE INGREDIENTS BECOME FLAVOR

By Jamie Dickerhoof, CNC, CCMH

A slow cooker has earned a reputation for convenience -- open a can, dump in a packet, turn it on, and walk away. But simple, natural cooking doesn't need condensed soups or frozen dinners with ingredient lists longer than a paragraph. Real food, built from carrots, onions, celery, herbs, and olive oil, can create flavor that no powder or packet can replicate.

Flavor begins with foundation. Across traditional cuisines, a simple trio quietly does the heavy lifting: carrot, onion, and celery. When chopped and cooked slowly, they release natural sweetness, savory depth, and subtle brightness. Carrot softens into gentle sweetness. Onion builds body. Celery adds a fresh, mineral edge. Together, they form a base so satisfying that you don't need processed shortcuts.

Both dishes here rely on thyme to carry that foundation forward. Earthy but not heavy, thyme holds up beautifully to slow cooking and slowly infuses everything around it with steady, herbal depth. Whether fresh or dried, it brings a quiet structure that complements both beans and chicken. With one bunch of celery, a bag of carrots, and a few onions, you can build more than one meal. Nothing wasted, and the starting point for countless others.

Savory White Beans & Thyme

This is a Mediterranean-inspired vegetarian slow cooker meal. This hearty dish stands on its own, rich with olive oil and herbs rather than cream or processed sauces. Start with a generous, roughly even mix of chopped carrot, onion, and celery (about one cup of each). Add to the slow cooker with a good drizzle of olive oil, 2-3 cloves minced garlic, 3-4 sprigs fresh thyme or about ½ teaspoon dried. Stir in two cans of drained and rinsed cannellini beans, season with salt and pepper, and pour in enough vegetable broth to just barely cover everything. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 hours or HIGH for 3-4 hours, until the vegetables have softened and begun to melt into the beans. The mixture should be thick and spoon able, not soupy. Finish with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, a little zest if



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you're feeling adventurous, and another drizzle of olive oil. Adjust salt/pepper to taste. Serve with warm bread or over simple grains for a satisfying vegetarian meal built entirely from whole ingredients.

Spring Braised Chicken & Kale

This lighter dish uses the same foundational vegetables with a gentler touch, perfect for spring. Scatter chopped onion and carrot across the bottom of the (lightly greased) slow cooker (about one cup each). Instead of adding chunks of celery, tuck in 2-3 leafy celery stalks, leaves and all, to flavor the broth as it cooks. Place 4-6 bone-in skinless chicken thighs or 2 skinless breasts on top. Season with salt and pepper. Add 2-3 sprigs fresh thyme or about ½ teaspoon dried, plus a bay leaf if you have one. Pour in 1-2 cups chicken broth — just enough for a gentle braise rather than a soup. Cook on LOW for 5-6 hours or HIGH for 3-4 hours, until the chicken is tender. About 30 minutes before serving, remove and discard the celery stalks and stir in a few handfuls of chopped kale, cover. Let it soften while keeping its vibrant color. Finish with lemon zest, a squeeze of juice, and a drizzle of olive oil. Adjust salt/pepper to taste. Spoon over mashed potatoes or serve with crusty bread to soak up the broth. It is gentle, bright, and deeply satisfying. When simple ingredients are given time, they become more than the sum of their parts. A carrot, an onion, a stalk of celery, a sprig of thyme — these are not humble ingredients. They are the quiet architecture of real flavor.

BIO: Jamie Dickerhoof helps people who feel stuck, stressed, or unwell finally understand what their body is communicating so they can heal and feel like themselves again. She is a Mastery-Level B.E.S.T. practitioner, Master Herbalist (CCMH), Certified Nutritionist Consultant (CNC), and creator of the Human Soundcheck method. Learn more at <https://humansoundcheck.com>

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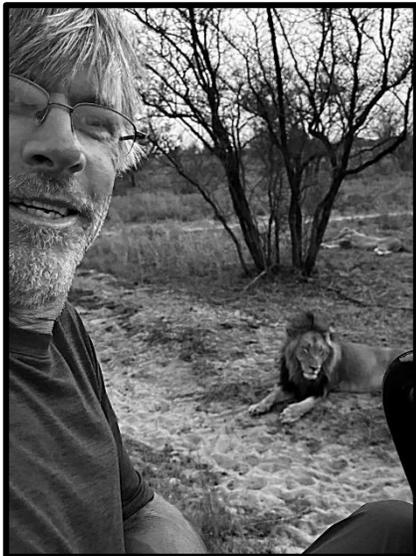
OUR AWESOME AFRICAN SAFARI

By Bruce A. Weston, Naturalist, Engineer

Last autumn my wife Kim and I and two other couples took a 16-day self-planned African safari trip full of wonder, awe and discovery. This included four days of safari in the African "Bush" of Sabi Sands Nature Reserve. We were in open air customized 4x4 vehicles where we saw many predators and huge animals in their habitat. After that we experienced eight days in other amazing areas.

By the second day of our "Bush" Safari we'd seen all of the big five (lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo). The Reserve does a great job of protecting predators with extremely robust fences and officers on constant patrol looking for poachers. The safari guides have conditioned the wildlife at Sabi Sands through repeated non-threatening encounters with vehicles full of tourists. If the animals walk away, the guides just let them go. Tourists are instructed to not stand up or make any sudden moves or loud noises. Each vehicle had a guide driving and a tracker who sat on a seat mounted over the 4x4's front hood.

Our first predator encounter was a lazy leopard napping in a dry creek bed. Our rush and excitement was opposite the leopard's reaction. She acted as if she was bored with us and tried to go back to sleep. We saw another leopard hauling an impala antelope up into a tree and eating (crunching impala bones) while a hyena menacingly waited below for scraps. We saw single lions and lion couples. There were couples mating just feet away, they do it every 12-15 minutes over about 2-3 days. We saw a group (pride) of four lionesses and another group (coalition) of four male lions, all while we were in the open-air vehicle within fifteen feet of them. But they weren't interested in us, they gave us a great big yawn. The elephants are very destructive eaters with large groups downing trees and bushes with ease and eating 12-18 hours a day. You clearly see where they've been. We saw a very large female elephant jab a young male elephant with her



tusk. They eventually drive the young male elephants out of their pack in their matriarchal society.

We saw many species of antelope (there are over thirty) from the small impalas that were everywhere to much larger kudus. The baboons were kind



of frightening, they did not ignore you. Our guide told us *that all the animals in the preserve could outrun us if they were not conditioned to ignore humans.* He said, "Elsewhere if a predator were to chase you, don't try to outrun any of them, you can't - - so you shouldn't try - - you stand your ground. But if you 'gotta run,' run zigzags because animals here are really big." We let the rhinoceroses and hippos keep their distance.

We were blessed to see a pack of painted dogs with about six young pups because there are only 3000ish remaining in the wild because farmers have hunted them to near extinction. They are the most efficient hunters in the bush and have a 90% kill success rate because of their superpower which is their endurance. But the painted dogs often have to concede their kill to other predators that would rather steal a meal. We saw a hyena dragging a carcass (stolen from the dogs) to its burrow where up to thirty will live in a network of burrow tunnels underground.



The next phase of our trip was to Victoria Falls which is on the Zambezi River between

Zimbabwe and Zambia. Zebra co-mingled with wildebeest in large herds with other grazers on the savanna style safari up here. It was a treat seeing a group of about fifteen elephants taking mud baths in a big mud hole, rolling in it and throwing it all over themselves with their trunks. It looked fun. We saw an abundance of hippopotamuses and several crocodiles on our Zambezi River safari. Later in town our driver had to stop abruptly for an elephant to casually cross the road. Also, we also saw a baboon family and warthogs casually walking around town. We rented mountain bikes to tour the town. The Victoria Falls waterfall is over a mile long and falls 230 to 360 feet. It kicks up such a spray that there is a rain forest at the falls that has many amazingly bright beautiful birds. We took a fifteen-minute helicopter ride over the falls and the deep gorges snaking back and forth below the falls. Wow! It was an awesome vacation, but we're probably not going back. There are too many other places to see. I hope you get there, though. It is special and the people are beautiful - - but be careful.

BIO: Bruce is a retired Professional Engineer who enjoys golf, biking, and growing mango and tropical fruit trees using natural farming in his Florida backyard.

PHOTOS: All photos were taken by Bruce and his wife Kim on their exciting trip to Africa.



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See shadows of travelers taking photos of elephants



Female lion yawning, tired after sex



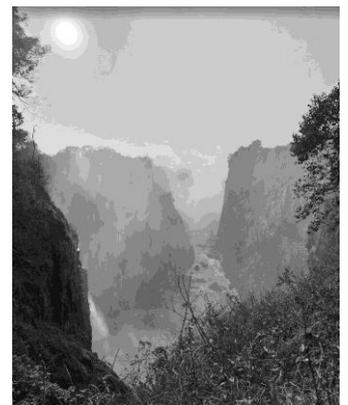
This was an amazing safari trip Bruce and Kim took. Truly up close with the animals in their natural habitat - - no fences separating. All set to go?



Elephants in Mud Bath to regulate body temperature, protect skin from sun, and repel insects.



Bruce's wife Kim in open vehicle very close to lion.



Victoria Falls in Africa

MAKE THE MOST OF YOURSELF

Kimberly LaFollette, Psy.D.

I recently attended a continuing education event led by Dr. Tammy Hatfield on the topic of Ethical Self-Care. As a psychologist and educator, I often speak about the importance of self-care. I've even written articles in this journal encouraging you to take care of yourself. In my previous teachings and writing, the message has typically been that caring for yourself allows you to better care for those around you. While that idea isn't wrong, Dr. Hatfield's presentation shifted my perspective. Self-care should not be viewed only as a way to improve our ability to help others. It's also about becoming the fullest version of yourself.

needs matter—not just because they help me support others, but because they help me grow into who I am meant to be. We each have gifts, interests, and possibilities within us, and nurturing them isn't selfish — it's essential. Self-care gives us the space to develop our talents, embrace our strengths, and fully experience this one life



we have. While living this human experience, we should take every opportunity to grow into ourselves.

Of course, *how* we do that can be

the complicated part. True self-care isn't simply massages or manicures. It's intentional, thoughtful time devoted solely to oneself — doing whatever brings joy, sparks curiosity, or awakens our interest.



Often, we spend so much time serving others that we lose touch with what truly inspires us. Reconnecting with who we are and what brings us joy may require stillness and quiet reflection — something that can feel hard to find in our busy lives. Yet caring for and nurturing ourselves is the only way to become the best version of ourselves and make the most of this human experience.

If you're interested in building more intentional self-care into your life, here are three small steps to begin:

- **Make the time:** Set aside at least 10 minutes per day for quiet reflection.
- **Listen inwardly:** Notice what genuinely ignites your mind, body, and spirit — and give yourself permission to pursue it.
- **Act on what matters:** Follow through with your passion. Spend time doing what helps you become the most fully realized version of yourself. This will mean setting limits with others who want your time and energy, but it's worth it!

Taking time for yourself isn't just about rest. It's about growth, meaning, and becoming who you were meant to be.

BIO: Kimberly LaFollette, PsyD. is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Certified Integrative Mental Health Professional. You can find out more about Dr. LaFollette and her practice by visiting her website kimberlylafollette.com , 502-541-1289.

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EAT TO LIVE, NOT LIVE TO EAT ***Christi L. Murphy, LMT, CLT, Reiki Master***

Inflammation is not inherently bad. In its acute form, it is a protective biological response—our immune system rushing in to heal injury or fight infection. The problem arises when inflammation becomes chronic. Long-term, low-grade inflammation is now linked to many modern conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, autoimmune disorders, cognitive decline, and even depression. One of the most powerful drivers of this chronic inflammation is not genetics or age, but daily choices around food and drink.

In much of modern culture, food has drifted from its original role. Eating has become entertainment, comfort, reward, stress relief, social currency, and identity. We eat because we are bored, emotional, rushed, or overstimulated—not because our bodies are asking for nourishment. This shift matters because the body interprets food chemically, not emotionally. Every bite either supports balance or provokes stress at the cellular level.

Highly processed foods are among the strongest contributors to inflammation. Refined sugars, white flour, industrial seed oils, artificial additives, and ultra-processed snacks spike blood sugar, disrupt gut bacteria, and increase inflammatory markers. These foods are engineered for pleasure and convenience, not nourishment. When consumed frequently, they send repeated signals of metabolic distress, forcing the body into a constant state of immune activation.

Drinks play a similar role and are often overlooked. Sugary beverages, sweetened coffees, energy drinks, and excessive alcohol all contribute to inflammation. Liquid sugar is absorbed rapidly, causing sharp insulin spikes and oxidative stress. Alcohol, even in moderate amounts for some individuals, can irritate the gut lining and burden the liver, increasing systemic inflammation. Hydration itself is not neutral—what we drink matters as much as what we eat.

In contrast, whole foods tend to calm inflammation rather than provoke it. Vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, seeds, high-quality proteins, and healthy fats like olive oil provide antioxidants, fiber, and micronutrients that help regulate immune responses. Omega-3 fatty acids from fish, herbs and spices like turmeric and ginger, and fermented foods that support gut health all play a role in reducing inflammatory load. These foods are not flashy. They are not designed to entertain. They are designed to sustain life.



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This is where the phrase “eat to live, not live to eat” becomes more than a moral slogan—it becomes a biological truth. Eating for nourishment means asking a different set of questions: Does this food support stable energy? Does it help my body repair?

Does it reduce strain or add to it? Pleasure does not need to be eliminated, but it must stop being the primary goal. When entertainment leads, inflammation often follows.

Reframing food as functional rather than recreational can feel radical in a culture built around indulgence, yet this shift does not require perfection or deprivation. It requires intention. Eating slower. Choosing simpler foods more often. Viewing meals as acts of maintenance rather than events. Over time, the body responds with clearer signals: steadier energy, improved digestion, reduced pain, and fewer inflammatory flare-ups.

Food and drink are among the most frequent signals we send to our immune system. When we remember their primary purpose—to nourish, fuel, and sustain life—we give the body a chance to stand down from constant defense. In doing so, we move closer to balance, resilience, and true health

BIO: Dedicated to guiding women on their journey to find balance and well-being of the body, mind and spirit through bodywork, energy healing, mindfulness practices, and intuitive card readings. Christi has a Bachelors of Science in Natural Health, is a Reiki practitioner/instructor, meditation instructor, massage therapist, and spiritual coach. She works with oncology patients at Norton Healthcare and has a private practice.

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TRUE INNER PEACE

Rev. Gerry Boylan, PhD.

Most of the time we perceive peacefulness as the absence of conflict. That makes sense, but in a limited way because we also know it must be more than this. You do understand that the reason why you would define peace as being the absence of conflict is because there continues to be so much conflict or so much separateness or so much duality.

Most of us have never really experienced peace in its true sense. And so, in our limited perception we seek only that which we can imagine. Because of our limited awareness, we can only imagine the absence of conflict; we cannot imagine true peace. And this is why true peace cannot yet be manifested. If manifestation comes from thought and our imagination is part of our process of thought, then only that which can be thought of -- only that which can be imagined can be made manifest.

We have been trained to be vigilant and to wait for the next shoe to drop. Even in limited consciousness, we can see how that thinking could not exist together with any sort of peacefulness. As a racial consciousness, we are working on raising ourselves to a higher level of knowing, a higher level of thought, to the essence of true peacefulness. True peacefulness rests in a sense of unity, non-separateness, non-judgment, non-duality. We think we cannot imagine what that would be like, and yet we do know there are hints of this true peace in our daily life, our inner life and our life with others, especially those we love and those who love us.

Let us take a simple example, something mentioned above: non-judgmentalness. We already know that when we have succumbed to judgment that the healing of that illusion, the healing of that manifestation of separateness, comes from forgiveness. When we forgive others and forgive ourselves, we achieve two things. One, certainly on a lower vibration of understanding, is that we have removed conflict between ourselves and our brother/sister. But on a deeper level of reality, we have also touched upon true peacefulness. We do not need to understand this with our mind, but to key into the knowing experience that already exists inside of us.

Another example is that there have been times when we have been in nature watching a sunset or walking on the beach or seeing a rainbow or even in the midst of a thunderstorm. Without force, without trying to make something happen, we have become absorbed into this natural event and in our absorption,



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we have become one with nature. When we are one or without thought about someone or something, then we are at peace with it.

This same would be true when we are absorbed in a task either by ourselves or with a loved one. We are what some people would call 'in your bliss' because time and other distractions are meaningless. We can notice we are not stopping to think "I am at peace," we simply know that we are. And so, you see this state of mind not only already exists on this plane but is very possible for each of us and all other beings. What is

emphasized here is that as we allow our vibration to raise, we raise the vibration of all beings -- not only on this plane, but all beings.

So as we begin to drop our skepticism and our doubts about the possibility of true peacefulness and allow ourselves to experience that peace here in the material world that we live in -- then we truly raise our vibration and the vibration of all

beings. Right now, what most of us are struggling with on Planet Earth is simply the possibility of peacefulness. Now it is for us and our role, our work if we choose to take it on, to know as we open ourselves to the possibility of true peacefulness, that we raise the vibration of all beings. For this we give thanks.

.Editor's Note: As we grow in our ability to meditate, that is an excellent way to experience peace, also.

BIO: Gerry began his career as a teacher and retreat leader at St. Xavier High School where he taught Biology, Chemistry and Religion. His undergraduate degree is from Catholic University and he holds graduate degrees in Biology and Transpersonal Psychology, and a PhD in Comparative Religions. He teaches classes at Unity of Louisville along with guest speaking at Sunday services.



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PRANA, TEJAS and OJAS for YOGA PRACTITIONERS, by Laura Spaulding

In Yoga and Ayurveda, **prāṇa, tejas, and ojas** are considered the three subtle vital essences that sustain life at physical, mental, and spiritual levels. They are sometimes called the “three treasures” of yogic physiology. Ayurveda is the yoga-related knowledge regarding physiology, therapy, herbology, diet and lifestyle choices that affect health and well-being. “**Doṣas**” are the names of the three main constitutions of individuals. One’s **doṣa** influences weight, preferred foods, temperature, lifestyle choices, tendencies, and many other aspects of one’s state of health.

Here is a clear summary of each essence — and how they relate to one another:

Prāṇa – The Vital Life Force

Prāṇa is the animating life-force that flows through the body via the nāḍīs (subtle channels). It governs:

- Breath and respiration
- Nervous system activity
- Circulation and movement
- Sensory perception
- Mental activity

In Ayurveda, prāṇa is closely linked with **Vāta doṣa**, especially prāṇa-vāta (the inward-moving force centered in the head and chest). In yoga practice it is cultivated through **prāṇāyāma**.

- Balanced by steady āsana and regulated breath
- Disturbed by overstimulation, anxiety, irregular lifestyle

When balanced → clarity, vitality, alertness

When depleted → fatigue, scattered mind, nervous instability

Tejas – The Inner Radiance

Tejas is the subtle essence of **agni** (digestive fire). It governs:

- Cellular metabolism
- Hormonal transformation
- Intelligence and discrimination (buddhi)
- Courage and willpower

Tejas is associated with the refined aspect of **Pitta doṣa** in Yoga practice.

- Strengthened by tapas (disciplined effort)
- Refined by meditation and mantra
- Disturbed by anger, overexertion, excess heat

When balanced → sharp intellect, luminosity, healthy digestion

When excessive → irritability, inflammation, burnout

When deficient → dullness, low motivation

Ojas – The Vital Essence of Immunity and Stability

Ojas is considered the most refined product of digestion and tissue formation. It represents:

- Immune strength
- Physical endurance
- Emotional steadiness
- Spiritual contentment

Ojas corresponds to the highest refinement of Kapha doṣa. In Yoga practice.:

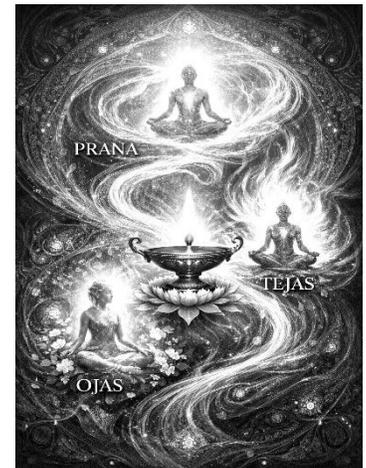
- Built through rest, devotion, and loving relationships
- Nourished by wholesome food and deep sleep
- Depleted by stress, over-practice, excessive sexual activity, chronic illness

When balanced → calm joy, resilience, grounded presence

When depleted → exhaustion, fragility, anxiety

Laura Spaulding will be teaching a workshop on Prana, Tejas and Ojas on Sunday May 3, 2026, 2:30-5:00 pm at Yoga East, 1125 E. Kentucky Street, Louisville, KY 40204. Go to <https://yogaeast.org> to register or get more information. Space is limited – registration in advance is required. Tickets: \$36.00.

BIO: Laura Spaulding is President of Yoga East, a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1971. She has been practicing yoga for 59 years and teaching yoga for 32 years. Laura is an E-RYT 500 teacher and teacher trainer. She has made numerous study trips to India.



WHY WE HEAL THROUGH STORYTELLING

Lauren Hannigan Thunder RYT

Long before Netflix shows or going to see a movie at the movie theater, there was storytelling. Our ancestors gathered around crackling campfires and told stories of survival, connection, culture, and courage. Ancient storytelling was for entertainment, but it was also a cornerstone of how early humans made sense of the world and passed on wisdom. The therapeutic benefits of storytelling have been utilized throughout history. Parents have long soothed children to sleep with bedtime stories, knowing their ability to harmonize the mind and body. Due to the transformative capacity of active imagination, storytelling remains a sacred therapeutic practice that we never outgrew.

Storytelling invites us into imagination, stimulating and strengthening a wide range of brain regions. MRI scans reveal that listening to narratives activates many parts of the brain. As we listen, our minds are hard at work to paint vivid images, follow symbolic threads, and journey beyond the immediate moment. The prefrontal cortex, occipital lobe, and temporal lobes work together to help us combine what we see, remember, understand, and imagine - - making it easier to adapt our thinking and solve problems. This collaboration also encourages the ability to grow and make new connections between brain cells, which helps maintain brain health throughout life.

The occipital lobe, located at the back of the brain, allows us to visualize both concrete and abstract people, places, and scenarios, responding to imaginary experiences as actively as to real ones. Imagination also enables us to hold multiple possibilities and perspectives at once. By practicing the skill of seeing the world through different viewpoints, we become more open-minded and capable of adapting to new situations and challenges. Through imagining stories, our minds move beyond the concrete into the realm of theory and abstraction. These imaginative capacities are essential for developing thinking skills needed for arithmetic, logic, and problem-solving. For example, imagination allows us to picture images, numbers, and shapes, just like when we do math or solve complex puzzles. By enabling us to approach problems from different angles and find new answers, imagination makes our thinking stronger and more flexible.

Ancient cultures knew that stories helped people make sense of their lives and experiences. By using clear story structures, familiar character types, known as archetypes, repeating rhythms, and strong emotions, storytellers could teach important lessons and values. These methods made stories easier to remember and helped communities share knowledge from one generation to the next. A narrative with a structured beginning, middle, and end can be profoundly calming and centering in a seemingly chaotic world. Stories with classic archetypes teach us by introducing recognizable character types, like heroes, villains,



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tricksters, and explorers. These characters help us learn important lessons, relate to experiences, and solve similar problems in our own lives.

Stories with a rhythm, such as in the classic "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" offer comfort and stability in their predictable framework. For example, Goldilocks encounters several items that vary in size and comfort. First, she finds Papa Bear's chair, which is too big for her to sit comfortably, then she tries Baby Bear's chair, which is too small, and finally she tries Mama Bear's chair, which is just right. Similarly, when tasting the porridge, Goldilocks discovers that Papa Bear's porridge is too hot, Mama Bear's porridge is too cold, and Baby Bear's porridge is just right. Lastly, when she tries the beds, Papa Bear's bed is too hard, Mama Bear's bed is too soft, and Baby Bear's bed is just right for her to rest in. These examples highlight the story's central theme of searching for balance - - and comforting the listener through rhythm. Our brains are soothed by rhythm and repetition.

In an increasingly fragmented digital world, live narrative storytelling can be seen as a radical act of focused attention. Modern TV shows and movies spoon-feed images to our brains to ingest, while narrative storytelling allows the mind space to create images on its own, like a mental bicep curl. Oral narrative specifically is a unique healing art. Spoken story as opposed to silent individual reading, involves voice, breath, body language, gesture, and a sense of togetherness and community. Cultivating imagination expands cognitive abilities and gently nourishes emotional well-being. Our ancestors gathered around campfires and fireplaces to deeply listen, captured by the alchemy of imagination and the medicinal magic of storytelling. We can still tap into this ancient art when we dare to begin with, "Once upon a time."

BIO Lauren Hannigan Thunder is a Louisville native. Her life's work is to promote wellness practices and community building. She completed her Yoga Teacher Training with Laura Spaulding at Yoga East. She completed her Master's Degree in Education at Antioch University.

Lauren currently teaches yoga at Wel at Humana. Her philosophy is that individual wellness promotes community wellness. She is currently hosting Yoga and Meditative Storytelling classes Monday nights 6-7 pm at Rainbow Blossom in the Highlands.



EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP OF OUR PLANET

By Rebecca Geracitano, M.A., M.Ht

To care for our planet, we don't have to think of ourselves as environmentalists, but instead as mindful stewards that appreciate and treasure the resources our planet provides. I have been conscious of recycling and not littering since I was in grade school. From the prompting of my mother and school programs about littering and recycling, I was in on the action of collecting bags of aluminum cans to turn in for cash.

I remember the 1970's environmental commercial ads by the "Keep America Beautiful Council" and the "U.S. Brewers Association" with their campaigns "Pitch In" and "People Start Pollution. People Can Stop It." The latter campaign was labeled the "Crying Indian Ad" that ran from 1971-1980. That one made a huge impression upon me because I knew how the American Indians valued their land and nature. It saddened me, too, to see litter strewn along our beautiful roadways - - and it still does. This ad is considered one of the most successful environmental campaigns in the U.S. and it marked a surge in environmental awareness. Many of these commercials were pivotal in changing public perception of littering as a social norm. Later there was a degree of controversy concerning some of those ads as to stereotyping and shifting responsibility away from manufacturing companies to the consumer.

In small and big ways we can be everyday stewards by making it a habit to recycle packaging, and to reuse containers, boxes, and storage devices. We could shop at consignment stores for clothing and other retailers for used furniture. We could shop at yard sales.

We can conserve water by not leaving the tap running unnecessarily. According to <https://greencitizen.com>, focus on the following areas: laundry, bathroom, kitchen, and yard. It is important to fix leaks, install low-flow fixtures like shower heads, run full loads in your washer and dishwasher, shorten showers, collect rainwater, and water your garden efficiently. These small daily changes can save thousands of gallons of water each year and help reduce your household water footprint.

A couple of things I am mindful of for conserving gasoline in my car are planning stops along my given route and avoiding unnecessary driving. I also use my cruise control whenever possible. According to Consumer Reports <https://consumerreports.org>, keep your gas tank half full and drive smoothly without sudden braking or acceleration. Buy quality gas but ditch premium unless it's required for your car. Check that your tire pressure is at the recommended weight and pay attention to aerodynamics by removing roof racks or anything



that puts a drag on your auto's acceleration. If possible, you could consider purchasing an environmentally friendly vehicle.

For our gardens we can compost food and organic waste. On a larger scale, reducing food waste and composting help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that affect climate change. When food rots in landfills it emits methane a potent greenhouse gas. It also wastes the energy and resources that were used to grow, transport and package that food. There are several ways to compost. You can make your own compost bin with a couple of plastic containers. To save time, smell and space in your kitchen, accumulate scraps in a freezer bag in the freezer until you're ready to add to your "do it yourself" compost container outside or in your garage or on your deck. The www.spruce.com website offers step by step ways to create your own compost container. You can also buy one fairly inexpensively.



As you can see, there are many ways to reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Personal small changes and habits can allow each of us to be mindful stewards of our planet. Our Earth grows and sustains each of us. When we have an "at one with our Earth" mentality, we can more fully understand that we are all part of the Earth and its rhythms. When we care for the Earth, we care for ourselves.

BIO: Rebecca is a Certified Master Hypnotherapist. She offers Current, Past Life, Life Between Lives, and Quantum Healing Regression. She also offers hypnosis for habits and issues, spiritual mentoring, meditation, dream work, Reiki and Crystal Bowl Meditations to help her clients find inner healing

RESOURCES: <https://therecycleguide.org>, <https://spruce.com>, <https://southerncompany.com>, <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics-and-benefits>, <https://www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/publication/how-food-waste-can-help-bring-about-a-healthy-farming-future/> Photo: John Rodenn Castillo, Unsplash

USING CRYSTALS & GEMSTONES IN HEALING

Dee Patterson, Intuitive Healer

One of the things my brothers and I loved to do when we were children was to go swimming. To reach the public pool near our neighborhood, we walked along the railroad tracks which were the quickest route. Occasionally, we would find the most beautiful crystals lying along the sides of the tracks. We just called them pretty rocks and on our way home we would gather them up. I'm not sure where the stones were headed, but since at the time we were near a Corning plant that might have been their final destination. Looking back, I realize that some of those were amethysts, since I remember some had colors other than clear crystal. I loved looking at them, they were so beautiful. That was my first encounter with crystals and gemstones. Unfortunately, when we moved my Mom tossed them.

As an adult, I was drawn to pretty stones and anything that sparkled. I discovered that quartz crystals were conductors of energy and that they were used in watches, radios, televisions and electronics. They contain piezoelectricity and all natural stones contain some form of this energy. When I seriously began to learn about the metaphysical, I ordered a book on healing from the local bookstore. When I went to pick it up they couldn't find it. I hadn't brought the name of the book with me, but the clerk thought that it must be "The Women's Book of Healing" by Diane Stein, because it didn't have a "hold" name on it. It didn't sound quite right, but I purchased it and took it home. When I began to read it, I discovered the book contained information on how to use crystals and gemstones to heal the body. I quickly became fascinated with the book. It turned out not to be the book I ordered, but one that spirit thought I needed.

Using their intuition, healers know what stone to use for the client. In this process the healer is amplifying the energy that is present in the stone and sending healing energy into the body for healing. Whenever I am asked what stone someone should use, I tell them to go toward whatever stone they are attracted to.

It is like the energy matches up like a magnet to something they need. Through the piezoelectric effect, mechanical energy can be transduced into electromagnetic energy and vice versa. Thus, they are drawn to a





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particular stone by the use of their energy and the stone's energy.

Simply by holding onto a stone and relaxing into a meditative state, you can feel the energy of the stone as it moves through your body. They work well with the seven chakras. Chakras control the energy centers of the body and are a whole study of healing on their own. Used in conjunction with crystals and gemstones, a chakra can facilitate the healing of the area of the body that relates to that particular chakra. For instance, if a person is dealing with a digestive issue, a healer would place a stone on the belly/sacral chakra and/ or the solar plexus chakra. Many healers will lay stones on each of the seven chakras and direct healing energy to all of them. After this type of treatment, the person feels totally relaxed. Each different gemstone or crystal is assigned to a particular chakra. You can also do this yourself by relaxing and placing the stones on your body. You don't need large stones to get the healing benefit.

You can carry small stones in your pockets and finger them throughout the day, feeling the healing energy. Some people prefer to carry them in a special bag. I place them on my "power grid" to amplify the energy when I am manifesting. I designed a chakra wand for this purpose that is filled with natural gemstones. It's available on my website.

While stones can be very powerful in healing, they also make beautiful items to showcase in your home or gardens. There are many books on the market that can help you learn more about using crystals and gemstones. They can be another resource to use for your healing.

BIO: Dee Patterson is a professional psychic. She reads the past, present and future, and is a medium and medical intuitive. She does spiritual counseling and emotional release. She also has a wide variety of crystals and stones for sale. Call 502-426-2220 or text 502-295-0788. deepatt@bellsouth.net and www.deepatterson.com.

Photo: Activedia Spiritualism of Pixabay & Kimberly Chow of Unsplash.



WHAT WOULD THE GODLINESS IN YOU DO? By Amanda Pollock

It feels like we're living in very loud times. There's war in the world. There's political division everywhere you look. The news cycle is constant and reactive and designed to keep us stirred up. It's easy to feel overwhelmed. It's easy to feel small. It's easy to think that if we can't solve the big global problems, then maybe there's not much we can really do.

For years people have asked the question, "What would Jesus do?" Today I want to stretch that just a little and ask: What would the godliness in you do? Because in Unity we don't just look at Jesus as someone separate from us. We recognize the Christ presence as something living within us. The divine is not only something we admire — it's something we embody. It lives in you. It lives in me. It lives in the person sitting next to you. So the question isn't only about what someone else would do. It's about what the divine within you is prompting you to do right now.

When I look at the life of Jesus, I notice something important. He didn't start with empires. He didn't begin by reforming Rome. He started with people. He gathered neighbors. He sat at tables. He walked alongside people. He listened. He healed one person at a time. He built community. And from that community change spread. We live in a culture that tells us change has to be big, dramatic, viral. But spiritual change is usually quiet. It starts close. It starts locally. It starts relational.

I want to share something personal. There was a season in my life when everything felt heavy. From the outside, everything looked normal. I was working. I was managing responsibilities. I was showing up. But internally I felt stretched thin and quietly overwhelmed. I was carrying more than I let on. One day, a woman from my community texted me, "Can I bring dinner by sometime?" It was such a simple question. I said yes. That evening I was working from home. I didn't hear her pull in. She drove up, parked in our driveway, walked to the front door, and placed a meal on our stoop. She didn't knock. She didn't ring the bell. She didn't interrupt my workday. She just gently set the meal down, walked back to her car, and texted me, "I just dropped off a meal for you guys." That was it. When I opened the door and saw that meal sitting there, something shifted in me. My circumstances hadn't changed. The responsibilities were still there. But I no longer felt alone inside them. She didn't try to fix anything. She didn't make a speech. She didn't require conversation. She simply showed up. That is what the godliness in her did. It wasn't loud. It wasn't public. It wasn't political. It was personal. And it mattered more than she probably realized.

When we ask, "What would the godliness in me do?" the answer might not be dramatic. It might look very ordinary. It might look like inviting someone to lunch after church service. It might look like driving someone to an appointment. It might look like organizing a meal train for new parents. It might look like helping someone clean their kitchen when they're exhausted. It might look like texting someone who has been unusually quiet and saying, "I was thinking about you."



We cannot individually stop wars. We cannot single-handedly fix national politics. We cannot control global conflict. But we can strengthen the climate of this room. We can build a congregation where no one feels invisible. We can create a network of care so strong that when life feels heavy, someone shows up — maybe quietly, maybe without fanfare — but shows up. In times like these it's tempting to harden— to choose outrage over compassion — to choose commentary over connection —to retreat into our corners. But the Christ within us doesn't harden. It opens. It asks: Who is carrying something quietly? Who feels isolated? Who needs to know they are not alone?

Unity does not mean we all agree. It means we agree to love. And love is not passive. Love organizes. Love coordinates rides. Love cooks. Love checks in. Love leaves a meal on the stoop and doesn't need recognition for it. If we want to change the world, we begin here. In East Louisville. In this congregation. In this circle. What if we intentionally deepened our connections? What if we made it normal to go to lunch together after church service? What if we created a ride list for appointments? What if we paired up and checked in on each other during the week? What if we made it our goal to really know each other? Not because it looks good. But because it builds something real.

The world does not need more noise. It needs more neighborhoods that know each other. More congregations that function like extended families. More people asking, "What would the godliness in me do right now?" and then doing the smallest faithful thing available. So this week, when the headlines feel overwhelming, pause. Take a breath. Ask yourself, what would Jesus do? What would the godliness in me do? And then choose the next small act of love. Call someone. Invite someone. Bring a meal. Sit with someone. Show up. Transformation doesn't start in Washington. It doesn't start online. It starts in driveways. It starts at front doors. It starts at kitchen tables. It starts here. It starts in you. And when we strengthen community, we strengthen the world. Amen

BIO: Amanda Pollock works in healthcare technology, loves her family fiercely, and believes the world changes when communities show up for one another. She lives in Kentucky with her husband and daughter and spends most of her time building things —whether that's systems, solutions, or stronger relationships. She believes faith should move us toward each other.

AN EASY INTUITIVE TECHNIQUE For Choosing Food and Drink to Help Our Body Stay Healthier & Renew

Joyce Hemdahl Gerrish, MA

Our human body is designed to renew if we take good care of it and understand what it needs and what it doesn't need. I am sharing with you in this article an easy technique that can indicate to you what foods are healthy for you and which are not. The same is true as far as choosing which drinks can help you stay healthy and renew. Foods and drinks are not entertainment; they are fuel for our precious physical body. Our body can renew over the years if we give it what it needs. This does take a certain amount of willpower if the people around you are not like-minded with you. Not everybody understands the importance of choosing what their body needs in order to thrive physically and give their body a chance to renew. On the other hand, it has its own reward when your body feels good and you want to maintain that good health. When giving up something that isn't good for you, it helps to replace it with something you like that IS good for you. I used peppermint herbal tea to replace unhealthy drinks.

Choosing as healthy food and drink as possible has been somewhat of a life-long journey for me. When I was twenty-five, the bottom seemed to have fallen through on my health. I felt maybe I was going to just collapse physically before my time. I had always been very active physically in sports and having fun in general. Then at twenty-five I was just dragging to make it through a day. Yeiks! I had been drinking a 16 oz. soft drink every afternoon just to keep myself going -- and a sweet snack or two.

Then one day a light came on in my head and I figured that I better find out how to feel better, I was still young! I found three books that helped me find the path to renewal and a life-long adventure of learning how to eat and drink what my wonderful body really needs to thrive and renew -- not just whatever is most handy at the moment. One book was about stress reduction and meditation, one was about aerobic exercise, and one was about eating wholesome pure food as close to how it grows in nature as possible. Wow! Those three books brought me to a whole new level of living which decades later I am still pursuing actively and I am healthy. It led me to eventually getting my Master's degree in Human Development (with focus in Holistic Wellness.) That led me to teaching classes and doing sessions to help others step into this transformative adventure. I am now going to share with you a priceless technique to help you, if you choose, allow your body to renew -- along with stress reduction and exercise.

With this technique your body gives you a yes or no answer according to whether you sway slightly forward or slightly backward. Swaying slightly forward when you ask



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yourself a question is a yes answer for most people. For a few people, swaying slightly backward is a yes answer. So the first thing to do is to find out if for YOU a yes answer is leaning slightly forward or backward. Stand up and become aware of your breath flowing comfortably in and out for awhile until you feel fairly calm and centered. Then ask yourself silently, "Show me a yes." If your body sways slightly forward, then you know that swaying forward is a yes answer for you. If your body sways slightly backward, then you know that swaying backward is a yes answer for you. Now you are all set to test whether a

food item is healthy for you. To test an item of food, you hold it in front of yourself and ask yourself silently, "Is this food good for me?" Your intuition will tell you through this technique. Now, that is a helpful technique, isn't it? You can do it in a grocery store and no one will notice at all. You can do it in your kitchen to check if foods in your cupboard are healthy for you and your family. It may take a little practice, but it will probably come easily for you. The important thing is to be open minded to discover the truth. Food preparation techniques need to be tested, also.

Food packages (or bottles or cans) with a lot of preservatives or added chemicals or pesticide residues may not test well for your health. Foods that may not digest well for you -- may not test well for you. I encourage you to allow it to be a learning experience for you. Test whether organically grown or conventionally grown foods test better for your health. I encourage you to really pay attention to your intuition. This technique can help you move into a whole new level of eating healthier foods and allowing your body to renew! Awesome! (NOTE: Some people do have genetic issues or other life conditions affecting health, but this technique can help.)

BIO: Zoom Meditations for Healing & Higher Consciousness Weekly Wednesdays 6 – 7 pm. Also, In-person class 1st Sunday monthly at Unity of Louisville at 12:15. By donation. Joyce is a Transformational Energy & Emotional Healer. She's a highly attuned & sensitive guide for Higher Meditation & Higher Consciousness.. Master's Degree in Human Development, Reiki Master, extensive training & decades of experience as a practitioner & teacher of Spiritual Healing, Chakra Healing, Reflexology, Meridians, & Zone Therapy. She's author of book "Secrets of Wisdom - Awaken to the Miracle of You," & Publisher- Editor of Natural Living Journal. 502-572-4871 www.joycegerrish.com PHOTO: Karina Syrotiuk, Unsplash.

**STARTING YOUR SPRING VEGETABLE GARDEN,
With Nancy Lang**

After an unusually harsh winter in Kentucky, temperatures are warming, daffodils are peeking out of the ground, and birds are busily gathering nesting materials. Robins are back in full force, which is a harbinger of spring. The days are longer, the sun is higher in the sky, and it is time for gardeners to plan and begin their vegetable gardens.

Gardening plots can be cleared, dug in some to loosen the soil, and fertilized. For organic gardeners, there are a lot of organic fertilizers—check your local garden supply store for resources. If you compost, that enriches the soil. Coffee grounds are good for the soil too.

Mid-March is time to plant cool season crops. Peas, carrots, lettuce, chard, kale, onions, spinach, radishes, and potatoes are among vegetables that can be planted from seed in March. Broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and asparagus do best planted from seedlings in mid-March. Cabbage and broccoli can be susceptible to cutworms, so wrapping paper collars around the stems will protect them.

After you plant your cool season crops, it is time to plan for the rest of the gardening season. You might want to start seedlings now. Once the last possible frost date is past, it is safe to plant what vegetables you desire. Have fun with it and enjoy all of the wonderful vegetables that you grow!



Images: 3 Children & Man in Garden & Standing boy, Getty Images unsplash; Preparing Soil Drazen-nesic unsplash; Planting Karolina Grabowka unsplash; tomatoes D. Light, Woman Dina Makhmutova;

