

birth of a woman

alternative › esoteric © health magazine

into the **wild**

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"She stepped out of the race she never wanted to be in, found her own lane and proceeded to win."

Daring to Suck Society

Safe space for sacred rebels (like you) to live, love and lead from Self, unapologetically!

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Alternative-Esoteric-Health
A modern restorative look at being a woman; maiden, mother, crone. The Village, Community, Tribe, Circle.
All of us fit somewhere.

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Editors Note

The birth of Birth of a Woman has been a long and arduous process. I have spent many years in the magazine publication industry, as an independent and mostly online publisher. I've also been an online blogger with Moms, For Real, and a co-organizer of a car show & fundraiser with Rides for Relief. My resume is long and eclectic, and with all of that experience you'd think I'd be wholly prepared for what life had to serve me with this project ... alas, I was not.

Birth of a Woman magazine has been an eye and heart opening experience of extraordinary proportions. The women I've met in this process; the same women you will meet within the pages of this inaugural issue, are the most amazing humans. They are diverse, compassionate, honest and will let you into their intimate writing space as they have never done before. The stories, ruminations, and learned philosophies that are shared within these issues are a collection and culmination of DECADES worth of experiences. I have been so honoured to read and learn from these women that it sometimes makes my heart hurt with love and adoration.

You will see very soon that the bravery and raw courage of these women is to be honoured and cultivated within all of us. We are witnessing the fruition of years and years of us, as women, having experiences in the cold silence ... We are all birthing ourselves ... And as a result we are forming a bond; a community, a tribe, a coven of women who will be forever tied together through and because of these shared experiences.

There is something uniquely powerful within sharing ourselves and what we have learned and gone through. I speak with so many women and each and every one of them have an untold story that seems, to them, isolated and one-of-a-kind. While each person does, in fact have their own story, I have very quickly learned that there is also a commonality that is threaded through each one of them. A commonality that needs to be seen, it needs to be shared, and it needs to see the light of day. Why? So that we can all come together within the commonality to understand we are **not alone**. None of us are alone, and none of us are separate. We were built for a community - a circle - to share within. Without it we suffer needlessly, and we suffer alone. That simply will not do! We have the ability with the internet, written word, printed magazines and everything else that falls in between to be able to share our selves with each other!

I see this magazine as an opportunity to curate women into the pages of the magazine so that more women can read, learn, understand and access all that is within. We can and will heal. We can and will learn. We can and will be more than the sum of our meat-suit parts.

Within these pages, you'll find a plethora of different topics and subjects of interest. I've put together a wide range of things for you to flip through: products, lifestyle, stories, testimonies, and education. All within the alternative, esoteric, eco-conscious, practical and sometimes not-so-practical health care.

I hope you find something, or maybe even a few things, that hit your heart, lift your soul, speaks to your mind, and opens your eyes. Above all I hope you feel the love that is abundant within these pages, as that was and always will be, my intention for bringing you all together.

Love, Tracy

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Actor, Artist, writer; Wrama Willis loves to talk about her experiences. They are heart warming and engaging. Her musing will inspire you!

Cover Photography by: Alise AliNari INSTAGRAM: alice_alinari

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Carly Banks. At The Habit Ayurvedic Wellness, Carly Banks teaches simple daily routines that support our mental, physical, and emotional well-being. As a working mother of two young children, Carly is no stranger to feeling "busy", and knows the importance of creating healthy habits that feel easy to implement. As an Ayurvedic Health Counsellor, Carly promotes self-care techniques backed by thousands of years of exploration. No new gimmicks. No equipment or supplements. Just simple actions for being well.

Danielle Faust is an intuitive wellness coach and mom of 2 based in South Florida. She blogs at OKDani.com and when she's not working her hobbies include hiding from her two children, drinking coffee and trying to finish a complete thought before getting distra....



Deborah Forehead Horticulturalist, First Degree Wiccan Priestess, Herbal Aficionado, and all around amazing human. Deb is a pillar in her community and is full of esoteric and practical wisdom.

Jesica Messom . Lover of life, yoga and dancing, trying to heal trauma, connect and grow with every day that passes!



Jill Ethier. Jill's clients call her the Energetic Ninja. Her online training programs, like Feng Shui and Ho'oponopono, provide you with the energetic tools and techniques you need to easily increase your mental, physical and spiritual energy so that you can be more abundant, fulfill your purpose more on a daily basis and improve your overall health and well-being. Her podcast, Ninja Jill KNOWS, helps you create more of what you truly want every week. Her first book, When the Meaning is Lost, shares how to create more meaning in your life after something hard has happened, will give you hope and will inspire you to live more fully.

Keri Looijen Aka "the shopping queen". Keri is many things communications major, community and relationship builder; in her spare time she's an adventure mom, pin up diva, epic party planner, women's advocate, food educator, flourishing yogi, a student of life. Check out her own magazine; True North Pin Up.



Kim Wuirch is a Psychic Healer, Empath, Spiritual Mentor and Archangel communicator, who works with people of all ages, to assist with healing and spiritual growth. Kim knows that people are being awakened in waves across the world. She wants them to know they are not alone and they are not crazy. To do this she shares her journey.



Keri-Anne Livingstone is a certified emotional empowerment coach, intuitive healer, and founder of Daring to Suck; a deep feelers guide to navigating Life, Death and all the WTFs with more grace, ease and humour. As a retreat host, comedic speaker and writer, she facilitates embodied exploration, honest expression, and healing expansion of Souls who came here to serve! Her work helps empaths, helpers and healers reclaim their wholeness in the WHOLE MESS of releasing and expressing their feelings and she lives to match the perfect GIF for every occasion and makes up words as if it were a sport!



Lyndal Cave I tried boxes, but none of them fit. I'm 100% Australian and 100% Canadian. I'm a Christian but don't ask me what kind because I don't have a clue. My top four passions are Story, Community, Connection and Creating. I like sparkles, film making, 18th-century dresses, frogs, fairytales, and irony.



Melanie Haggert RAC TCMD RMT BFA Melanie is passionate about travel and the life lessons it teaches. She considers herself a "Jill" of all trades. Growing up in rural Alberta gave her the chance to get her hands dirty in many different jobs/trades. She always had an affinity for Eastern culture, medicine, art and philosophy which lead her down the path to become a registered acupuncturist. Finishing up school in Beijing, she decided to travel through China, Tibet and Nepal before coming back to Calgary to start a career in holistic healthcare. Melanie has her own practice and looks forward to more travel and adventures.



Nicole Pemberton. Nicole went through her own healing journey with a physical clearing of having 10 massive Fibroids removed from her uterus. She is driven to share the knowledge she has acquired with others to disrupt generational patterns and reconnect to our bodies from the inside-out. She weaves movement alchemy, embodiment and fusing ancestral practices within our modern society. This became the catalyst in creating The Goddess Moves. Through her business she teaches live workshops, retreats, 6 month juicy deep dive alchemic programs and one on one sessions.



Trish Felber. Business Owner Extraordinaire! Trish is a Homeopath, Intuitive, Energy Worker, and self taught IT guru. She's also passionate about her family and her dog (not necessarily in that order:). Mostly Trish is a dream seeker - her dream led her to homeopathy and then to creating a clinic full of like minded practitioners working hard to help clients fulfill their own dreams of wellness.



Ursula Jordaan is a creative writer in multiple genres but she's also the creator of The Happy Pill podcast - a show that openly shares our stories of abuse, depression, and other mental health issues. This is a place of inclusion, sharing, caring, and resources to help all those in need.



Wrama Willis is an emerging artist, actor, writer and in-the-shower songstress. Having a zeal for film, television and theatre, Wrama began pursuing her creative passion over three years ago. Wrama is passionate about telling stories that talk about social and human inequality. And equally inspired by real life stories that encourage a connection, understanding and compassion for one another. She is a firm believer in the power of love, laughter, and dreaming big. Wrama is a mother of three kind, beautiful, and amazing kids that she proudly shares with her lovely husband, Roy. Together, they live in Calgary, AB.



Forget grand New Year's Resolutions.
Start EVERY DAY on the right foot with

Ayurveda

CARLY BANKS

Move over pie in the sky, 'dream a big dream', un-keepable New Years' resolutions, there's a new guy in town.

Or should i say... a very, very old guy. I'll tell you all about em' in a moment...

If you've ever defaulted on a New Year's resolution,
... if you did it again this year,
don't beat yourself up too bad.

According to a study conducted by the University of Scranton, just 8 percent of people achieve their New Year's goals, while around 80 percent fail to keep their New Year's resolutions for even 30 days.

Now don't get me wrong, I LOVE dreaming big dreams. Saying things like:
"2020 is going to be different!"
"I'm going to lose 20lbs! Go to the gym!"
"Eat better!"
"Get my Business off the ground! [insert sweeping change here] this year! This is it!"

It makes ya feel pretty good.
But there's a tiny problem.
Having the end goal in mind
... *doesn't magically teleport us to said goal.*

No one arrives on January first, suddenly showing up as a different version of themselves.

This reminds me of a friend of mine who was recently considering moving to another city. Her family travelled out to their potential new home town to have a peek around, and she came back

gushing about how much outdoor space there was at the home they looked at, how perfect the coffee shop was, and how lovely the one yoga studio in town looked. She figured it would be the perfect place to do her yoga and meet new mom friends.

But here's the thing:

In the city where we currently live;
She doesn't spend a ton of time outdoors on the almost 1 acre they've got.
She rarely goes to coffee shops.
And she definitely does not attend yoga classes (at any of the forty+ studios in our city, which I'm sure all have "new mom friends" in them).

**A new year does not equal a new you.
A new environment does not equal a new you.**

In the famous words of Jon Kabat Zinn, founder of the MSBR (mindfulness based stress reduction) technique:

"WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE"

In other words, you'll still be you, until such time as you decide to change.
And usually those New Year's lofty goals require a pretty big change, seemingly supposed to happen overnight.

Which, if you're still reading this, you've likely experienced to feel impossible.

If you want to experience positive, permanent change, you need a better plan. And here's where my old friend comes in...

Ayurveda

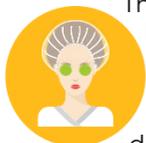
Ayurveda. The 5,000 year-old science of self care.

Among many many other things, Ayurveda teaches us a VERY important life lesson: Who you are is not made up of big moments or decisions. Who you are is made from the things you do every. single. day. Your body, mindset, belief system, are all a compilation of the repeated patterns you go through on the daily. And if you have daily patterns (otherwise known as habits) that leave you overwhelmed, exhausted, rushed or weary by the end of the day.... Well it's less than easy to show up as this fancy new version of yourself. So here's what's really cool about ayurveda: Ayurveda teaches us EXTREMELY simple actions that save us from the weary feels. These 2 minute or less 'actions', which are dead easy to fit into your current busy schedule, give you the energy and mental clarity to actually get after those bigger goals.

Ayurveda leverages the functions of your physiology to help you feel your best. These tools optimize your sleep cycles, digestion, hormone production, nervous system and circulation, so you waste less time thinking about how 'off' you feel.

And today, I'm going to teach you 4 of them.

1. PRATYAHARA: FASTING OF THE SENSES



The intermittent fasting "trend" is anything but new. Intermittent fasting involves allowing for longer time between your final meal of the evening, and breaking your fast in the morning, for complete digestion of food, absorption of nutrients, and regulation of digestive organ function.

Between the hours of 10pm and 2am, the liver is going to work flushing toxins and regenerating cells. If you're eating right up to the moment you close your eyes, you're not resting, you're spending the night digesting.

True Ayurvedic Pratyahara practice goes much deeper than timing our meals, but here's a start:

To wake up feeling rested every day - drop the "diet starts monday" mindset and start tonight. Aim to close your kitchen at least 2-3 hours before you go to bed, and hold off on breakfast for 12-14 hours for optimal results.

2. USHAPAN: HYDRATION UPON RISING



A very common Ayurvedic practice in India, is the daily ritual of ushapan: drinking one litre of water first thing in the morning. Through the night the body goes through detoxification processes, moving toxins and waste toward the colon for flushing in the morning. Drinking a large amount of room temperature water upon waking stimulates "apana vayu" - downward flow of energy, which triggers a killer morning movement (because seriously, nobody wants to walk into today carrying yesterday's you know what).

For optimal flushing of toxins and light mornings - fill a large mason jar with water and place it on your bedside table. Immediately upon waking, down it like a frat boy on spring break.

3. JIHWA PRAKSHALANA: TONGUE SCRAPING



Another place you'll find built up toxins from the night is... in your mouth (gross). Kinda makes sense why we have gnarly morning breath right? Tongue scraping removes built up toxins from the mouth, builds immunity, and keeps breath fresh as a daisy. This, my friend, is a tool you will LOVE.

Pro tip for using a tongue scraper - Before brushing your teeth in the morning, glide the tongue scraper from the back of your tongue to the front, lightly tapping it on the sink to remove what's coming off (which will likely gross you out and also excite you to be getting rid of it). Glide 7-10 times. Don't SCRAPE. Because, ouch.

4. GARSHANA: DRY BRUSHING



Like a back scratch for your whole body, this one minute practice stimulates circulation + lymphatic drainage (which is oh so good for inflammation and immunity). Dry brushing also exfoliates and softens the skin (Win. Win. Win.)

Before you get dressed in the morning: use your dry brush in long strokes along the bones and a circular motion at the joints. Brush your tummy in a clockwise direction (the direction of digestion) to support healthy flush of toxins, and brush from the floor up toward the heart for a healthy boost of natural energy.

These tiny habits are known as continuous improvement tools.

Things that are seemingly ineffectual in the span of your life, yet boost your self care daily by a minimal amount.

And this my friend, is not nothing.

As habit guru James Clear teaches, improvement of just 1% daily, has HUGE benefits over time.

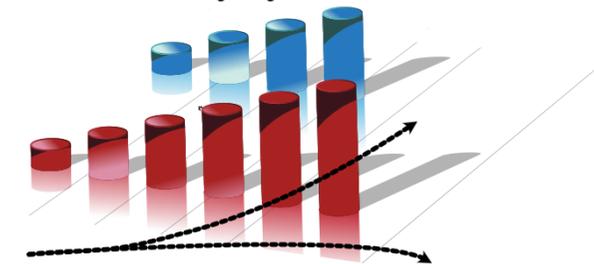
"If you get one percent better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done." James Clear

The most common testimonial I receive from my clients over at The Habit ayurvedic Wellness, is that their life feels completely different, yet it feels like they haven't changed a thing. Through adopting tiny habits, one at a time, you'll be BLOWN AWAY by what's possible. This, my love, is the Every Day Resolution.

This, my love, is the power of 1%.*

The Power of Tiny Gains

1% better everyday $1.01^{365} = 37.78$
1% worse everyday $0.99^{365} = 0.03$



Want to learn more about the simple daily habits of an Ayurvedic lifestyle?

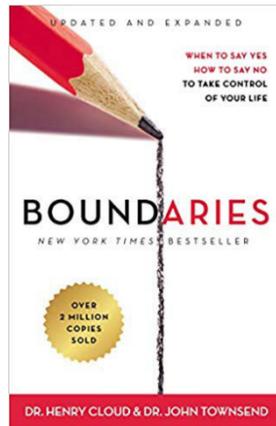
Head to www.thehabit.net/daily-rituals for a free daily checklist.

Links:

James Clear habit change <https://jamesclear.com/>
Jon Kabat-Zinn mindfulness based stress reduction <http://www.mindfulnessinstitute.ca/mbsr>

More on Dry brushing www.thehabit.net/daily-rituals

THE BOOK SHELF



Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No To Take Control of Your Life

by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend
 Lyndall 's Review - "The concepts in Boundaries changed my life for the better, and I rarely say that of any book. It taught me how to be my own person and have healthy, life-giving relationships with other people. I no longer feel guilty for saying no, and I've learned how to relate without draining myself. The book is written from a Christian perspective, but I believe EVERYONE, religious or not, can benefit from the principles of Boundaries. (I would skip the first chapter though because it's cheesy.)"

Brene Brown's Vulnerability TED Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

"Brené Brown studies human connection -- our ability to empathize, belong, love. In a poignant, funny talk, she shares a deep insight from her research, one that sent her on a personal quest to know herself as well as to understand humanity. A talk to share."

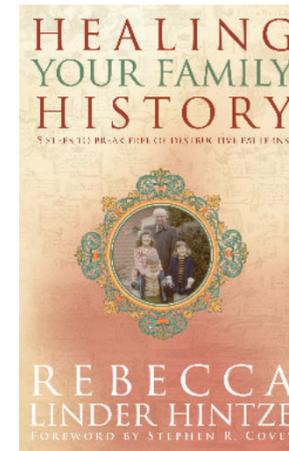


Empath Series by Kim Wuirch

"Just finished Waking up an Empath. Such a great book written from the heart. I learned so much and highly recommend."
 ~Alanna

"Loved this book - it's informative and personal to a point where you feel like you are not alone in your gifts. I learned a lot and felt confident in pursuing more knowledge about being an empathic clairvoyant."
 ~Tracy

Editor, Birth of a Woman



Healing Your Family History by Rebecca Linder Hintze

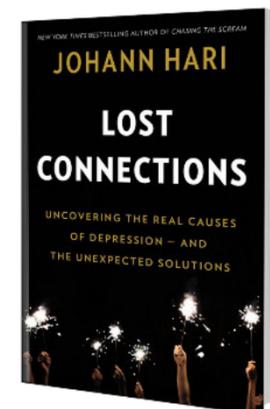
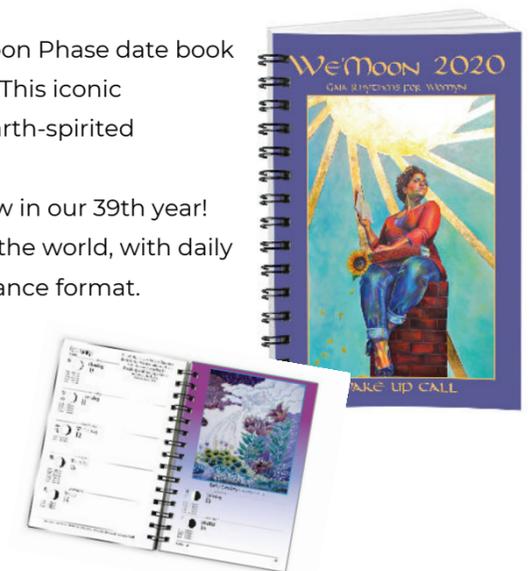
Is YOUR Family History Sabotaging Your Career, Relationships & Finances? Expert says "Absolutely!"



In a new breakthrough book, "Healing Your Family History: 5 Steps to Break Free of Destructive Patterns" (Hay House, October 2006, foreword by Steven R. Covey) Rebecca Hintze, an expert on family patterns, reveals how family belief systems can continue to affect generation after generation. Have you ever wondered why some families reach a ceiling on their earning potential, continually struggle with bad relationships, or can't get along with their siblings and parents? Hintze explains that most of our individual issues originate from family blocks.

We'Moon 2020: Wake Up Call - Your favorite Astrological Moon Phase date book

filled with art and writing by women from around the world. This iconic astrological datebook, is a best-selling moon calendar and earth-spirited handbook in natural rhythms. A visionary collection of women's creative art and writing, now in our 39th year! We'Moon features art and writing from women from around the world, with daily astrological information and moon phases, in a week-at-a-glance format.



Lost Connections by Johann Hari

Lyndall's Review - "Lost Connections explores the roots of depression in modern culture. It's phenomenally well-written and reads like a mystery story, though it's non-fiction. Hari talks about how disconnection from our selves, our past, our communities and our spirits contributes to the modern epidemic of depression. More than that, he gives us suggestions for how we can begin to restore the connections we have lost. Enlightening, and hopefully the start of a broader discussion on cultural amplifiers of depression."

TALES FROM MY MIXED RACE FAMILY.

YES, WE STILL NEED A LIST OF DO'S & DON'TS

DANIELLE FAUST

My brother-in-law's ex-wife's parents crashed our wedding. Yeah. I must note that my wedding was only 8 people so their presence was markedly noticed. I was trying to be on my best behavior so I tried not to let them dampen my spirit. However, I almost lost it when the woman continued to badger me about when we were having children and how cute they were going to be and how much she loved mixed children and curly hair. It was nauseating, and not just because of the alcohol on her breath.

I had been with my husband for 9 years prior to our wedding so I was already familiar with the stares and comments and erasure that is birthed when closed minds meet an interracial pairing. Our interracial marriage has only been legal since 1967 thanks to Loving v Virginia. I had briefly considered how my future children would be affected, but it wasn't until this interloper was hounding me that I really gave my children's racial identity a deeper thought.

My children are now five and seven and are aware that their cultural and racial makeup is different than most of their friends. While it is not my duty to tell them how to identify, I hope to ensure they have a solid connection with, and pride in, their Blackness despite being a minority in a racist society. When I look at my children I see two Black kids and I know society sees the

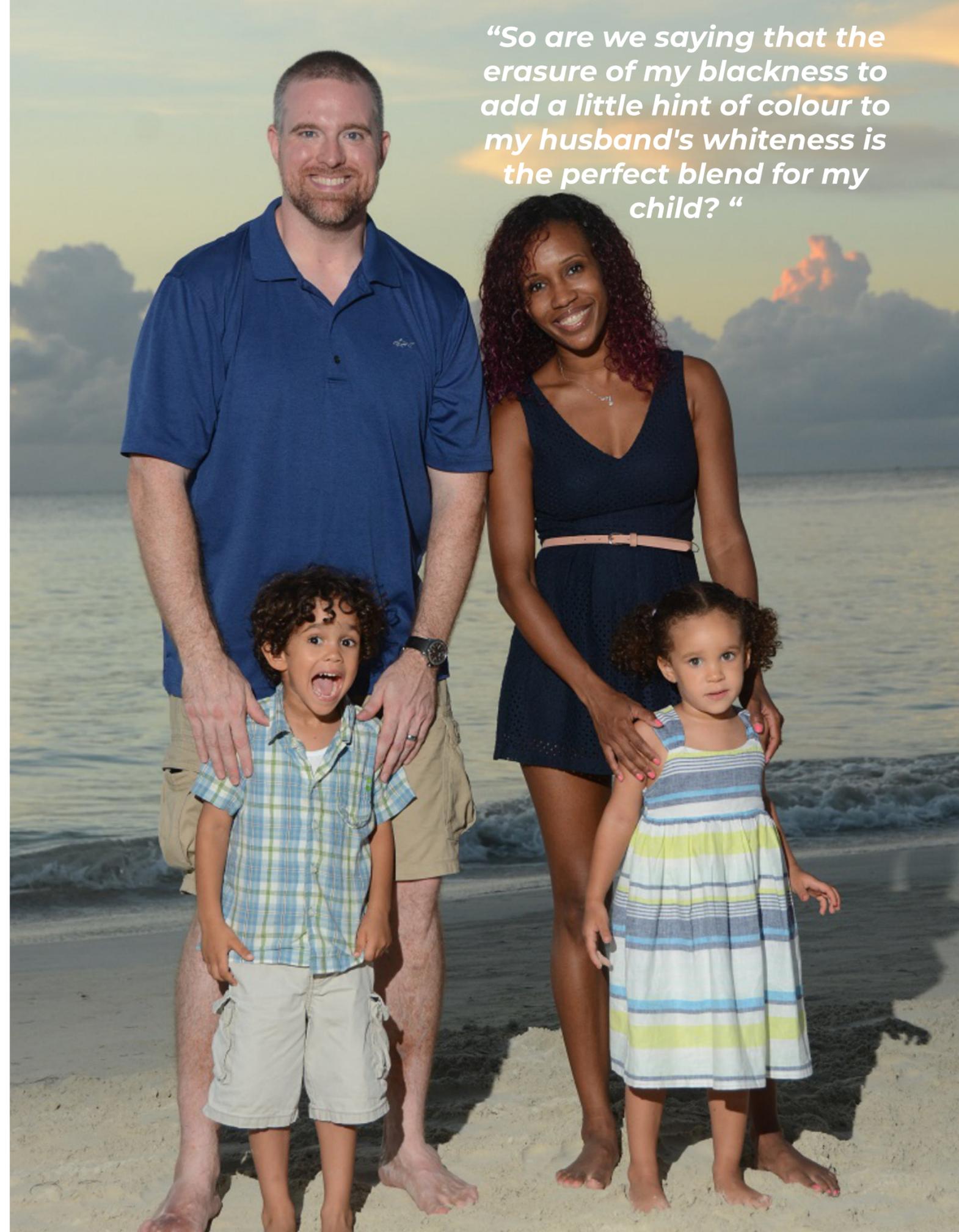
same (and if not Black, then society certainly looks at my children as a non-white other). When I am speaking I very consciously refer to them as biracial and depending on the audience mixed-race.

Having grown up in New York City and then moving to South Florida after my children were born, we've had to deal with our share of close-mindedness; manifesting as well-meaning community members. I've had to correct language, swat hands away from my children and place firm boundaries around them since they are too young to assertively and confidently do it on their own just yet. As a Black woman who already has a lot to deal with socially it is extra exhausting for me to now have to police everyone in relation to my kids.

So I am doing my sisters 'a solid.' To all the women raising biracial (or Black) children this guide is truly a gift for them, written to you. All I ask is that you be mindful. Your intention does not equal impact and your well-meaning comment to a mixed-race family maybe doing harm inadvertently.

Here are a few tips of what NOT to do that might help you refrain from inadvertent emotional violence.

“So are we saying that the erasure of my blackness to add a little hint of colour to my husband's whiteness is the perfect blend for my child? “





TALES FROM ...

or play with a part of their body without their explicit consent.

Now as a black woman with wild curly hair, I have had my share of requests to touch my hair. I have never once had a request from a woman whose hand I had to slap. They don't even make eye contact with me. They just reach out to touch my child's hair as if they deserve to. If this is you, please stop. Now that you have read this piece going forward do not reach out your hand to touch anyone's hair that is not your own without explicit consent of the person whose head you are reaching towards. Your curiosity does not outweigh another human's desire to be touched or autonomy of their bodies or hair. Be mindful.

USING INSENSITIVE LANGUAGE ---

I was at a birthday party for a friend recently and a woman referred to her adopted children as mulatto which took me aback for a variety of reasons. One, I hadn't heard that term used in common conversation since 1993 when I was sticking up for a friend of mine named Jasmine whose mom was Black and dad was white. A coupling that was a true oddity back then. I didn't know what the term meant back then but I knew the way it was used against her meant it must be something bad. Mulatto has an ugly history and can most closely be defined as descending from Mule, the hybrid offspring of a horse and a donkey. It has been historically used to remind mixed white individuals that they are still "less than" due to their non-white blood. If you were not aware of the term or not aware of the history of the term I ask that you research it yourself and be mindful never use it.

Secondly she was using this derogatory term to speak of her own adopted children! At first I wondered if I'd heard her correctly and when I realized that I had, was then hoping she was

from another country or some area where mulatto has no negative connotation as it does here in North America.

If you hear the term being used seriously or in jest let the person know it is completely inappropriate to use those words and the other counterparts are often used for mixed-race individuals such as half breed and gray baby. All should be removed from our lexicon immediately and again I ask you to be mindful. You can say mixed-race, multiracial, biracial, or another such respectful term should you need to. And honestly, how often will you really need to? It is not your place to define or group a racially ambiguous subset of individuals nor is it your place to demand they classify themselves to you, which brings me to the next tip.

ASKING "WHAT ARE YOU" -----

Do not ask "what are you." I am a Black woman. When I look in the mirror I see all this chocolate skin and I don't know how anyone could look at me and see something other than a Black woman. However, even I have had to deal with the question "what are you." I usually just looked down at my skin and then back up at the person questioning me as if they're stupid to which they'll chuckle sheepishly and say "No, where are you from because...bla bla." and trail off realizing how rude and overreaching they are to ask such a question. When you as a white member of the majority ask a minority to identify themselves for you that is almost the peak of white privilege. What you're saying is "hey you are an unidentified other, an alien. I am part of the majority and I demand to know how you identify so I can classify how I view you accordingly."

Besides the fact that how someone identifies is absolutely none of your business and completely inappropriate for you to interrogate them on, it is

"It is very common when I'm out with my family to notice people staring at each member of my household one by one trying to determine who belongs to whom and how."

STARING -----

Staring is never okay whether at an adult or child of mixed heritage or not. However, when it comes to dealing with biracial or multiracial children who often have what we degradingly term "exotic" or unexpected appearances we tend to forget this basic rule of common courtesy. Be mindful of staring at biracial children and mindful of your little ones doing the same. We have come to a place in society where we dissuade our children from staring and pointing at differently-abled people yet have not yet found the wherewithal to avoid, and dissuade our children from, staring and pointing at different looking people with no visible disability.

It is very common when I'm out with my family to notice people staring at each member of my household one by one trying to determine who belongs to whom and how. This happens even more so when my husband, two children and I are out with my nephew who is Japanese and Jamaican. I can almost literally see the gears turning in people's minds trying to figure out the family dynamic as if it's any of their concern.

Try to mind your manners and avoid staring, and certainly avoid pointing and whispering to your neighbor about the family that looks just a bit different from yours especially if the children in said family can see you and hear you.

TOUCHING HAIR -----

I started out my career as a hair blogger and I would do various styles grow my hair out long to donate to a charity and instruct my readers and viewers to do the same so, I am very hair focused hair centric. I notice styles, colors and I'm very interested in the way other people do their hair. Despite this hobby I have never once reached out my hand to touch the hair of a stranger's child, it never occurred to me that petting a child that is not my own would be a thing to do.

Now, I don't believe in violence and I have never been in a physical fight as an adult but I have slapped more women's hands away from my children's heads as they come in for an unsolicited grope of their curls than I can count. Women in Target are the worst offenders. It must be a very privileged mindset for one to think that you have some type of ownership over another person's body wherein you can pet, grab, touch



also a wholly personal decision how they choose to identify.

In North America with its dark history of chattel slavery and the one drop rule (wherein if there is one drop of black lineage in the bloodline the white is sullied and you must now identify as Black) it's a loaded question and you should be mindful not to ask it. That said, how a person identifies is not based on what ethnic group they are part of its a personal decision whether they like to be referred to as mixed, biracial, multiracial, multicultural, black, white, pink purple or other. Whichever box they choose to check (or not check) has nothing to do with you or your curiosity. I asked that you be mindful and if in the conversation you think to ask this question be aware that you may get a response a little sharper then you anticipated.

COMPLEMENTING THE MIX -----

My husband and I took a cruise with my son when he was just about 1 year old. When you look

at my son alone one may assume he is multiracial or of Latino descent. When seeing him flanked by a white dad and Black mom, it's clear that he's a bi-racial boy and it is very often that people, well-meaning as they may be, let us know how much they approve of the mix. I have heard more times than I can count that 'mixed babies are the cutest babies' and on this cruise a woman referred to my son as 'the perfect mix.' I was too annoyed to get into a conversation with her, plus I was a few mojitos deep so I surely wouldn't be polite. My husband removed us from the situation but I was left on my pool lounge wondering which part?

Which part is the perfect part of him because looking at him all he got from me is a tan and some curl to his hair.

In 2019 supermodel Bella Hadid was named the "scientifically most beautiful woman in the world." I know, it's absurd, but stay with me. This actually made news and is not-so-subtly reinforcing white supremacy as it reminds us that the standard of beauty is European based.

So are we saying that the erasure of my blackness to add a little hint of color to my husband's whiteness is the perfect blend for my child? Had he been darker would he still be a

perfect mix? Had his hair been coarser, nose wider or lips fuller? Where does the perfect mix turn into too ethnic? Where does ethnic turn into ugly?

You may not have considered this if you are someone who has said mixed babies are the cutest but I again urge you to be mindful because firstly all babies are the cutest. They just all look like squishy tiny old men.

Second, implying that mixed babies are somehow cuter than single-race babies is inaccurate, biased and dripping in white supremacy. It is often the mixed-race children who have stereotypically Eurocentric features with olive skin and loose curls who are heralded as the face of mixed-race people, and lauded as beautiful while an entire country (I'm looking at you, Brazil) of mixed-raced individuals whose

"The fact is that each day more interracial pairings and mixed race children are created. Luckily there are a lot of societal changes requiring people to be more mindful."

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traditionally African features are more prominent are cast aside as second class.

Now, you may see yourself or someone you know in the examples noted above. Do not take offence. Just do better. You can't feign ignorance now. Interracial couplings are gaining in popularity and while still a minority the rate of mixed-marriages is soaring. The 2010 US census lists 15.1% of marriages as interracial and 2.9% of the US population as biracial (that's about 9 million people, for context). The products of such couplings are a quickly expanding group of biracial "mixed" children for whom we need to be respectful allies.

I encourage you to share these tips with someone who can use the information for good as I know you will.

My husband and I are very fortunate to have been raised in the multicultural landscape of New York City. Queens is the most diverse city in

the entire country by countries represented there. You'd have to try very hard to have a homogenous circle. We are blessed with family and friends who "get it" and when they don't are respectful when asking questions or, like a dope ally, go research the information on their own.

It is folks like them that give me hope for a more racially respectful and comfortable culture.

Listen, we get it. Interracial relationships aren't the norm and biracial children are certainly a minority. The fact is that each day more interracial pairings and mixed race children are created. Luckily there are a lot of societal changes requiring people to be more mindful. I know that after reading this, you will be too. *



ALL THE FEELS

PART I - Terror

*An open dialogue
about depression.*

URSULA JORDAAN

To actively talk about depression is going to take more than one article. How can you possibly describe all at the emotions and effects of depression in just a few paragraphs? You can't, or at least I can't. I've suffered from clinical depression all my life while being completely unaware that I had it. Some may question how that's even possible, but the truth is, if this was my only way of experiencing life, how would I know any differently?

It all started from being bullied as a baby, to being severely sexually assaulted for seven years as a young girl, to more bullying and physical violence up until the age of twenty-one. I grew up in a world of violence, anger, abuse, abandonment, and negativity. I sought out guidance and help, but it wasn't until I was older and experiencing symptoms of C-PTSD (Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) that I realized I'd always lived in this depressive state.

I'm not the only one who has gone through or experienced depression, but the truth of the matter is, we need to continue to discuss it. We need to bring more voices, light, and awareness of this invisible condition that carries a negative stigma in our modern-day culture. I created a podcast called, "The Happy Pill Podcast" to openly discuss the effects of abuse and depression while generating a positive dialogue around our mental health issues. *"Because your mind matters,"* is one of my main mottos.

"You don't have to be abused to be depressed," is another motto I continue to repeat. Depression can come from any life event that you experience. It could be a separation from you and your spirit (or church), a loss of a loved one or lifestyle, it could be lingering physical ailment with a yet to be discovered diagnosis or an emotional trauma that leaks into the mental health spectrum. All of these situations and conditions can play into our mental health state. When one of our four bodies - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual - is out of alignment, it

will have an effect on the other bodies, which is why healing is so imperative. Unless we get a chance to hear more stories with healthy outcomes, people like me will still be marginalized and judged based on a condition that has been an epidemic over the last number of years.

I still suffer some severe insomnia, anxiety, overeating - ugh, sugar - all the while feeling alone and abandoned with the daily struggle of thoughts that want to deceive everything that I've been creating for myself. So, as a regular woman making her way in this world, I want to share how it feels to go through depression and live with this daily. This condition has dictated every aspect of my life for decades, and I do mean everything. There is not one relationship, or

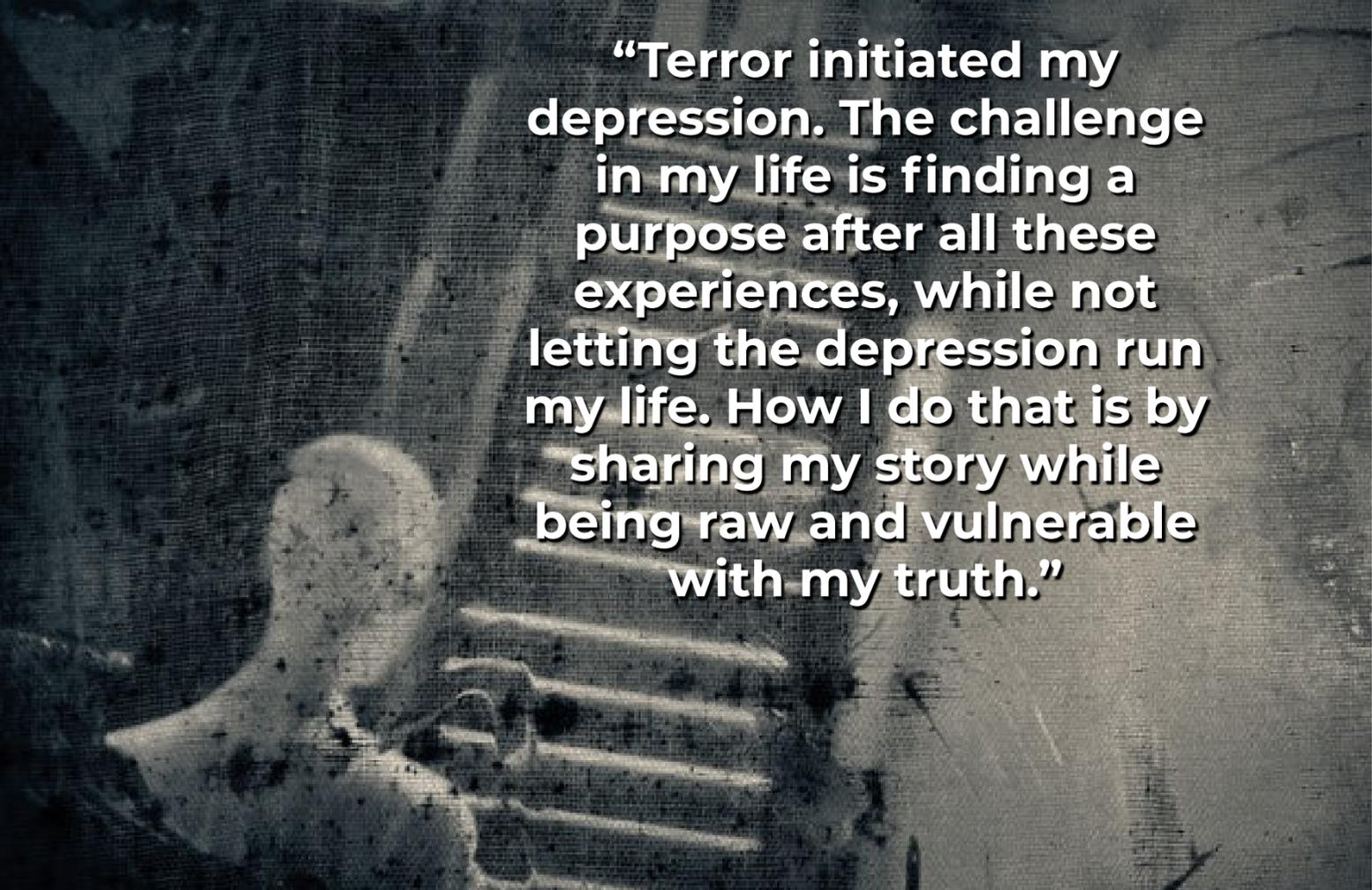
"I'm not the only one who has gone through or experienced depression, but the truth of the matter is, we need to continue to discuss it."

a job, or a creative dream that has not been impacted by depression, whether that moment lasts for a few minutes or several months or years.

I don't recall the first time I was sexually assaulted. It began when I was about three or four years old. In

fact, during those seven years, I wouldn't have any mental memory of those kinds of assaults. I developed what is known as Dissociative Amnesia, a protective mechanism my mind created to safeguard me throughout all those years. However, I can still recall some of the molestations of that period. This man, this friend of the family and lover to my mother, would touch my vagina; he'd smell it then make me smell it and go on to tell me how dirty it was, how dirty I was. He towered over my little body, telling me how good it was that I was a girl and that I should be thankful for being a girl. As a smart little girl, I would refute his statements, telling him I'd rather be boy, but the impact of his fowl words and actions left me hating myself. I hated being a girl, even though I didn't know what it's like to be a girl. All I knew was that I was disgusted by being a girl because of what he did to me. Today, I still struggle with being a woman.

Growing up in the tiny hamlet of Delroy, just



“Terror initiated my depression. The challenge in my life is finding a purpose after all these experiences, while not letting the depression run my life. How I do that is by sharing my story while being raw and vulnerable with my truth.”

outside of Calgary, I remember running through the house to hide when I saw his car steering towards our home, hoping for all hope that he wouldn't find me. My tiny legs ran me up the stairs, dodging into the bedroom I shared with my brother at the time, desperate to hide in our closet. It was there that I discovered for the first time a hidden door at the back of the closet. I had felt a momentary sense of relief that I was going to be safe. However, when I pulled open the door and turned on the light, I panicked. I saw many dismembered mannequin body parts layered in years of undisturbed dust. I was so terrified of what I was seeing that I reacted in the only way a 5-year-old girl knew:

I screamed.
Then he found me.
And I blackout.

The first feeling I'm going to talk about in this series is terror.

I've been afraid my entire life, so I've got fear

down pat. I've missed so many life opportunities because fear has kept me disabled. But terror, that's a whole new level and emotion that I wouldn't want anyone to experience. Ask someone who has experienced terror, and they may tell you the same thing.

Terror shapes my C-PTSD nightmares, and it's the emotion of complete abandonment of my skills and powers. Not because I don't have them, but because the skills to save and protect me won't work. In one of my dreams, I am surrounded by four alcoholic men. I'm outside in the backyard of the place I'm living, and my landlord is asleep. The entire neighbourhood is asleep. The four men approach me from all sides, and I'm sickened *knowing* what their intentions are. I *know* screaming won't help because they are going to shut me up. I reach for my childhood bike as some form of protection, wanting to throw it at them to give me a moment to escape, and I *know* they'll rip it out of my hands and toss it over the fence. Surrounded by them, there is nothing left for me to do. No amount of fighting,

ALL THE FEELS Pt. I

kicking, or screaming is going to help.

Terror is the feeling of *knowing* what is going to happen and having no power to stop it. The result is inevitable.

There will be no one to protect me.
There will be no one to hear me.
There is no God to save me.
The assaults are going to happen, and I'm going to have to live through it. Again.

And again.
And again.

Terror is the declaration of powerlessness. It's your worst-case scenario coming to life, and the body becomes so paralyzed in trauma that the only way to survive is to disassociate, and that's if you're lucky. The mind will shut off or create another personality that can handle what it's experiencing at that moment. Even with disassociation, my body recalls the terror because it's reactivated with nightmares, triggers, or in the process of doing healing work.

So even if I don't have the assault films playing in my mind, every other aspect of me *knows* that something horrible has happened to me. These are what I call, "*sensory memories*." They are in the smells, the sights, the sounds in my environment that can trigger the terror feelings once more. I'm momentarily paralyzed as my body freezes, while I zone in on the emotion that's triggering me. I'm on high alert ready to run because out of the flight, fight, freeze, and fawn options, I always choose to run and hide.

Terror has left me in the flight response mode because my mind is always on alert for the next assault. It very rarely enters the other brain waves like delta or theta because to do that, I have to believe and trust that I am going to be safe. So, one of the first effects of terror is insomnia because my mind is never at rest.

Not being able to enter into a deep sleep and wake up feeling rested, has led to me to be exhausted as a general state of living, but when I am triggered, I go into severe exhaustion. To date, I only recall once day, twenty years ago, that I was

able to wake up and feel rested, just this once - in my entire life. That leaves a lot of sleepless nights and plenty of room for depression to take hold. Because now that the terror is over, depression replaces it. The hollowing feeling that I'm unworthy to be loved and protected.

He didn't attack me because I was a girl; he attacked me because I was powerless. I've endlessly battled the emotions of powerlessness, unworthiness, and ugliness simply because I thought that this is how life is meant to be. As awkward as it is to say, terror has served a purpose in my life. It kept me safe from going outside or staying out late, from wearing feminine clothing and stepping into the power of being a woman; it sheltered me from relationships, and it kept me safe from pursuing dreams and passions. Terror forced me to create a world based on safety, with the assumption that I'm going to be abused. With this background, you can see how limiting my life had become, but as I continue to heal, I can stretch those boundaries to be more inclusive of who I'm meant to be, which means taking my life and power back. Improving my perspective of the world at large while pursuing dreams and goals that I once thought to be too terrifying.

Terror initiated my depression. The challenge in my life is finding a purpose after all these experiences, while not letting the depression run my life. How I do that is by sharing my story while being raw and vulnerable with my truth. I also continue to work with my team to rebuild the life that I dream of.

Empowering myself is realizing that the abuse was never about me. It was never about my innocent little girl that he was assaulting. From here, it's about building myself back up with the tools and techniques that I've learned in my decades of healing, and by sharing what I know. Daily affirmations that I am worthy, working with a team of supportive doctors, therapists, holistic practitioners, and loved ones. Meditating on my divine purpose and how my story can help others while ultimately finding a way to forgive those that have hurt me. It's a daily process for me, but it's one worth pursuing. *



**DEBORAH FOREHEAD
HORTICULTURIST & 1ST DEGREE WICCAN PRIESTESS**

Welcome to the inaugural article of "The Apothecary". Here you will find information on the health, culinary, and mystical properties of different herbs and resins. .

It's only fitting that a first article should highlight the herb that many have used for all three of these property categories – Sage!

The name 'sage' is a common name that typically refers to two distinct types of plants. There is true sage, *Salvia* genus, and, what we frequently refer to as sagebrush, *Artemisia* genus. *Salvia* (true sage), has nearly a thousand species, many of which have medicinal, ceremonial/magical/spiritual and culinary properties. *Artemisia* (sagebrush, and more) has several hundred species, some which are also used ceremonially/magically/spiritually, culinarily and medicinally.

Plants in the genus *Artemisia*, a name derived from the Greek Goddess Artemis, are part of the

Asteraceae (Daisy) family and are primarily comprised of hardy, herbaceous plants and woody shrubs.

These grow in temperate climates of both hemispheres in arid or semi-arid environments. The most notable species are Common Mugwort (*A. vulgaris*), Big Sagebrush (*A. tridentata*), Sagewort (*A. annua*), Wormwood (*A. absinthium*), Tarragon (*A. dracunculus*) and Southerwood (*A. abrotanum*). *Salvia* is the largest genus in the Lamiaceae (Mint) family, consisting of shrubs, herbaceous perennials and annuals. The etymological origins of the word *Salvia* are from the Latin *salvere*, which loosely translates to "to save, redeem or heal". Herbs from both genre are important food sources for a wide range of Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) and are commonly used in a variety of applications. Since this is an article and not a book I thought it best to limit the list to just a few plants, encompassing both genera, with some of their known uses.



CEREMONIAL~MAGICAL~SPIRITUAL USES:

White Sage/*Salvia apiana*, also known as California Sage, Bee Sage and Sacred Sage, is a true sage. It is considered by some, the only sage to use for smudging. I have found there to be differing information regarding the attributes of White Sage. This is in part due to applying the common name to more than one plant in more than one genera. *Salvia* species, in general, are masculine plants, ruled by Jupiter and associated with the element Air and the zodiac sign Aries. Their magical powers encompass immortality, longevity, wisdom, protection and wishes. Predominant application is smudging or burning. *Salvia apiana* is difficult to grow and is mostly wild harvested. Due to excessive harvesting for spiritual practices among non-indigenous peoples, this species of sage is considered threatened. This puts at risk its availability to First Nations peoples, to whom it is very sacred. It's really not part of spiritual traditions outside of First Nations and can be substituted with other Sages such as common sage or *Artemisia ludoviciana*, also known as White Sage.

White sage/*Artemisia ludoviciana*, also known as Western Mugwort, Silver Wormwood, Louisiana Sage and Prairie Sage is not a true sage but is interchangeable with *Salvia apiana*

for smudging and magical uses. It had an aggressive growth habit and can be easily cultivated and is not at risk of becoming a threatened wild species from harvesting. All *Artemisia* species are associated with the Goddesses Artemis, Diana and Hecate. They are feminine plants, ruled by Venus or the Moon, associated with the element Earth and the zodiac sign Taurus or Libra. As a smudge, *Artemisia ludoviciana's* magical powers are for protection and divination. As a smokeable, it is said to enhance astral projection and lucid dreaming. Being placed under a pillow it will encourage prophetic dreaming. As a sachet, *Artemisia* is protective for travellers. The stems of the plant make nice, albeit un-sturdy, wands. Making a herbal water is a good cleanse for ritual tools, especially those used in divination. Hanging over a door will keep unwelcome energies from entering. A garland worn while performing ritual at midsummer, and then thrown into the bonfire at the end of the ritual will ensure protection through the year.

Common Sage/*Salvia officinalis*, also known as Garden Sage, has all the same attributes and correspondences as *Salvia apiana*, listed above. It is an easily cultivated, accessible sage that will serve most magical needs where sage is required.

MEDICINAL USES:

White Sage/*Salvia apiana* has antiseptic qualities and makes a good gargle for sore throats as well as a cleansing rinse for skin abrasions.

Common Sage/*Salvia officinalis* can be used as a





soaking tea to be applied to painful areas and used as a foot soak. Decoctions made from sage can be used for curing coughs. Heated leaves, held against the ear, can reduce ear pain and wrapped around the neck are said to alleviate sore throat pain. It can be used as a diuretic, a local anaesthetic and a styptic.

White sage/*Artemisia ludoviciana* is reputed to have tonic, cardiac, nervine, vasodilatory, diuretic, antiseptic and anti-fungal properties. It can be used for stomach ailments, fungal ailments, and prevention of skin infection at a wound site.

CULINARY USES:

Wormwood/*Artemisia absinthium* is used to make Absinthe, a very potent spirit. It is also used to flavour Vermouth.

Tree Wormwood/*Artemisia arborescens* is indigenous to the Middle East and is usually combined with mint in a tea.

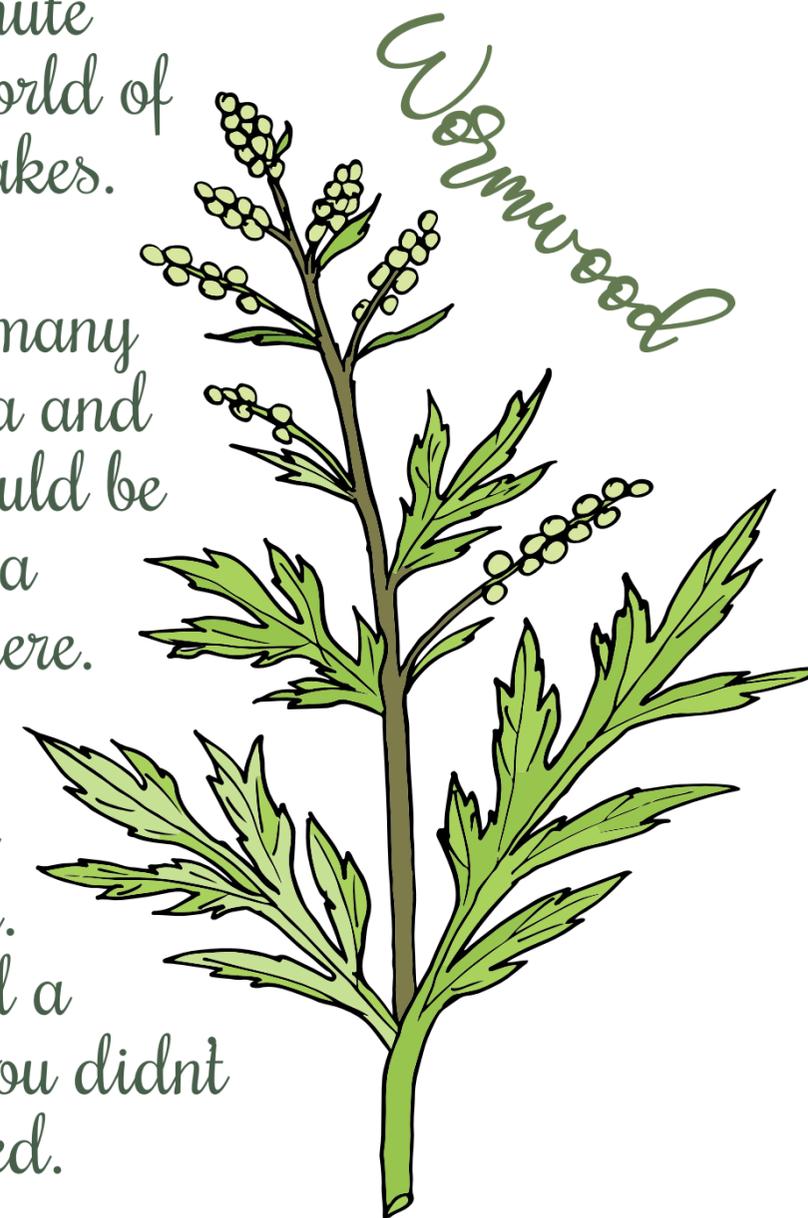
Tarragon/*Artemisia dracunculus* is a very common herb in the culinary world. It is especially important in French cuisine. It is a nice addition to egg, chicken and fish dishes. It has a flavour mildly reminiscent of anise.

Garden or Common Sage/*Salvia officinalis* is probably the best known and most widely used sage in the Western world. It used to flavour many things from poultry to stews and soups to dressings, and many things in between. The leaves can be fried to use as an accompaniment to pasta and meat dishes. Pork is often seasoned with sage. It is also sometimes used as one of the spices in chai tea. It is easy to grow as a garden or house plant and is readily available. It has a savoury, slightly peppery taste.

This is just a minute introduction to the world of sage and its namesakes.

There is so much information and so many species of both *Salvia* and *Artemisia* that it would be impossible to have a complete discussion here.

Take the time to explore the available information a little bit. You might just find a herbaceous gem that you didn't even know existed.





Spring has Spring

**What that means for your
Liver and Traditional
Chinese Medicine**

MELANIE HAGGERT RAc TCMD RMT BFA

What does spring mean to you? For most of us Albertans it means unpredictable weather, snow showers, emergence out of long winter darkness, a little bit more sunshine, palette change of the landscape from cerulean blue skies, bright white snow covered ground into emerging earth tones, mud on our boots, new aromas of thawing dirt, budding poplars and pinches of green emerging from perennials in flowerbeds stretching to the sunshine. In TCM spring is not restricted to a date like our Gregorian calendar date of March 20th, the date of the Spring Solstice. The Sages/Daoists like to express springtime by watching nature. They knew that spring is expected but never knew exactly the exact time or date it arrives. Only the signs from nature, like the green that emerges on hillsides, leaves start to emerge and creeks become full like rivers for a short burst of the accumulated gathering of melting snow. We can all agree that weather cannot be controlled but can accept Spring means "GROWTH"

I am a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. Over the years I've been practicing, I have substantiated, as we head into spring it can be a difficult or tumultuous time for people. It sneaks up on us, like the day that the trees start to pop their leaves, the spring storms or that crazy wind that hits southern Alberta like a prairie spring squall.

Let me introduce myself, my name is Melanie and I practice Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Acupuncture. I absolutely love what I do, my treatment room is my sanctuary, my zen space. I am an artist, a painter and now I include artist of health in that self description. I'm chatting about TCM and the change of the seasons from winter to spring. How does this effect us and how can we prepare and enjoy the change, instead of reacting and feeling really off and out of control. By sharing my experiences in the treatment room and explaining the 5 Elements concepts I hope to help ease into spring with grace and understanding on why we might feel this way.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is based in the knowledge and study of nature and universal experience. The Taoists/Sages taught us to live in harmony with the natural environment as it pertains to holding all aspects of Mind, Body and Spirit in balance so disease never has a chance to flourish.

A colleague quoted this so eloquently:

"TCM views humans as a microcosm of the universe that surrounds them. Humans, and life forms are seen as inseparable from nature. This philosophy also implies that what harms one person damages all people and what injures the earth injures us all."

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Changing seasons using TCM and 5 Element methodology of Organ system, emotions, sound, colour, odour, taste and food choices can assist on creating balance with our bodies and the seasons. The 5 Element philosophy describes the interactions and relationships between nature and life force or "Qi" that flows through them. The 5 Elements are Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood. I will be discussing the Element of Wood and how it pertains to Spring and how to gently guide ourselves through this big seasonal change. What attributes does the Element of Wood hold for us and how we can understand this concept to help with our health and well being?

Spring is the time of Wood, the organ system is the Liver, the colour is green, the flavour is sour, the emotion of the Liver is anger/frustration, the sound of spring is shouting. I know that sounds a bit strange and esoteric, TCM explains concepts in stories and metaphors. We definitely lose some nuances with translations from ancient Chinese to modern english. I will do my best to explain these concepts.

In TCM we talk about the organs in more conceptual ideology. Yes we know that the main job of the liver is to filter the blood coming from the digestive tract before cycling it through the rest of the body. It also detoxifies chemicals and metabolizes drugs. When the blood is being stored in the liver, if there's too many toxins on the Liver it gets "Stagnant" the purification may be inadequate leading to the release of those toxins thru the skin. Impure blood is a cause of eczema, acne, skin allergies and rashes.

In Chinese medicine the

Liver rules the tendons and eyes, supports menstrual blood and lubricates and nourishes the tissues. If there is a disfunction, as in the Liver is not detoxifying well or is in toxic overload we get aches and pains, that feeling of stiffness. If this becomes chronic, toxic blood also feeds all degenerative conditions including cancer and arthritis. We can also be emotionally toxic too, carrying what we feel is the weight of the world on our shoulders, repressing our anger and frustration.

All of our organs have an emotion attached to them and the Liver's emotion is anger and frustration. The Liver is perhaps the most congested organ in the modern human, we deal with so many toxins, from environmental, processed foods, drugs, alcohol, emotions, and stress which lead to Liver disfunction. I tell patients that the Liver likes to be the chill dude, calm, happy helping with smooth flow of energy. Unfortunately with our busy non chill lives, poor eating habits, self medicating with alcohol, drugs, smoking and food the Liver takes a bit of a beating and over time and we get that "Stagnant Liver" feeling.

Signs and symptoms of this are as follows, see if you have any of these?

Quick to temper, road rage, outbursts of anger, easily to cry especially when we are close to having a period, heavy painful periods, poor digestion, heartburn, vertex(top of the head) and temporal(side of the head) headaches, high pitched ringing of the ears when we are frustrated and angry. The Liver is a very important organ in women's menstrual cycle health as it supplies blood to the uterus so if there is a Liver issue like "Stagnation" we might have these symptoms: painful periods, cramping, heavy big clots, intense pre-menstrual symptoms, headaches, emotional outbursts, breast tenderness, acne, pale face, anemia, eye floaters and fatigue. If you notice or have any of these you may have some Liver Stagnation happening. (The Kidneys and Spleen-Pancreas can also effect the flow of menstrual blood as well which I will discuss in the future issues of this magazine.) Unfortunately these signs and symptoms have become very common and "regular" for so many women but TCM can defiantly help ease these issues so we don't dread that time of month.



Traditional Chinese Medicine

When we suppress the emotions of anger and frustration it also taxes the Liver with emotional toxins.

I'm not saying start yelling at everyone that pisses you off but maybe the frustration can lessen if we take care of the Liver. When I get patients that are feeling stuck, holding in anger and frustration I recommend to let it out, not at anyone, but in a safe place. I love to get in my car and let it out, yep screaming to the top of my lungs, vehicles are usually pretty soundproof and it feels great to move this "Qi". Mine usually ends in tears and I feel like I have lost emotional baggage that could fill a steamer trunk. Thinking becomes much more clear, usually I come to some resolution. I also recommend gratitude for our Liver/Wood, go hug a tree. It's spring and the Wood element, I find it very grounding to hug a tree, thank it for all it does. We all need to hug more trees!

What we put in our bodies is as important as dealing with our emotions. I don't like to call anything a "diet" as for many people diet sounds restrictive, negative and historically has set us up for failure. I'm sure we have all been on different diets, some work, some don't and I feel they can cause more stress which we are trying to alleviate. Lets call it a lifestyle change or food change or whatever works for you. What we eat can have monumental positive changes as well as negative outcomes too. I like to focus on the positive, I suggest really notice what we put into our bodies. Intention is an important quality of nourishment. If we slow down, sit to eat, have few distractions like the nightly news and are calm and have

gratitude/intention, our food will nourish us, almost always we have much better digestion. If we resent what we are eating that intention gets swallowed and over time manifest physically with digestive issues. We generally know that



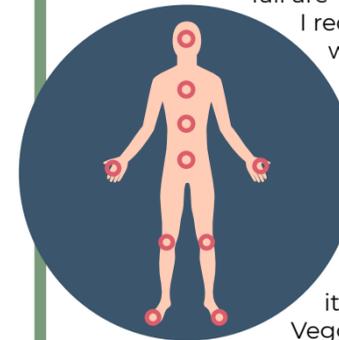
food is our fuel, to have long term wellness we need cut out the processed foods, refined sugar and start eating a clean diet of simple food. Lets start with vegetables, your mom was right, eat your veggies! Liver health depends on it. I encourage everyone to start cooking at home.

One of my favourite books on TCM and nutrition by Paul Pitchford says:

"Nutritional principles for healing and balancing the Liver for spring cooking can be fun and a change from soups, stews, rich, higher fat and bland winter ingredients. In the spring we tend to eat quicker and less amounts to cleanse the body of excess fats that have accumulated over the winter months of eating comfort food. Foods to stimulate the liver out of winter stagnancy are as follows: pungent herbs and spices, watercress, all members of the onion family, mustard greens, turmeric, basil, bay leaf, cardamon, marjoram, cumin, fennel, dill, ginger, black pepper, horseradish, rosemary various mints, angelica root. Try not to eat too much extreme hot foods as they can damage severe liver stagnation. To much to quickly can set the liver to overheat and get even angrier. Foods to help with that stagnancy are mild pungent food: beets, taro, strawberry, peach, cherry, pine nut, leafy veggies like the brassica family, cabbage, turnips, kohlrabi, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts and arugula."

"Bitter and sour foods can help move the Liver stagnation and winter depression. Sauces or dressings for the veggies made out of vinegars, good oils and a bit of sweetness from honey or brown rice syrup can add flavour and aid in digestion. Unrefined vinegars are the best like Apple cider, brown rice, balsamic or rice-wine vinegars. Using small amounts of good oils can help as well. Make sure its of good quality like almond oil, olive oil grape-seed oil, sesame oil."

If you feel the need to do a cleanse, spring and



fall are the best time to do a cleanse. I recommend a gentle cleanse with food. I learned this cleanse information from a wise teacher and I use it all the time when patients are wanting to do a cleanse and clean up their diet. Instructions as follows: Omit all processed food, sugar, caffeine, processed items, even flours, breads etc. Veggies, meat and grains on a plate. Again back to simple foods, made at home. I like to have patients cleanse a little, then build a little, cleanse a little and build a little. I find that if we go fast and hard into cleanse we get headaches, pimples, rashes or physically ill and cannot finish the cleanse 2-3 days in, not only do we feel horrible we also feel totally defeated and didn't help our Liver at all. I recommend setting a date to start this whole new food change, please be gentle with yourself, you will fall off the cart so to speak but not to worry, brush yourself off, get up and keep going. Don't give up because when we put good thing into body, our body does good things!

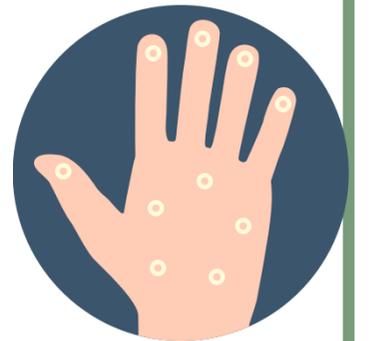
Starting with a weekly meal plan is helpful, grab some yummy recipes of ingredients you like and will eat. If that seems overwhelming try those companies that deliver prepared uncooked meals in a box to your door. They give you lots of healthy choices, and in turn some confidence in the kitchen cooking. The food is healthy, tasty with great portion control. Then you can move onto preparing your own meal plan and cooking. Not only will this nourish and assist the Liver to what it does best, but all our other organs will benefit from this as well.



There are 12 meridians or pathways in the human body and Liver is one of them. Along those pathways are acupuncture points which correspond to the organ system and have physical phenomenon when the points are activated from needles(acupuncture) or pressure(acupressure). The Liver meridian starts on the inside tip of the big toe and ascends up the medial side of the foot to

the lower leg, inside of the knee continues up the inside of the thigh around the genitals, ascends to the upper hypochondriac space by the ribcage you guessed it to the Liver. It then ascends along the neck and back of the throat to link up with the tissues surrounding the eye, ascends across the forehead to the vertex of the head. If you can picture that, it might make much more sense when we get headaches from say hangovers, stress, to period headaches. We also hold lots of tension in our necks and sometimes we also feel like there is something stuck in our throats, that's the Liver telling you it needs a bit of attention and love.

The practice of TCM can help acute health issues, chronic issues and what I find the best attribute is that its a lovely preventative medicine. We can treat all three levels of issues with our sessions. When you find great practitioner they assist with prevention in what questions they ask. I recommend finding an registered Acupuncturist and treating yourself to some treatments especially with the change of the seasons . *



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Yoga

and the enticement of enlightenment

JESICA MESSOM

Before I began this crazy yoga journey, I was a single mom working 2 jobs to make ends meet, while trying to focus on my physical and mental health. I had a history of depression, PTSD, anxiety and being super stressed out, but somehow it all felt normal. It was as though I was just holding on in hopes that life would not change and would stay consistent. I wasn't unhappy by any means, but something was missing and I knew deep down that life was not meant to be this way for me.

2011 is when I met one of my beautiful soul mates, Jaycee, who would quite literally change my entire life. She came to me in the form of a best friend, a true soul sister who was the opposite of what I had become. She introduced me to yoga after we discovered our love for fitness and failed attempt at running together. (Seriously, I give props to you runners out there, you are all champions.) She brought magic into my life, she opened up a path for me which connected my mind and soul, she inspired me everyday, just by being herself so authentically.

Afterwards we tried yoga together at home using her Kathryn Budig DVD and let me tell you, it wasn't for me. I felt like yoga was either for you or not for you, and yoga was not for me. The following week, Jaycee convinced me to try a class at a studio, which was set to 3 billion degree because apparently that is fun. I was slipping everywhere, no one was laughing or falling. It was so serious, so freaking hot and also, stinky, like very hot and sweaty with food combined. However, at the end of the class, it felt like I was in a competition with myself, not with anyone else. I was just so focused and present that I didn't even

realize how focused and present I was. It took a few days of absorbing the experience and realizing that I wanted more of that 'awareness'. The true realization being; I needed yoga in my life. From then on, I just kept on practicing at home, meditation became a regular part of life for me. It was good.

Something funny happened over the course of 2 years, it was like this push in me, this voice in my

“Stepping into my first yoga class at school was almost unbearable for me, I have a history of being bullied in school ... which caused huge anxiety for any event where I have to walk into a place of strangers.”

head that kept saying how I needed to explore this further somehow. Well, I am very good at ignoring my inner voice and ignoring all signs until I see fit. After proceeding to ignore this voice, life went on and I got back together with my little girls dad, we got married and had another daughter. I practiced yoga every single day through pregnancy and through post-delivery to help me heal, I just loved it so much. It made me feel like a better person. I was

more patient and relaxed, I felt calmer and in tune with myself. Along with the amazing support, love and help from my husband, I signed up for yoga teacher training in Calgary.

Stepping into my first yoga class at school was almost unbearable for me, I have a history of being bullied in school (from grade 5 to the end of grade 10) which caused huge anxiety for any event where I have to walk into a place of strangers. If I am being honest, I contemplated being 'sick' for class and just not showing up...but I signed up. If yoga had taught me anything thus far, it was that I had to challenge those thoughts and habits and do something different. I arrived later than most, about 1 minute prior to class

starting, *hello anxiety*. I set up, sat down and observed, trying to slow my heart rate and my thoughts. Big sigh. I made it.

In the first couple weeks of class, we started to learn about philosophy and the beautiful history of yoga. That is when I truly and finally heard some solid information about enlightenment. Up until this point, it was just something that only Gurus could accomplish, and from the look of it it turned you into the happiest, healthiest and most content little person ever.

As someone who has struggled with severe depression since I was 12, what I wanted most in life was to just be happy, I would even settle for just being neutral! The hope and desire to wake up every morning without tears, fears or anger, was what my soul had been longing for. My ideology thought that this path I was on now, would surely lead me to enlightenment. If I could commit enough time and energy, I would one day soon be one of those zen moms without the wine needed to make it there. No more screaming or yelling, no more frustrations and fights over my lack of knowledge on how to parent 'perfect children and have them do everything exactly as you say'. Let me acknowledge now, that this ideology is completely unrealistic and dare I say, somewhat self-abusive to try to force all emotions away except the positive ones.

With every class that passed, I felt like I was just living a dream. It felt like enlightenment was just around the corner, it was a concept I finally understood. It was a path that was laid out in front of us, we were basically people of the

“Let me acknowledge now, that this ideology is completely unrealistic and dare I say, somewhat self-abusive to try to force all emotions away except the positive ones.”

universe delivering this slice of self-peace and love that comes in the form of a yoga practice, which leads you to enlightenment. Almost every yogi there was feeling the same, we were on that yoga high and it was glorious. We all looked forward to advancing our spirituality, hopefully reaching enlightenment in fleeting moments, and we all looked forward to the beautiful, peaceful and positive healing that yoga was offering. Most of us graduated 3 short months later, and from there we all went our own ways. Mine was to open a small intimate home yoga studio for beginners and start teaching right away, others simply advanced their own personal practice, some even travelled afar.

What was interesting to me, was that this was the opening of Pandora's box for my life. What I thought the personal spiritual journey would be: beautifully healing the traumas and issues I had accumulated all my life, and replacing them with positivity, maybe counselling, and a whole bunch of yoga enabling me to let go of what no longer served me.

What my spiritual journey actually has been: healing the traumas and issues I had accumulated all my life, by dealing with them in a real, honest and raw way. Multiple specialized counsellors, medication, proper exercise, self-reflection/meditation, a marriage that mirrored me and my issues (I originally thought everything was his fault, or at the very least, he had a massive role in the bad parts while I was trying hard to make it work), kids who mirrored my emotional state AND all of the generational traumas that existed. One solid mental breakdown, a couple close call breakdowns, severe depression on multiple occasions, anxiety, stress, the close call to the end of my marriage two times, the friendships that have died, ties that have been severed due to toxicity. Oh, did I mention the withdrawal and seclusion from the public and most people, the tears and realizations, the weight of 'my truth' and what it was that I was carrying around and how it was causing so many issues?

It was painful.

I didn't expect this. I didn't know that healing my

trauma was going to be so painful. I didn't know that trying to get rid of all this baggage meant that I was going to feel so bad for so long, especially since I thought that life was going to get easier and stay consistent. I did not expect this at all. No one had ever talked about it, no one had told me I might feel this way. So there I was, once again, thinking how I failed at this. How I am just bound to be unhappy and always be depressed. How could I be such a failure, when I was so sure of this? I was given a bloody sign from the Universe, or so I thought, was I messing that up as well? Was I just wishing signs to be there? What is my purpose if yoga and healing others is not it? This is the Enticement of Enlightenment.

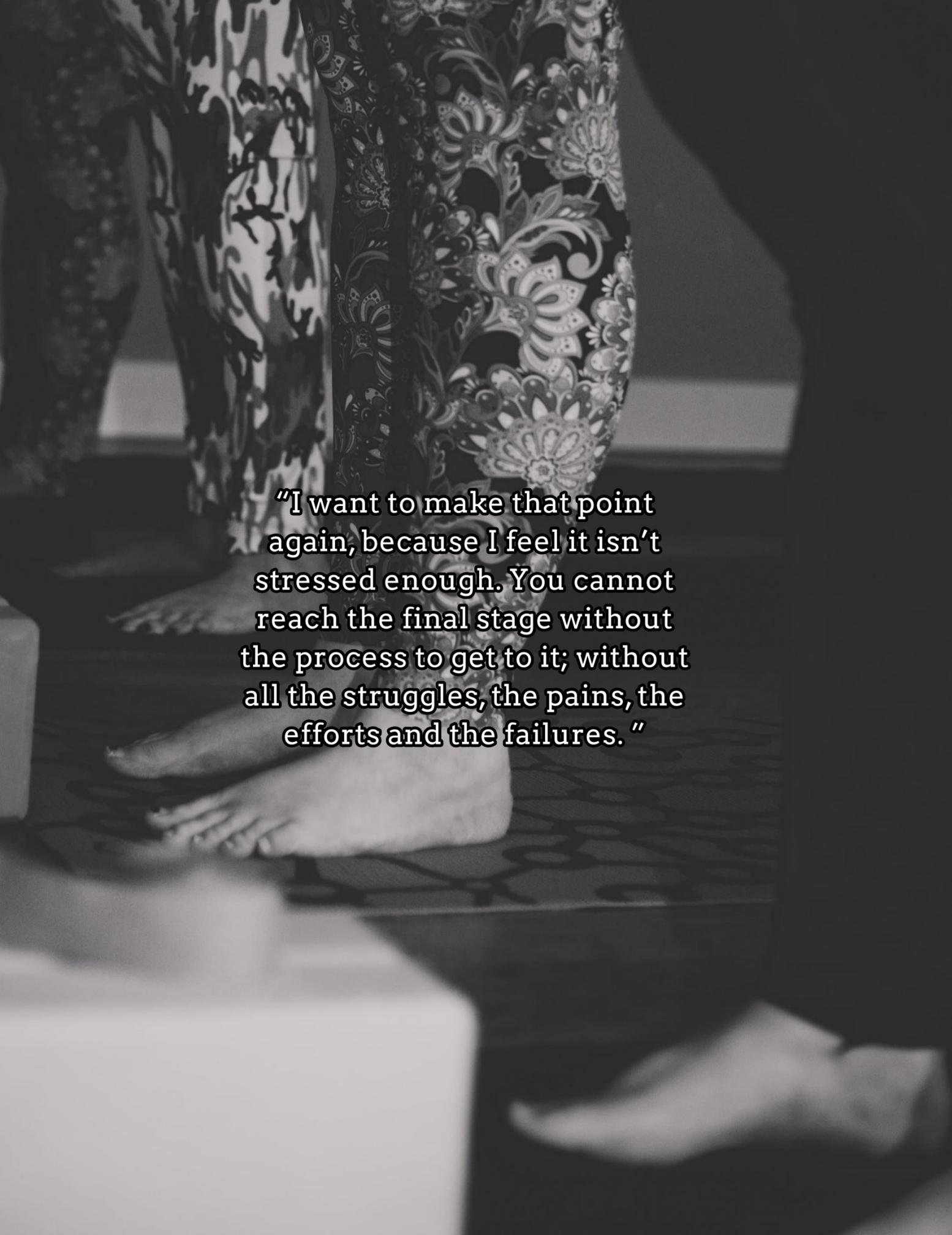
“I didn't expect this. I didn't know that healing my trauma was going to be so painful.”

Once again, I was feeling alone, but this time, I felt I couldn't tell anyone because I was a yoga teacher and the one that others come to for answers. I am so light, and airy, and fun and positive, I do such a good job at helping people feel good, how could I

share that I didn't feel good? That I actually may need someone to do those things for me. I wanted that help. I wanted someone to say magical words to me that soothed my soul and made me sleep well. I remember seeing all the yoga teachers posting their lives online, how they all looked so happy, fulfilled and like this was not an issue for any of them. What was I doing wrong? Why can't I just be happy?

I'm not sure what changed or in what moment it changed. It seems every day or at least once a





“I want to make that point again, because I feel it isn’t stressed enough. You cannot reach the final stage without the process to get to it; without all the struggles, the pains, the efforts and the failures.”

week somethings happened, or something is said, that shifts my mindset, forcing me to look deep within at my own beliefs, intentions or perceptions.

It is hard to put into words each series of events that happened which opened my ‘third eye’ if you will. In truth, it wasn’t one event, there was nothing big. Instead it was a bunch of little things, daily, that I started to notice. Things, such as, how my body reacts when my girls are starting to raise their voices and get aggressive with each other. Or the awareness I gained seeing the daily thoughtful act from my husband to try to be as quiet as possible while he gets ready in the morning to go to work, even when he absolutely does not want to. Small changes such as taking a breath when my girls are playing and screaming instead of cleaning and tidying like I’ve asked them to, not yelling at them in a moment of chaos and being rushed. The gentle tone I take and the compassion I offer to them when they are fighting. Acknowledging the fact each of them are rightfully upset and emotional and need help to navigate, instead of being scolded. Noticing things like needing to bring more exercise into my life because I was getting agitated while driving, or responding to people with uncalled for sass because I was overwhelmed or lacking a connection with my husband.

The enticement of enlightenment is what drew me in and what originally caused me to pursue yoga. The sensations on the mat kept me coming back to practice, but the pure contentment that I have for life now, is what makes me know I made the right choices.

I have gone through so many emotions and events which have allowed me realize how much yoga has helped me in life, and not just my physical practice on the mat which comes and goes with my moods and activity levels. The practice of yoga in my life for the last year has mostly been off the mat, with healing my human brain and emotions, strengthening my relationships to be genuine and aligned with my soul, facing and dealing with all the trauma I have been carrying. Finding ways to truly be kind to myself, to love myself exactly as I am with all

my faults and be okay with it.

The forgotten part of yoga in the Western Culture is what is most transformative and special.

The eight limbs of yoga help us to find the peace within, as lame as that may sound. It is basically like a treasure map to the spiritual world, and it goes as such...

Yama is ethical standards and how we behave.

Niyama is our self-discipline and spiritual observances.

Pranayama is our breath-work and connecting the body, breath and emotions together.

Pratyahara is the withdrawal of our senses outwardly and drawing them internally.

Dharana dealing with the distractions of the mind that will prevent us from having a successful meditation – learning to focus on a sole energetic point in the body.

Dhyana is one step further than Dharana, it is meditation with awareness of all, or at least, lack of one focal point. Ideally this is where we meditate with few or no thoughts at all.

Samadhi is the final stage, but should never be the goal, as a goal implies rushing towards the end result without true slow appreciation for the journey which will eventually bring you to the final stage. Of course, without the slow appreciation of the journey and being able to live each moment and challenge, you can never attain that final stage.

I want to make that point again, because I feel it isn’t stressed enough. You cannot reach the final stage without the process to get to it; without all the struggles, the pains, the efforts and the failures. More importantly though, we don’t want to do that, even if it seems like we do.

Through yoga, I struggled so much in my marriage. I really thought that my husband was the biggest cause of our issues, that his drinking and working late was what was driving me to pull

Yoga and the enticement of enlightenment

away from him and withdraw my love from our marriage. I listened to others and compared our situations, compared my husband to theirs, compared myself to other wives and moms. I didn't realize that I gave my power over my own human life to others. I gave them the power to make me happy or unhappy, the power to determine my future, the power to determine my own self-esteem and confidence; the power to control my entire life was given away. The most incredible realization though, was that I gave it away to no one in particular, it was just out there for anyone to take and abuse, and they did, and they will continue to do so to anyone who allows them to.

That really opened my eyes to what I feel this whole journey has led to so far, the fact that I was this traumatized person who had to take back her power. I had to face what I was hiding from and had forgotten, open up and be vulnerable with only people who are good for me. Ending relationships that were toxic, getting rid of the generational trauma that would continue with my girls if I did not commit to dealing with it and healing it. Then most importantly, at this time anyways, being able to be completely transparent without shame. Meaning; standing up for what I believe in and not letting someone steamroll over me, taking back my voice and allowing that 'bossy girl' to come back and be firm and expressive and not be afraid to ask for what I need.

This yoga journey has meant so much more than just the appearance of yoga in the western culture. It went so deep into my human experience, it peeled away the layers of human input and influence and opened me up to the true Self. I still have trouble sitting in meditation

and connecting to the universe, God, higher Self, or whatever you want to call it. I still have anger and get annoyed at people for doing otherwise normal human things. I still deal with fear of not being good enough. More often than not though, I enjoy the simplicity that is life in the moment. I have gained an awareness that reminds me to stop, take a breath, look around and observe, even for a moment, and just allow myself to sense what I feel or think and then carry on. It has allowed me to avoid fights, it has allowed me to listen to my gut/intuition and act more in alignment with myself instead of a reaction out of some weird twisted childhood issue I carried into adult life. It has allowed me to see moments of

love, that I otherwise would have completely missed. It has allowed me to see how others show their love for me and therefore allowed me to receive it. It has showed me where I feel bad in behaviours and how I can change it. Such as wanting to be a better listener, for at times I find myself wanting to relate and express it. Or when I was about to not let someone cut in during traffic, only to realize that act made me feel

negative physical reactions. Where relaxing and letting that person in allowed me to feel better and more aligned with who I actually am as a person.

I am so thankful that I followed my path and listened to the quiet whispers of intuition leading me to this life I had dreamt of for so long. I am so thankful for all the heartaches I have endured in my life, because it allowed me the strength to get through the last few years of transformation and growth, as well as gain the moral compass that I have now. I am thankful that I didn't reach enlightenment but chased it, because it led me here, to exactly who I am and where I belong. *

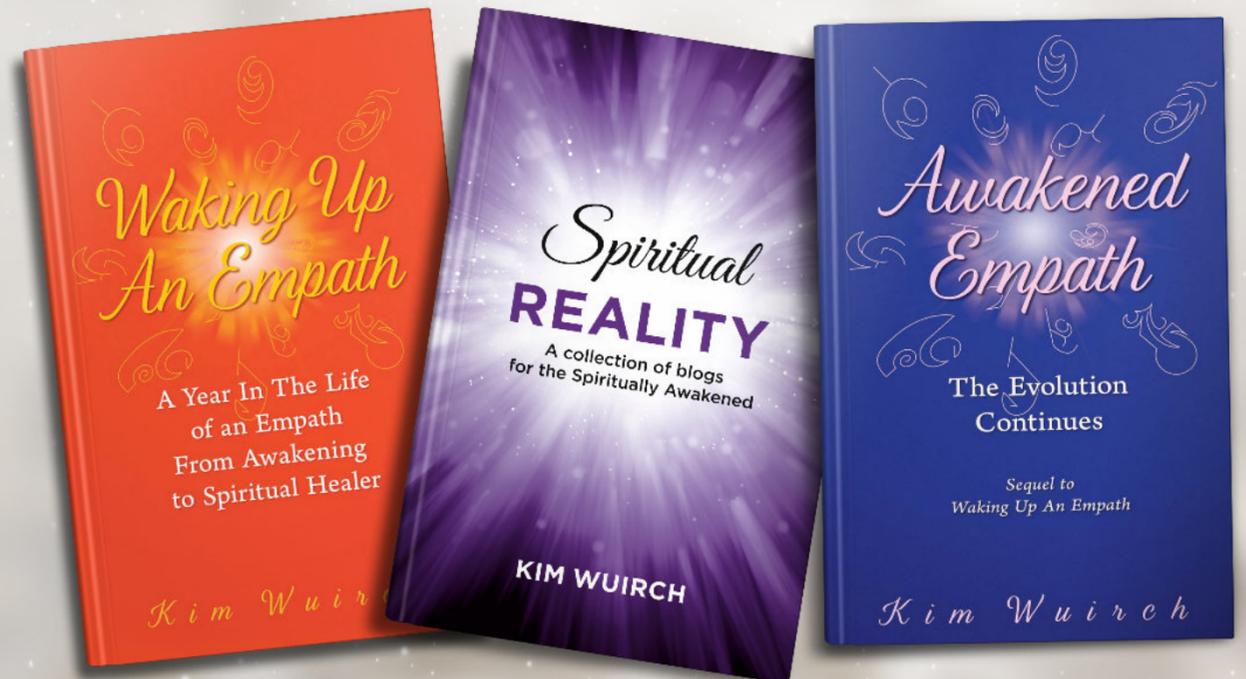
“Let me acknowledge now, that this ideology is completely unrealistic and dare I say, somewhat self-abusive to try to force all emotions away except the positive ones.”



Kim Wuirch is a spiritual author, healer, & trainer. She works closely with her partner Ken Lewicki, who is a channeller.

Together, they assist people worldwide to be healthier and develop their spiritual abilities.

Kim Wuirch



Spiritual Awakening

KIMBERLY WUIRCH

Are you one of those people who was born with spiritual abilities and shut them down when you were a kid? Well I am one of those people, and this is a story about my spiritual awakening and then re-awakening.

When I was a child, I had “imaginary” friends. I would have tea parties with them and talk with them, although to the observer it appeared that I was alone. I had heightened physical senses, and unbeknownst to me, other worldly senses that allowed me to better read emotions and intentions and see those who are not in physical form. I knew when adults were lying. I knew when an adult was dangerous and to be avoided. I knew when classmates were struggling emotionally, even if they appeared otherwise. I was labeled sensitive for this reason.

Then one day I shut down, I was only a child.

We all have our reasons for shutting down our abilities, whether it's trauma, fear of the unknown or simply because we were told it wasn't real or did not fit with certain belief systems. In my case it was trauma. I faced sexual abuse, physical violence, verbal abuse and the abuse of a parent. Something that no child should ever have to be forced to endure.

It was a particularly rough day, when I shut my 'friends' out. My usual chores on the farm were to feed and water the animals which included, chickens, turkeys, rabbits and horses. Every morning I got up before school to do my chores and the same



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use our abilities, or we can choose to block them out or ignore them. Now thankfully I didn't shut down ALL my abilities. I still had psychic abilities, which would surprise me from time to time, but I would usually brush it off as 'coincidence'.

Fast forward to adulthood.

What do you think happens when you block something like a spiritual ability for a long period of time? It's like putting up a dam to block a waterfall, eventually the dam will break. I was 36 years old when the dam broke and the result was turmoil, chaos, exhaustion and having my abilities back full force. Suddenly my whole life was in question. The energy that was blocked for so long flooded my body, physically tiring me as I tried to adjust to wave after wave of information and source energy. Souls and angels visiting me and expecting me to understand them and work with them. The confusion I felt seemed insurmountable. I felt isolated, because I thought things like this only happened to people who had a mental breakdown. I thought maybe I was dying, and that's why I could see and talk to dead people in my head.

A spiritual awakening can be powerful and confusing for anyone, even if you were born with certain abilities. Do not underestimate the power of the universe. If you were born with certain abilities and talents, there's a reason for it. You can only ignore and deny it for so long. The truth is, if I hadn't blocked out some of my abilities, I would have grown up learning how to use them effectively. I would have had time to adjust to the increases in energy over a longer period of time and my physical body would have been better able to accommodate the growth. The growing pains would have been less drastic.

Of course, it didn't happen that way. I did block them, and everything did hit me like a ton of bricks at age 36. The barriers I had built were crumbling fast. When we create blocks like the ones I did, you are blocking more than just spiritual abilities.

The barriers keep people from getting close, keeping out the good (like love) with the bad, while at the same time repressing all our emotions too. I was often seen as cold or distant, though I never felt that way, I know now that it was because of the barriers I had erected. It was a slap in the face when I couldn't keep the barriers up anymore and everything I had been blocking out came right at me full force. At the same time everything that was never fully expressed for so many years, all those repressed emotions, came pouring out.

I was a hot mess. I laugh when I hear people talk about how wondrous their spiritual awakening is. Mine was gut wrenching and hard.

I was on an emotional roller coaster. I was fatigued. The source energy that flooded my system triggered detoxing. My hormones were erratic. My brain was bombarded with information. No essential oil or crystal was going to be enough for the onslaught, as I soon discovered.

I realize it's not like this for everyone, but I know I am not the only one that has had this experience or something similar. Many of us in the spiritual industry joke around that it's not a real spiritual awakening if it doesn't hurt at least a little. When you have a lot of healing to do, it can make the spiritual awakening process that much more challenging because it dramatically lasts longer. At first, I thought I just needed to heal from this lifetime of traumas and events. Oh no, that would be too easy! All too quickly, past life events were coming up to be addressed and healed. All the things that triggered me had a root cause, sometimes in multiple lifetimes! It seemed like a never-ending list of things that needed to be uncovered and resolved. To heal and to grow spiritually I had to forgive, let go, clear out and resolve every little hurtful thing that ever happened to me, or in some instances, where I hurt someone else.

when I got home from school. Well, on this particular day I did my chores, I apparently forgot to close the gate properly and one of the horses got into the chicken pen. The way I was reprimanded was with a solid steel toed boot kicked into my rear end, while being yelled at for my misdemeanour. Crying I ran to get the horse out of the pen and back where he belonged. As I sobbed loudly, I kept repeating the horse's name trying to call the horse to do my bidding. Of course, in my stressed state I forgot the one rule of horsemanship, don't stand behind the horse and do anything that would scare them. For my efforts I was kicked in the stomach. Luckily, I only caught the tips of the hooves, so it could have been much worse. Eventually I calmed down and got the horse into the right pen and the gates properly secured.

Later that day in my room, I blamed my "imaginary friends" for not protecting me from the horrors I faced. I directed my anger and fear at them and shut them out, having no one else to direct my emotions at. I sort of knew I was doing this, because I squeezed my eyes up tight and I said aloud that I never wanted to 'see' them again. In my mind I made them go away. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I didn't make them go anywhere. They stayed by my side through childhood and into adulthood. All I really did was shut down my clairvoyant and clairaudient abilities; to see and hear souls and angelic beings.

It may come as a surprise to some people that we have the power to do this. We can choose to keep and

Spiritual Awakening

A spiritual awakening is an uncovering of the truth, both internal and external.

We all find different methods and modalities helpful for managing the symptoms of a spiritual awakening and to continue our spiritual development. I personally tried as many different things as possible. I went to many different practitioners and the ones that worked well for me, or that I knew I would enjoy practicing, I became trained in. Initially the training was an attempt to better help myself. I didn't have grand aspirations of becoming a healer or helping others. I was simply trying to get my own life and self sorted out.

Just to give you an idea of the options available, here's what I was trained in:

- USUI Reiki Master
- Karuna Reiki Master
- Violet Flame Reiki Master
- Bio Energy
- Reflexology
- Akashic Records
- EFT Tapping (Emotional Freedom Technique)

Other forms of healing that I utilized, but did not get training in:

- Body Talk
- Acupuncture
- Rain Drop Therapy
- Massage
- Access Bars
- Channeling

We all want the short cut. The easy route. I know I did, and most of my clients do too. Yet I would be doing you a disservice if I said that was even

possible, when I know it's not. The best things in life are worth working for because at the end of the day, when you look back, you earned it. You know how you got there because you got the experience, and you gained the understanding that goes with it, so you cannot avoid the discomfort or the emotions.

A spiritual awakening is more than just a connection to something bigger than yourself.

It's an opportunity.

As I look back now, I am so grateful for the journey. I understand the ins and outs because I had to figure most of it out for myself. I started with google and eventually realized that not everything is available on google. I learned from the hardships and from trial and error. I learned forgiveness. I grew and developed from the constant healing. Through it all, the most important thing I learned about having a spiritual awakening, is that it doesn't happen overnight and cannot be rushed. How long it takes is as unique as a fingerprint. What triggers an awakening will be very personal to each individual.

I will say this though, nothing has ever been worth more to me than the peace of mind, body and spirit I have achieved after years of working to better myself. I know that I am healthy. I know that I am content with my own company. I know that I am strong. I know who I am now.

My advice to you; stop blocking your abilities, stop hiding yourself and most of all stop avoiding. You do yourself such a disservice and only prolong the inevitable. Say yes to your spiritual awakening and meet it head on. For when you do, I will be here if you need me, as will many others who have chosen a spiritual line of work. There are many dedicated souls who work for the light.

Maybe you will become one of them. *

Love and Light

Kim Wuirch

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Website: www.KimWuirch.com

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transform all your food scraps into microbe and nutrient rich compost and fertilizing tea in just 4 to 6 weeks
1. ADD 2. SPRINKLE 3. BURY 4. GROW
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BOKASHI LIVING

Bokashi composting is simply a process of using your valuable food waste to generate garden friendly microbes, yeast, and fungi (all of which are contained in a dormant state within the bokashi bran).

These microbes come alive and multiply when they are added to your food waste, and, when dug into your garden, immediately begin to benefit the soil structure and plants living in it.

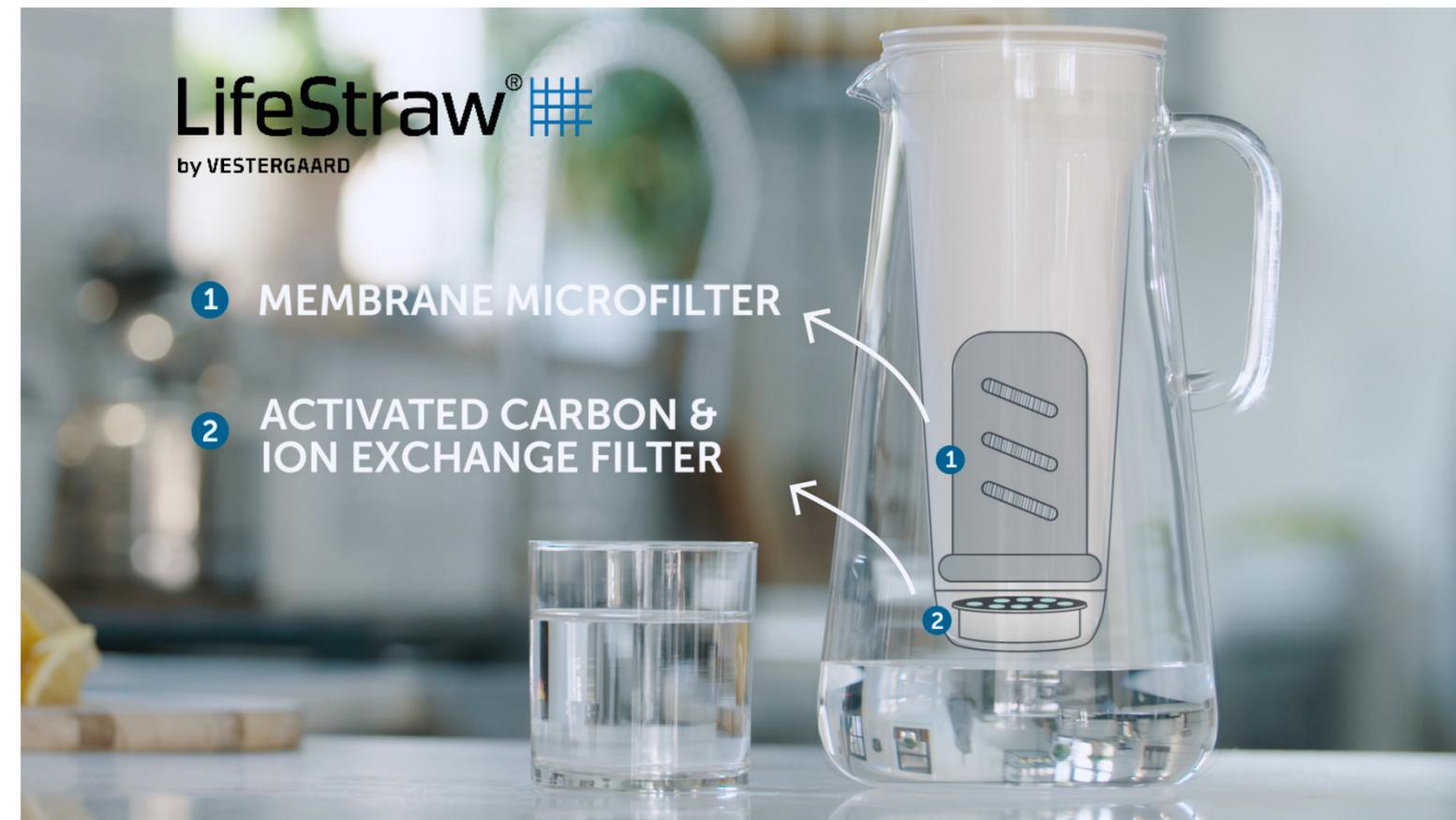
As a home owner, bokashi is your ideal tool for creating microbe rich compost. And adding quality compost to our soils is perhaps the only task we really need to focus on as gardeners. If we do that, then the microbes in our soil will thrive, resulting in plants that develop stronger root structures, and have better growth, nutrition and resistance to pests and disease.

The key to the bokashi process is fermentation. In using the bokashi bin, you are in effect rapidly fermenting your food waste, and in doing so converting it to a microbe rich format that becomes extremely accessible to your soil ecology and plant roots.

In just two weeks after burying your fermented food waste in your garden, it will be assimilated into the surrounding soil web, where it will benefit everything from microbes to macrobes, and in turn the plants themselves. The more you do this, the better and more natural your garden will become.

Remember, we depend on plants, plants depend on soil, and healthy soil depends on microbes.

www.bokashiliving.com



LIFESTRAW PRODUCTS & HOW THEY WORK

- Hollow Fiber Membrane
- All LifeStraw products use a hollow fiber membrane. These membranes have microscopic pores that trap contaminants.
- Filtration Process
- Bacteria and parasites are bigger than the pores in the filter. Water is able to pass through, but contaminants larger than 0.2 microns remain trapped.
- Filtering Chemicals
- Some LifeStraw products use a two-stage filtration process. In addition to the hollow fiber membrane, a carbon capsule absorbs chemicals like chlorine and pesticides.
- More advanced carbon filters, like the LifeStraw Flex, also reduce heavy metals, like lead.



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BRAVE SOLES 

Oceana - NAVY LEATHER SLIDE SANDALS THAT SUPPORT YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

To find pricing and links to purchase visit our website's blog under Fresh Finds.



These beauties are a tribute to our hometown, Cabarete.

Inspired by the Atlantic Ocean that surrounds our local community in the Dominican Republic where our shoes are made, the Oceana deep blue navy slide sandal is a reminder of what we want to help preserve.

Made of locally sourced leather

Handcrafted tire soles made from upcycled tires sourced in Haiti

No break in period "aka" instant comfort

Super cushy foam core mid-sole made from high quality foam to offer support and durability

Handmade leather footbed

Slightly raised heel for extra impact absorption

Handmade by artisan shoemakers in the Dominican Republic

The Oceana leather slide sandal loves sundresses as much as frayed jeans. The Oceana will be the sandal you reach for when you want to feel comfortable and confident that your shoes look great, while contributing to eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives.

10% from the revenue of each pair of Oceana's goes to the Dominican Republic Education and Mentoring Project, helping to provide education and environmental awareness for more than 7000 youth across the north coast of the Dominican Republic.

BraveSoles.life



THE GODDESS MOVES —



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I connect women to REMEMBER and honour their magnificence. Patters are disrupted. Our womb stories are Rewritten. Dreams are ignited! A complete conviction of exquisite queen power is reborn. This is how The Goddess Moves!

For information on live events, coaching and retreats contact Nicole www.thegoddessmoves.space



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RENEWAL
HOMEOPATHY AND WELLNESS



She is calling you....
are you *listening*....

NICOLE PEMBERTON
THE GODDESS MOVES

She is the woman that people get a little uncomfortable around. She is the woman who people also wish they could have a little more of in their being. She is the fire in your belly. She is the roar when you get angry. She encourages you to get messy and dirty. She does not always play nice but she is fair. She tickles and dances with inhibition. She wants you to breathe more, go deep more, let your scared waters overflow, moan/use your voice more and be completely unapologetic about being comfortable in your own your skin. She wants you to let your hair down. She has been given the label of Witch, Slut, Dangerous, Whore and unpretty. However she needs you to stand your ground. She inspires you to own your sovereignty. She gives you added strength to know your boundaries. She encourages you release what does not serve you with urgency so all the goodness and abundance can flow into your life with ease. She affirms you have the choice of your body, soul and how you want to live. She is the Wild Woman in you.

In the 21st century in the year of 2020 we are only just starting to get more comfortable with letting the Wild Woman be seen. Through protests, sexual liberty and complete expression of what women want and deserve as an individual and a global collective. The revolution is real when we stand up for the reproductive rights of our female bodies. The call in accountability for the unacceptable behaviour of language, rape, genocide, mutilation of genitals and trafficking against women is louder than ever. The pride to claim our worth, to be paid properly in our careers and embody successful ownership of our own businesses is RIGHT NOW. As a Wild Woman we use our voices to demand equal representation of the beautiful landscapes, shapes and colours of our magnificent bodies. Yes! To a plus 30 sized woman strutting across the catwalk in lingerie! Yes! To a woman of colour

running a fortune 500 company! Yes! To a woman owning her sacred sexuality and having an abundance of orgasms! Yes! To a woman giving birth with a doula by her side in the ocean and with love and care all around her! Yes! To a woman raising amazing children with or without her partner. Yes! To leading from love!

For some this is unsettling because this is a rising of the new paradigm. However it is not new at all. There was a time when the society was a matriarchal society. The utmost respect was honouring the woman and man. The divine feminine was cared, nurtured, and respected equally with the divine masculine. Deep reverence was upheld in relationship with the land, spirituality, community and our bodies. The

priority was divine union not competition and power. Competition and power led to the patriarchal paradigm. Instead of a collective power it became singular power. The presence of The Wild Woman became a threat and needed to be controlled, subdued, reprogrammed, forgotten or wiped out.

"As a Wild Woman we use our voices to demand equal representation of the beautiful landscapes, shapes and colours of our magnificent bodies."

Thankfully she has not been extinguished. The call of the Wild Woman has never been louder and we are REMEMBERING! We are remembering that we are not alone. We are remembering that as women we have access to resources that are steeped deep in our DNA. The Goddesses are making their presence known to remind us we have a team of divine feminine priestesses that we can call on.

Kali

The Hindu Goddess of revolution and the archetype of the creator/destroyer. She is the dark Goddess who helps you cut out, burn away and clear anything that is getting in the way of our ultimate freedom. Kali helps with seeing the

She is calling you....

truth of who you are so you can move through the world with embodied presence.

Lilith

According to Jewish folklore Lilith was the first woman who was married to Adam. The same Adam we know in the Christian spirituality Adam and Eve. She rebelled against conformity. She held her sovereignty and was vocal about being equal, free and the sole owner of her body and soul. She was uninhibited in her sexuality.

Sekhmet

Daughter of the sun God Ra she is the fierce lioness Egyptian warrior Goddess. She is the hunter, protector and the defender. She reminds the collective of women to speak up for what is right. She calls us to voice our anger and strength for justice. She empowers us women to use our emotions for conscious action.

Isis

Daughter of Geb who is the God of the Earth and Nut, Goddess of the sky, Isis is the Egyptian Goddess devoted to love. Mainstream media will have you associate her name with terrorism. Isis is the exact opposite. She is not to be feared but to be honoured. Her true association is through love, fertility, healing and magic. She reminds us of our deep sacred sexuality. It is more powerful than it was taught to us. It is healing and sacred. She reminds us about our own sexual empowerment.

Lalita

She is the Hindu Goddess of Spiritual Eroticism and her archetype is the Goddess of love. Part of her name in Sanskrit Lila translates to "divine play". Lalita invites more play. She delights in heightened senses, manifestation and sensuality. She invites us into laughter and lightness to help cultivate even more joy.

A woman's moon cycle in the Luteal Phase or Waning Moon phase is where the Wild Woman confronts her shadow. This is the phase before the endometrium lining sheds which is the female body's natural way of physically and

energetically detoxing. At the beginning of this phase the body has a short burst of energy and starts to slow down. The estrogen levels drop and the testosterone hormone rises. The womb calls for you to go internal and to face any aspects that needs to be addressed. This confrontation of the shadow, thought and emotions is not always comfortable. It can bring uncertainty, confusion, frustration, anger, sadness and shame. The emotions can produce tears, erratic behaviour and shouting at the top of your lungs. However allowing the womb and body to address any unresolved issues allows the body to heal. It clears any stagnant energy. It also helps to not have that energy manifest into a physical imbalance in the womb. Being aware of this time eases the energetic release through your blood and lessens pain (PMS) at the beginning of your moon cycle.

How do we embrace and allow the Wild Woman to come through? Here are a few meditative and embodiment ritual practices you can do.

Meditative Practice

Soul Scribing

- Make it a ceremonial experience
- Choose a beautiful journal to write in and a pen
- Carve out space where you will not be disturbed for a certain amount of time
- When you put pen to paper let the thoughts pour out and don't stop until you have gotten everything out, try not to censor yourself, this is a space to let it go
- Work with a Goddess that speaks to you and answer the following questions that is correlated to the Goddess you chose

Kali

What are you we ready to burn and release with love?

Where/who are you ready to forgive so that you can move forward with love?

Sekhmet



She is calling you....

Where are you creating boundaries in your life? Are you holding in repressed anger that needs to be released?
 **Additional and Optional practice for Kali and Sekhmet, after you have finished your Soul Scribing, tear up what you wrote and burn the paper outside in a safe fire pit, as the papers burn you say-
 "I release the unwanted energy that is not mine, I gifted with the highest gratitude and blessings, thank you"***

Lilith
 What do you truly desire and are you living it? What would it take to co-create that life?

Isis
 What does your power in your sacred sexuality mean to you? Where can you integrate more pleasure as a daily practice?

Lalita
 How you can have more fun? What actions can you take to invite more deliciousness into your life?

Embodied Practice

Movement Journey

- All practices invite breath and sound,
- Be mindful if you have an injury that is healing or chronic
- Give yourself time in the practice minimum 5 mins (one song)- maximum one hour

For Play:

- Find a space where you can feel safe and move freely
- Call in the Goddess Lalita for playful energy
- Put on joyful music that makes you smile and feel light
- Dance!!! Move the way you want to move, throw your arms in the air, move your hips, feel the beat, sing loud if you know the words, empty out the expectations of what you should look like and move like you just don't care!

For Sensuality:

- Find a space where you can feel safe and move freely
- Call in the Goddesses Isis and Lilith
- Put on music that makes you feel sexy, sassy and a little naughty, music that brings in pleasure
- Move!! Dance in ways that invites an invitation to appreciate your body, your essence, your being, allowing to love on you, to drink yourself in, start to enjoy the skin that you are in

For Sovereignty and Release:

- Find a space where you can feel safe and move freely
- Call in the Goddesses Kali and Sekhmet
- Put on music that invokes unapologetic spirit, revolution, aggression, speed, and sharpness
- Shake each part of your body vigorously start with the legs and work your way up the body, if it jiggles a lot its a good thing!
- Let it build and progress till the whole body is shaking, take big bountiful inhales and exhales
- Allow the body to move at you own freedom with speed, vibration and attack

Chakra Activation

Chakras are an energetic system that communicates with the whole body. They run from above your head all the way down to the base of your spine.

Carve out space where you will not be disturbed for a certain amount of time and can use your voice loud and freely.

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, this is an active mediation as you do not want to fall asleep.

Take some deep breaths to ground yourself.

Visualize the colour of the Chakra and repeat the

sound according to each Chakra.



Root Chakra: located at the base of the spine.

- colour is red
- themes of being grounded, stable and rooted
- connected to the earth
- sound LAM
- Mantra- I AM CONNECTED, I AM ROOTED



Sacral Chakra: located in the centre of the womb

- colour is orange
- themes of womb wisdom, sensuality, pleasure, creativity, boundaries
- connected to water
- sound VAM
- Mantra- I OPEN, LISTEN, TRUST AND CREATE SPACE IN MY WOMB



Solar Plexus: located at the base of the rib cage

- colour is yellow
- themes of power, purpose and strength
- connected to fire
- sound RAM
- Mantra- I STAND TALL WITH MY DIVINE SWORD OF SOVEREIGNTY



Heart Chakra: located at the heart

- colour is green
- themes of unconditional love and compassion
- connected to air
- sound YAM



- Mantra- I LOVE MYSELF, I FORGIVE AND RELEASE

Throat Chakra: located at the throat

- colour is sky blue
- themes of expression, voice, truth
- connected to the universe
- sound HUM
- Mantra- I USE MY VOICE TO SPEAK MY TRUTH



Third Eye: located at the centre of the forehead

- colour is dark blue
- themes of intuition, imagination and vision
- connected to the universe
- sound OM
- Mantra- I AM A VISIONARY, I CO-CREATE THE LIFE THAT I DESIRE



Crown Chakra: located just above the top of the head

- colour is purple
- themes of knowledge, spiritual and divine alignment
- connected to the universe
- sound AH
- Mantra- I AM CONNECTED TO THE DIVINE, I AM THE SACRED FEMININE EMBODIED

We are all connected to laugh more, breathe, dance, love, shout, express, stand up for ourselves more, decompress and forgive. She helps us to fully embrace our divinity.

The Wild Woman is calling you. Listen to her.

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Cultivating Creativity:

Practices to Grow your Creativity

By Lyndall Cave

There is a time for everything,
And a season for every creative activity under the heavens
A time to start and a time to end,
A time to work and a time to rest,
A time to dream and a time to act,
A time to move and a time to be still,
A time to create with others and a time to be alone,
A time for loudness and a time for solitude,
A time for planning and a time for going with the flow,
A time for deadlines and a time without deadlines,
A time to push yourself and a time to refrain from pushing
yourself,
A time for the old and a time for the new,
A time to make and a time ignore making,
A time to do, and a time to be.



Cultivating Creativity

Lyndall Cave

Everyone is creative. AND THAT INCLUDES YOU. You ARE creative. No arguments. You may have forgotten your creativity or buried it, but this fact remains: Human beings are born creators. Your answer to why may differ -- I believe that we are all made in the image of the Creator God, and thus to be human is to create. A part of our soul and our essence dies if we are not creating. We were MADE to do this. So let's learn how to nurture and cultivate our creativity. Let's become even more fully human.

I've read a lot of writing advice books and articles, in an effort to get better at creating my own books and articles. But they all seemed lopsided, and focused on only one aspect of the creative process. The whole "sit your butt down in a chair and write or else you won't be ready when the muse shows up" thing never worked well for me. Yes, when it comes to creative projects, you do have to do the work. But the muse got bored of me sitting at my desk all day. And she's sensitive and flighty and really doesn't like the word "should". I figured I needed some better ways to create. Ways that would attract the muse, that make her want to stick around longer and chat. I've collected some ideas that have worked for me, and hopefully will work for you too.

Let's look at some creative practices other than butt-in-chair-do-the-work. We already know about that one. And there are SO many more ways to nurture and develop our creativity.

HANG OUT WITH CREATIVE PEOPLE Humans are social creatures, and we're meant to do things in groups. We often work better with other people, and with more than one brain working on one thing. Popcorning (aka brainstorming) with friends is awesome sauce, and you might come up with even more awesome ideas than you could have thought on your own. Even better than brainstorming together, create things together. This has the added bonus of building relationships.

STILLNESS Watch, observe, be mindful. Really NOTICE things. Describe to yourself or a journal what you see, hear, smell. Eavesdrop on people and transcribe their conversations (this will teach you so much about how people talk if you ever want to write dialogue). Be like Sherlock and pretend that you have to describe to Watson what people are wearing. Look at the world with your right brain, not your left brain.

WALKING There's something about the gentle repetition of walking that allows your brain to float and make creative connections. Many, many great English authors went for long ambling walks in the countryside. Coincidence? I think not.

IGNORE Put your thing on the back-burner and go do other stuff. This gives your subconscious mind a chance to work on the project. You'll often come back refreshed, and with greater insight into whatever you're creating.

MOVE Exercise, dance. More strenuous exercise gives you endorphins and takes your mind off the thing you're working on. And hey, dance IS creative, so you can move and nurture your creativity at the same time. One of my favourite things to do is shut the door to my sewing room, blast some tunes, and dance (probably badly) all over my room. I did that this afternoon, and it gave me the energy to write this so... go dance. Even if you're not a dancer. Pfft. Screw that last sentence. Go dance, and when you do, you ARE a dancer.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN ART YOU LOVE Ok, this is my actual favourite. Nothing gets me more inspired than hanging out with art I love. Play music by your favourite artists. Go to an art gallery or a museum and surround yourself with things that make you gasp in awe and wonder. This is your excuse to use Pinterest, so GO USE PINTEREST. Get lost down bunny trails of pictures of things you love, that move your soul. Peruse your favourite artists' websites, buy season tickets to the ballet or the opera, watch

movies that stir your soul. Something in you will rise up and want to do the same thing, which will give you the energy you need to learn and create.

THROW IN A LOBSTER Did you know that Lobsters are nocturnal? And that in the wild they generally have a lifespan of up to 50 years, with some living over 100 years?

Cool. Now you know more about lobsters and I'm having fun writing this article. Throwing in a lobster is a way of shaking up your creative process, making yourself laugh, and thinking new things. It's also good to take a break sometimes. Creativity is not all seriousness. Some people know this naturally, but it's something I need to remind myself regularly. Throw something random and unrelated into your creative process and watch cool things happen.

TINKERING AND PLAY You don't HAVE to do anything. Throw the 'shoulds' out the door. Set the timer if you have something to do afterwards, so you can lose yourself. Fool around. Create just for the heck of it, with no goal or place you need to be. This is FUN. Tinker and play alone or with other people.

WORK WITH YOUR DISTRACTIONS Sometimes a distraction IS the creative thing. Don't try to squelch the thing that's distracting you. Listen to it, integrate it, go with the flow and see what happens. Which leads to my next point. . .

WORK WITH YOUR BODY'S FLOW AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE Modern culture would have you believe that our bodies don't want to do what's best for us. That working out or eating healthy is hard. That creativity must be dug up and purified and worked like a lump of metal. But here's the thing. Your body actually does want good food, and your muscles will get antsy because they want to be used. So it is with creativity. You don't have to conjure up or manufacture creativity. It's like a vine that grows and can be gently directed where to go on the trellis, but still has its own shape. Work with that unique shape. If you create better at night, don't think "I should set up creative time while the kids are napping at 1pm"; wait until they've gone to bed. If you create best standing, for the muse's sake, don't go sit at a desk! Listen to what your body needs and what shape the creativity is taking, and then work with it. (Not saying you ABSOLUTELY MUST to do what your body wants, but at least listen and have a discussion.)



BE KIND TO YOURSELF. AND BE KIND TO THE MUSE. Nothing flourishes in an environment of shame and condemnation. Creativity loves kindness, and people create best when they're safe. Be that safe place for yourself.

SHOW UP Ok, twelve squillion articles have been written about this point, and I'm not going to go into it, but it does belong on the list. So here it is. Put your butt in the chair and do the work.

TRY NEW THINGS This is like throwing in a lobster, but a GIANT lobster. Do something different. Even a little shakeup can lead to a lot of creativity. For example, use your other hand to do things you normally do. Or go big and practice an entirely new skill. Learn something on your own, or from another person. Take a class. Experiment.

CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS These seem counterintuitive, but giving yourself constraints and limits can breed greater creativity. You spend less time making decisions and more time actually creating things. Try giving yourself a time limit or word limit. Write a poem where you can't use the letter E. Or use existing constraints like sonnet or haiku form. Design something using only two colours. Do an entire dance on only one leg, or sitting down. It's a laser-focused creativity, instead of broad spectrum. You'll find new and interesting things that you never could have discovered when using all your capacities.

DO THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER As the Zen saying goes, chop wood, carry water. This is a creative meditation of sorts. Draw the same thing every day. Crochet the same thing every day. Read the same poem every day. This will bring you deeper into your art and into your self.

DAYDREAM Use what you use for worrying, but make it positive and INTERESTING. Stretch your daydreams, don't dream second-hand dreams. We dream a lot of really unoriginal things, things that culture or movies have told us to dream about. Try daydreaming ridiculous things. Like what it would be like to meet your long-lost great uncle Bob while wearing a giant cassowary suit.

GET IT DOWN If you have a thought or an idea, capture it. I know you think you'll remember, but you won't. Trust me. You really won't, unless you snag that thought in some way. (With a pen/pencil and paper, voice note, photo, video, sketch or intentionally putting it in your mind palace.) I also find that writing down an idea often leads to me having three more ideas,

because I now have brain space for the new ideas to come. It's worth it. Write it down.

ELIMINATE "CAN'T" FROM YOUR VOCABULARY Instead of "I could never do that" focus on the fact that you too have a brain and body and COULD potentially do the thing you're looking at, given enough time, resources or will. Whether or not you WANT to, or if it's a good time, is a different story, but "can't" doesn't apply here.

Test Your Edges Push yourself to your creative limits, and see what happens.

CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT In order to create you need to be in an environment conducive to creating. That means physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I struggle doing creative writing at a desk, and often have to move to a couch or the floor in order to get my creative juices flowing. Other options include making your workspace beautiful, inviting or comfortable. It can be as simple as adding a plant or something you love, lighting a candle, diffusing essential oils, or tidying your space if you need clean to begin working. If you need more of a change, move outside, or go to a coffee shop, library or art gallery. Also make sure that you're creating in a supportive environment, where other people won't criticize or belittle your work. (See also Be Kind to Yourself)

There you go! A whole bunch of ways to cozy up to the muse and make friends with her.

Don't try implementing all of these practices at once. It's impossible, and you'll just stress yourself out. Choose one or two that resonate with you (or come up with your own!) and give them a try, for five minutes or five hours or whatever.

And one last thing. I'm noticing a pattern with life. Actually, I'm noticing that life IS a sort of pattern, a rhythm. Breathe in, breathe out. Day and Night. Moon cycles. Seasons. We rest better when we work, and we work better when we rest. So it is with creativity. We need practices that are both active and passive, social and individual, quiet and loud, small and large, energetic and restful, comfortable and uncomfortable. If you're stuck in a rut, try something that's the inverse of what you've been doing.

Flex those creative muscles and make beauty in your life. You CAN do it. Because you're human, and that means you're creative.*

Holistic living

Alyssa Sheffar

WHAT IS HOLISTIC LIVING?

WHAT DOES HOLISTIC MEAN?

When working with clients, I often explain it as whole-istic as it means all parts are intimately and inexplicably interconnected as a whole.

“The whole is greater than the sum of it’s parts” ~ Aristotle

The origin of the word Holistic comes from the Greek word holos which means “entire” or “all”.

There is no right way to approach Holistic living, it truly is as unique as your fingerprints. Living holistically means honouring a lifestyle that nourishes physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Holistic living is fluid, proactive and an ever-changing process. There are no short term results, it is a lifelong journey that requires you to prioritize and invest in yourself, to stay consistent and to keep learning, this is when you will see health and harmony in mind, body and spirit.

There are a lot of misunderstandings around Holistic Living - it does not mean endless herbal supplements, juice cleanses, a rigid or vegan diet, pretzel yoga poses, or giving up all the things you enjoy (like pizza, wine, chocolate, Netflix binges).

Holistic living actually simplifies our lives. It's living in moderation with all things, it's listening to our bodies and needs, it's flowing with the cycles and seasons of nature and life stages, it's showing up each day of your life in a way that is congruent with your deepest desires and values.

Holistic living supports treating the cause rather than just the symptoms. However, part of living a Holistic lifestyle also means knowing when it is

appropriate to reach for natural remedies while also knowing when it is appropriate to consult with a physician.

Living holistically often has a ripple effect; we start with ourselves in the middle and it reaches our partners, children, extended family members, friends and communities.

WHOLE TRANSFORMATION

My journey with Holistic living began with the birth of my two babes back-to-back in 2007 and 2008. I was 19 years old with my first and gained a lot of weight during my pregnancy, she was only four months old when I got pregnant with our second and this triggered an immense hormonal rollercoaster in my body (along with all that extra baby weight) leading to untreated postpartum depression.

I discovered Yoga and began devoutly practicing at home with DVD's. I fell madly in love with Power Yoga as I watched my body transform and I embarked on my first 200hr Yoga Teacher Training which led into many more Yoga trainings over the last decade+.

As I watched the baby weight fall off, I began tracking my food and obsessing over every calorie that went in. This led me down a dark path. I dropped weight drastically, my hair started falling out, I was achey all over from over-exercising, I was experiencing dramatic mood swings, I wasn't sleeping well and had extremely low energy every day (just to name a few symptoms).

Finally, after family mentioning their concern and a shopping trip that led to tears (I felt like a 12 year old boy in everything I tried on) - I found myself called to a Holistic Nutrition Diploma program that changed my life.

Holistic Nutrition also emphasizes the whole; mind, body and spirit. It is not simply about the foods we eat, but more about the lifestyle we live. However, nutrition absolutely plays a colossal role in our health and wellness, my philosophy is the foods we eat not only feed our bodies but also feed us in mind and spirit.

Holistic Living

I relished in my own holistic transformation - my hair was healthier, I was maintaining happier moods, I had energy and I really enjoyed having feminine curves.

After graduating from the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition, I opened a yoga studio offering many different styles of yoga and 1:1 Nutritional Consulting. I thought I had truly found concord in mind and body.

However, during this period my marriage ended abruptly and I found myself feeling lost .. I had a great job, beautiful kids, a healthy body, but something felt off inside, something was missing. I decided to close my yoga studio and embark on a journey within, not knowing what would manifest or unfold in my life.

It was an interesting couple of years that followed - I moved twice, worked at Westjet as a flight attendant and I dated, which really had me struggling with old behavioural patterns and beliefs. No matter how much I kept my body in shape by practicing yoga and eating well, my internal system was amok.

It was time to really step up to the plate whole-istically.

This is when I met Yara, my first horse. At that time her name was Marg and she was very distrusting, aloof, scared, and dissociated. With consistent patience, work and compassion, she softened into herself, she began to trust and engage, and she taught me many many things about myself.

I'd always wanted to change her name but knew it had to be meaningful so I waited until it felt right. After months of building a relationship and us both going through a massive soulful transformation, the name Yara came to me and synchronistically, it meant butterfly - which is the symbol of transformation.

I have always had a lifelong calling to horses and I never quite understood it, I didn't grow up around them so where did this yearning to be with horses come from? It was so powerful, there was no denying I was meant to partner with these majestic animals.

Horses are a mirror to our soul, we cannot hide from them, the quantum leaps of growth and transformation initiated by spending time with horses is beyond measurable. My soul transmuted through the dark, gooey cocoon phase to the emerging ethereal butterfly.

As I began peeling away the layers to my soul my relationship with Yara evolved, and through our journey I knew we had to share the wisdom of horses, so I enrolled in an Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) Mentorship program and am so honoured to work alongside my herd of medicine horses.

I recognized the piece that had been missing was my authentic spirituality and through this journey I understood how balance in mind, body and spirit is truly the epitome of Holistic living.

THE PILLARS OF BALANCE

MIND Holistic living is a mindset. In order to change our habits and behaviours, we must look at our limiting beliefs and thought patterns in our subconscious mind that influence our actions. These often stem from familial generations, childhood wounds, societal influences and lifestyle choices.

Holistic living is fostered by self-awareness, mindfulness, and intentionality; being intentional with your thoughts, feelings, and actions.

These take practice, like building a muscle, they develop overtime with consistency.

Talk therapy, vent sessions with trusted love ones and group support are cardinal in living Holistically. Sometimes just hearing ourselves express the internal dialogue or being given a different perspective refines our mental health.

Shifting to a holistic perspective is seeing the "bigger picture" and making a conscious commitment to align in mind, body and spirit. Rather than merely survive, you must choose to thrive and take action that supports that choice. Tending to our mental health is just as important as working out at the gym or eating wholesome nutritious foods. On that note ...



“I RECOGNIZED THE PIECE THAT HAD BEEN MISSING WAS MY AUTHENTIC SPIRITUALITY AND THROUGH THIS JOURNEY I UNDERSTOOD HOW BALANCE IN MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT IS TRULY THE EPITOME OF HOLISTIC LIVING.”

BODY Physically living holistically is often described as regular exercise - this is true. However it's much more than that, it's listening to our bodies, honouring those hunches and gut feelings, resting when we feel called to rest, practicing healthy sleep habits, movement that feels good for YOU (yoga, walking, running, cycling, swimming, dancing, weight lifting, team sports), proper hygiene, fresh air and sunshine, creativity and expression, and touch and affection.

An important piece to Holistic nutrition is the art and enjoyment of cooking. Exploring new recipes, playing with different foods, herbs and spices, bringing a sense of wonder and nourishment to the prep of wholesome home-cooked meals makes for a healthy dose of Vitamin L (Love) in the fibres of our meals which weave into the makeup of our physical bodies - we literally become the foods we eat.

It's paramount we look at the health of each body system as individual yet interconnected. Often we experience symptoms physiologically when the root cause may be psychological, emotional or even spiritual. A lot of our physical symptoms and dis-eases are related to repressed thoughts, feelings, traumas, desires, or needs. Symptoms mean our bodies are trying to tell us something, so ...

Take time to still your body, sit in silence with your eyes closed or focus on a distant point, and maintain your awareness on the flow of your breath. This is simple meditation and is very grounding, it's important we stay grounded within our bodies otherwise we're fragmented and exerting unnecessary energy. Meditation is also when you connect with your spirit, where you begin to hear the whispers from your soul.

Holistic Living

SPIRIT A balanced holistic lifestyle includes a daily spiritual practice. And it absolutely does not matter how you connect with your Higher Self, Source, Divine, God, the Universe, Creator - whichever resonates - as long as you continually nourish your spiritual being.

Spiritual balance comes with an awareness of our shadow side, we all travel with core wounds, fears and insecurities. Like yin and yang, and dusk and dawn, we too have a light and a dark aspect. Holding space for all parts of ourselves is the hub of healing and alchemy.

Holistic living includes practicing forgiveness for self and others, showing compassion to all living beings, and incorporating a daily gratitude practice.

Holistic living does not mean acting positive all of the time and putting on a happy face when we're feeling broken inside. That is called Spiritual Bypassing which causes damage mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually and collectively.

Spiritual Bypassing is used to disconnect from true feelings & avoid real issues. Like using a sparkly feel good bandaid to mask deep wounds.

Your inner wisdom, inner knowing, inner compass, will never lead you astray. I often share with clients that a holistic life is a wise life, it's trusting your unique and brilliant wisdom to guide you on your journey through life.

Who are you anyway?



AUTHENTIC SELF In life we wear many hats; daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother, job title, grandmother, maid, chef, chauffeur, event planner, bookkeeper, etc.

But, these roles are not who you are.

Who you are starts at your deepest core with your values, needs, desires, interests, shadow side, triggers, wounds, visions, dreams, and favourites.. colours, style, music, flavours.

Who you are is already in there! Take off the masks from family dynamics and society's standards ...

- What do YOU believe in?
- What do you stand for?
- What is calling to you?
- Where does your mind wander?
- How do you feel?
- What are you needing?
- Where are you at?
- Where do you want to be?

Holistic living authentically is; speaking your truth, knowing and honouring your personal boundaries, practicing discernment and dancing to the beat of your own drum.

**“To thine own self be true”
~ Shakespeare**

Genuine holism is knowing you will stumble, you will come up against road blocks; facing challenges, making mistakes, struggling at times, but you will grow and evolve, you will experience more joy in your day-to-day life and you will spread that within your world.

When you find yourself bumping up against mind, body or spirit imbalance; ask “what needs

to be nourished most?” and listen for the answer, stay open and receptive. Trust. Surrender. Love.

Where to look next?

If healing and living holistically resonate for you, I invite you to reach out for a FREE 1:1 60 minute Discovery session over the phone or in-person with the herd.

We will discuss symptoms, areas of concern, goals, needs, and desires.

We will look at where you are and where you would like to be.

We will create an action plan that works for you and your life (schedule, family, career, body).

My goal is to empower and educate you to make lasting and meaningful change in your life. The essence of what I do is support you through the change and help set you up to sustain it long term.

I also welcome you to join my Unbridled Mamas Facebook group and check out my Blogs on www.alyssasheffar.com. Here you will also find events and more offerings! *



What's your Ayurvedic Mind / Body Type?



Kapha



Vata



Pitta

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Getting the Energy Flowing

Feng Shui

JILL ETHIER

I began my Feng Shui journey over 13 years ago and it is a tool that I continue to use, love and teach. It has created a foundation for my life and my family's life.

Feng Shui is an ancient art and science and is thousands of years old. Translated, it means wind and water. Feng Shui focuses on the movement of energy into and throughout your home and ultimately your life. This flow of energy should be like that of a gentle breeze and babbling brook. And when you create this type of energy in your home, you reap the benefits mentally, physically and spiritually.

What first drew me to Feng Shui was that it was so old. I figured that something that old was definitely worth researching, learning about and implementing. It stood the test of time so there must be something to it. It's also why I love Ho'oponopono and Dowsing.

Feng Shui

I dove into my study of Feng Shui and have never looked back. I started adding the Feng Shui cures (the colors and elements) right away into my home as I learned them and we instantly began to not only feel but also see things shifting in our life. Once I had experienced even more of the changes and shifts it created in our life, I knew that I had to share it with others. So that's what I did. I've taught Feng Shui in workshops, online programs and done hundreds of consults for clients both in person and virtually over the years. I truly believe it creates the foundation from which to launch your life. Feng Shui produces an environment that nourishes and supports your mental, physical and spiritual energy.

I learned, practice and teach a version of BTB Feng Shui mixed with a little bit of Landform Feng Shui (Feng Shui for your outdoor space). It is a more modern version of Feng Shui and makes applying the cures in your home very simple. There are many ways to practice Feng Shui and I have chosen and teach a way that is easy to understand and where a cure is available for anything going on in your home's floor plan. If there is a missing piece of the footprint of your home (if it isn't a square or rectangle), there is a way to fill in that missing energy and ensure that that area of your life will prosper and flow. It doesn't matter if your home is facing a certain way or is in a certain location on your street, there is a cure for that too. There is a cure for anything in your space that

would disrupt the flow of energy in this version of Feng Shui. I won't be recommending that you have to move like other versions of Feng Shui may suggest.

Simply put, different areas of your home represent different areas of your life based on the Bagua Map.

These areas are Abundance, Self-Discovery, Relationships, Creativity, Assistance, Purpose, Wisdom, Community and Well-Being. In each of these areas, there are certain colors and elements that vibrate with the energy that aligns with this part of your life. These are your Feng Shui cures and will be what you use to shift and increase the flow of energy in this area. For example, the colors pink, red and white and the elements of earth and fire are added to the Relationship area of your home. This area is all about your romantic love and self-love. You energize this area to increase its vibration by adding the Feng Shui cures.

While the cures (the colors and elements) are very important in Feng Shui, I also learned that the shift in energy that you are creating is actually boosted by the intention that you set when you place the color or element in your space. When you add the Feng Shui cure to a certain area of your home (like a water fountain in the Abundance area), the placement of the object creates a change in the energy in that area of your home and life but it becomes supercharged when you have a clear intention of what you are wanting the change to be.

So, if you are adding a water fountain to the Abundance area in your space (which is the back left corner of your home from the front door), when you place it there, be specific with what you want to attract. Perhaps, you want a certain dollar value in your bank account (this is one of the first intentions I set when I began Feng Shui'ing and I can't believe how it showed up), a new car, a raise at work or more meaningful relationships in your life. I love that Feng Shui uses the Law of Attraction to create the energetic shift as well. Everything is energy. And when we use both mental (your intentions) and physical (the Feng Shui cure) energy to create a change, a bigger shift in energy happens.



When we purposely place things in our home, we change the energy. And with this shift in energy, comes a change in our lives.

I share with clients and students that Feng Shui is a journey. When you learn Feng Shui, it is something that you will always use and apply in your home to create an energetic shift in your life.

Once you you have laid the Bagua Map on your floor plan, determined where the 9 areas of your life are represented, you can then begin to add in the colors and elements to your space. You will create an initial flow of balanced energy when you have done this. But your Feng Shui journey is not over. You've created the foundation and then when life doesn't feel like it's going your way, or you want something more or something to change, you can go to that area in your home that represents that area of your life like your Abundance or your Relationships or your Purpose and you can boost the energy in your space and that part of your life with more of the Feng Shui cures. It's a way to set clear intentions, take action and show the universe what you want now.

Laying the Bagua map separately on each bedroom, your office and your back and front yard, can further enhance the flow of energy in your home and life. You can individualize the energy and intention in these spaces to suit the family member who resides there. Each of my girl's rooms and the master bedroom are Feng Shui'd with each individual's intentions, my office is Feng Shui'd with specific intentions for my business and the deck areas on our acreage have Feng Shui cures applied to them as well.

To dive even deeper into the energy of your home and why it matters that we become the "Keeper of the Energy", it is important to know that each level of your home represents a different period of your life. The basement is your past (so if it is really cluttered, it's time to let the stuff and the past that is holding you back go). The main level represents the present and your current experience and the upper floors and attic represent your future. When you focus on Feng

Shui'ing the different levels of your home, you can really hone in on what your intentions are and what you want to create next in your present and future.

GETTING THE ENERGY FLOWING

There are many ways to start the energy flowing in your space. Clutter clearing, shifting the energy in the entrance of your home and creating a flow of energy in your master bedroom are three easy ways to begin to increase the flow of positive energy in your home.

Clutter clearing is one of the fastest ways to increase the energy in your space. Depending on where the vast majority of your clutter is, it is impacting a part of your life in a very negative way. When you remove that clutter, you shift the energy and new things and opportunities have room to come into your life.

The front door is a key area in the practice of Feng Shui. It is not only the way that energy enters into the home but it is also the most important factor in how the Bagua map is laid to determine where each area of your life resides in your space.

Your master bedroom is your sanctuary. It is where you need to be nourished, supported and able to renew your personal energy. This is one of the key energetic areas in your home.



Feng Shui

CLUTTER CLEARING

The first step is to prepare your home for the Feng Shui cures with clutter clearing. Decluttering sets the stage for your cures to be more powerful. When there is too much stuff in the space, the energy cannot flow. In a future article in this 4 part series, I will give you must best decluttering tips and tricks that I have honed over the years.

What I will share with you know though is that it is so very important to only have things that you love and use in your space. If the item is not one of these two things, it is time to let it go.

So, to get the energy flowing in your home and your life, it is time to clear some clutter. Start with something easy like under the bathroom sinks (I know that there is always extra stuff under there that you don't use or need), the linen closet, the front hall closet or even the junk drawer in the kitchen. When you begin with something easy, you will receive a quick boost in energy and it will propel you to keep going. I bet that after you finish cleaning that drawer or cupboard, you will open it up a few times to enjoy your handiwork and the refreshed energy.

Once you've decluttered something easy, it's time

to tackle the closets or the storage room. The more you can let go of, the lighter the energy in your space will become and the more ready it will be for the Feng Shui cures.

THE MOUTH OF CHI

Your front door (the main entrance into your home) is one of the most important areas in your space. It is called the 'mouth of chi' and is the way that energy enters into your home. There are a few things that you can begin to do to get the energy flowing more into your home and your life in this area. The first is to, you guessed it, declutter. Make sure that there isn't a pile of boots or coats right in the entryway. You want the door to be able to open freely. You don't want things spilling out of the entrance closet. All of these things block the flow of energy into your home and therefore into your life.

Red is one of the most powerful colors in Feng Shui. It represents power and strength and is a

magnet for energy. Because of the way it attracts energy, you always want to have some red on the outside of your front door. You could add a red wreath, an entrance mat or for the more bold, paint your front door red. Don't worry; you can also paint the front door red and then another color on top to match the color of your home. The color red doesn't need to be visible to vibrate with

Simply put, different areas of your home represent different areas of your life based on the Bagua Map. These areas are Abundance, Self-Discovery, Relationships, Creativity, Assistance, Purpose, Wisdom, Community and Well-Being.



Your master bedroom is your sanctuary. It is where you need to be nourished, supported and able to renew your personal energy. This is one of the key energetic areas in your home.

the energy that you need in this area.

Another addition to your entryway is a mirror inside the front door. Once the energy enters into your home, the mirror will move it further into your space. Do not hang the mirror directly across from the front door. If you do this, the energy comes into the home and then bounces back out of the home off of the mirror. You also want to hang the mirror so that no one's head is cut off when they look in the mirror (it's like cutting off their intelligence). When you choose a mirror, it should be as big as possible to reflect more energy into your space.

THE MASTER BEDROOM

Your bedroom should be a place where you retreat to for sleep and for romance. Does your master bedroom reflect this right now or is there piles of laundry on the floor or hung on the unused exercise equipment, stacks of books on the night tables and things thrown under the bed?

Take some time to create a more tranquil space for you and your relationship. The first step is to clear some clutter. Only keep things in your bedroom that belong in a bedroom. Your bedroom represents your relationship and so you want to make sure that everything is in pairs in this space. You also want to ensure that you have

a headboard that is preferably wood or fabric (this provides strength and security when you are sleeping) and that your bed is in the strongest position in the room which means it has a clear view of the door and is on a solid wall if possible.

When you create a more tranquil environment to retreat to at the end of each day, you not only increase the energy in your relationship but you are able to renew your personal energy through the night. Our energy fields expand up to 3 times the size when we are sleeping so all of the stuff in your room, definitely impacts your energy at night. This is why it is so important to create a peaceful environment.

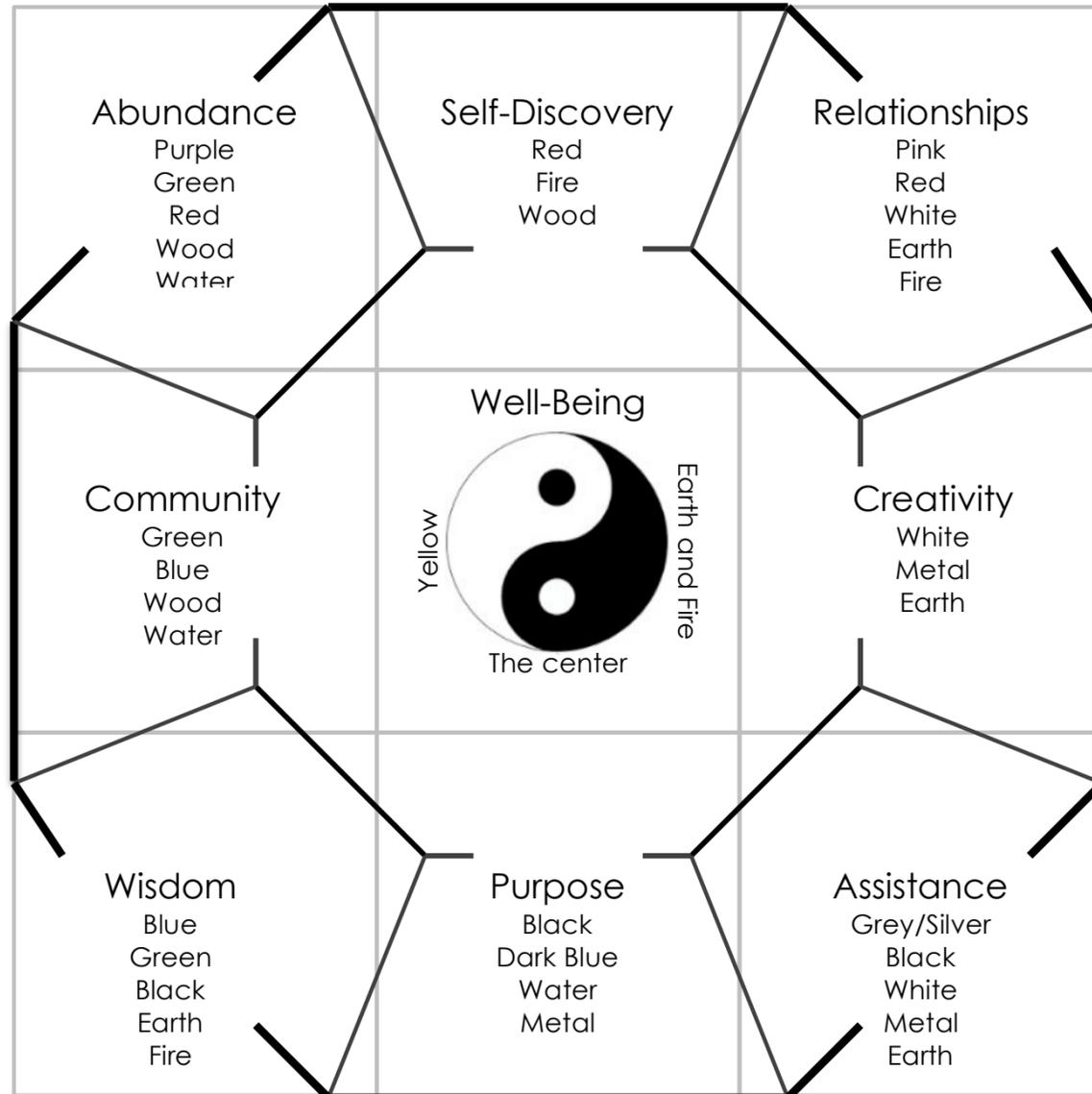
To start your Feng Shui journey, begin to let go of things that no longer serve you in your space and add these cures in your front entrance and master bedroom.

Remember that everything is energy and Feng Shui is one of the most powerful ways that you can harness that energy to create more of what you truly want in your life. It sets the foundation for you to achieve more of your dreams, desires and goals.*

To learn more about Feng Shui, visit www.jilleshier.com.



FOUNDATIONAL Feng Shui© Bagua Map



Entrance

(one of these three areas, that lie along the front wall, will ALWAYS be your Entrance)



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Practitioner in Focus



TRISH FELBER

When you look backwards at your footprints you can see the path so much clearer than when you're actually making the steps! My path really began in 2004.

I was working at chiropractic clinic - loving the clients, the staff, and doing an all around kick-ass job. One day, one of the massage therapists mentioned she was going to take a Reiki course. Out of my mouth came the words, 'I want to do that!'

Then the very next words I spoke were, 'What is that?' It sounds funny now, but that's what happened. I really don't think that was random, I think I was *prompted*.

I've always been very connected intuitively, though it was more difficult to articulate when I was younger. All these years later, it's much easier to put the pieces together!

I did take that Reiki course and treated anyone who would let me. I had several people coming to my house every week, once again, I was asked a question that led me further down the proverbial rabbit hole. A client of mine asked if I knew what a Medical Intuitive was - I didn't at that time but soon found myself fully trained!

I will admit that there is a lot of stigma, even now, about spirit sent messages. Sometimes I find myself astonished at the messages I receive and how they positively impact people. I have had to learn how and when to share these messages, without letting ego or self consciousness get involved. I don't create the information I receive; I feel humbled and honoured to be able to be a conduit. Whew - even writing this now I get a jitter or two!

It's a tricky thing to have been given a gift you didn't ask for - it's not like a sweater you can return for something you like better! It took me years and years to get comfortable with the

messages from spirit and I'm still working on getting comfortable sharing it with people. I had to learn to set boundaries both within myself and with others. The information I received was not always welcomed by those who were intended to receive that intel! I am so grateful to those who walked, and continue to walk with me on this journey. Fellow energy workers will understand that thankfulness for kindred souls. Each one of us, with any gifts, can appreciate some understanding.

Does anyone else find that the more they learn, the more they want to learn?

That's what kept happening for me. I noticed an online course for Homeopathy, not knowing anything at all about it but feeling very much drawn to find out more. I was intrigued, and found myself going down the old internet rabbit hole, becoming more and more fascinated. It just made sense to me! I took the one evening course and asked the presenter

“Does anyone else find that the more they learn, the more they want to learn? That’s what kept happening for me.”

if it was 'energy medicine' and suddenly it all connected - just like that! Homeopathy was something that resonated with my energy background and with my belief in the body's innate ability to balance.

After my introduction to homeopathy I sought treatment for myself and found it to be an amazing experience. I had been struggling with the common themes in a young mom's life - too little time, too many unanswered questions, and the overriding wonder if I was doing it at all well. I couldn't believe how balanced I felt after treatment - it was incredible. Nothing in my outer world had changed, but my inner being felt so much stronger, more clear and so present.

One of our daughters began showing signs of some developmental delays early on and we were concerned. After my own positive homeopathic experience, we decided to take our

RENEWAL
HOMEOPATHY AND WELLNESS

Practitioner in Focus



“I will admit that there is a lot of stigma, even now, about spirit sent messages. Sometimes I find myself astonished at the messages I receive and how they positively impact people.”

The clinic has developed its own life and seems to initiate a calling out to practitioners and staff who do much more than drink the Kool-Aid. We evolve as individuals and as a business organism. Right now, I'm finding the clinic is like that second year of college - independence is strong, the brash idealism is receding and having an open mind is critical.

I really believe there are 'callings' in life. That's certainly not to say my experience is elevated or unique, just that when you feel and hear the whispers of the spirit and you intentionally tune in, those messages become more clear.

Lately I've been feeling called to resume my Medical Intuitive practice. I'm not entirely sure exactly why now, but I know the spirit has been pushing me to put myself 'out there.' Energy work just seems so logical to me. We are energetic beings and using tools of energy is natural when trying to help people find balance.

I've also been learning more and more about homeopathic remedies from colours. Sounds pretty weird at first, but it's about the colours of the chakras and how they can support a return to balance. Energy and remedies together is really what it comes down to. I just get chills thinking of how all these pieces are coming together!

A recent facebook memory popped up from ten years ago and it said, 'Tricia Felber feels big things coming her way,' dated November 24 2009!

It seems so many things have changed since then but really, upon closer inspection, it is more of a sharpening; a focusing - as if the bits and

pieces are coming together for a single purpose.

I certainly don't pretend to 'have arrived' by any means - I'm just so excited to connect the dots! The intuition I've had all my life and the training I've been drawn to has always been about energy, and wanting to know how to support the journey to wellness, both for my family and me and for others too. It's so amazing to discover there are treatment modalities that encompass all those aspects.

This has been my path so far; it's not one that I have created but rather one I have been led along. Nothing is random! I believe so strongly that there are gifts in following those leadings, for each of us. Your destiny may not be what your originally expected, but those little twists and turns taken by faith will keep you on the path intended for you. *

Love and Light. -Trish



little one. It wasn't cheap and it was a leap of faith, but what a difference it made in her life! She went from being overly quiet, and still, and slow to progress, to speaking and hitting milestones and participating vibrantly in life. We continued homeopathic care and her classroom teachers asked us what we had done over one summer to make such a remarkable difference. That difference was seeking treatment from a homeopath.

There is nothing like personal experience to create drive. I wanted to be a homeopath! This was certainly not the arena I expected to find myself in - my background was in early childhood. I had worked years in daycare and implemented my training into making it enriching and positive and effectively managed a small group of preschoolers. Homeopathy had not even been on my radar!

I thoroughly enjoyed my four years training to become a homeopath. It was intense both academically and personally. I was one of an all women class and we learned so much together about ourselves, and the variety of ways education fits into women's lives and the lives of our families. I went to India for a month to study further. This meant my family stayed at home and you know what? They were fine! I was fine! That experience was one of many that really freed me from wanting to control so many aspects of my life. And that is an exhilarating discovery to make.

My homeopathic practice led me further along the path, once again, in an unexpected way. I began dreaming of a wellness clinic. One where families could come and partner with varying professional, caring and genuine practitioners from different modalities. I really wanted to develop a place where practitioners could work together to support the needs of our community. It's been more than 5 years since that dream became a reality! A bumpy, pot-holed road paved with laughter, a few tears and lots of doubt and today Renewal Homeopathy and Wellness is that place.

Surviving Sudden Death:

Healing regret, remorse & unforgivable choices when things end without warning.

KERI-ANNE LIVINGSTONE

Hey Dad,

It'll be a year ago, tomorrow you died.

There were no signs, no warning. You went to bed like you did every other night before. Only this time, you just didn't wake up. You left without an event, an explanation or the chance to say goodbye one last time and every day over the last year has been an ongoing Groundhog Day reflecting on the same day the year before, when you were here and how different things are a year later. Every significant holiday, milestone and Facebook memory amplify your absence in the present moment.

I've never been more viscerally aware that time is bullshit and appreciate those who talk about how it's a manmade construct. That time is non-linear, but more like layers of multiple reality streams running simultaneously alongside one another and stacked one on top of another. So if I were to look above I would see the future selves of me living my lives and if I look down I'd see all my younger selves, walking along below me.

Same day, different year. Only this year you aren't here and it hurts.

It's like I've been comparing the previous year to the one I'm having and painfully aware of every memory and moment that lead up to you leaving and how oblivious I was to the monumental loss that was about to happen.

I 'see' me moving through my life blissfully unaware - trapped on the other side of soundproof glass like a pained observer unable to stomp or bang on the glass to warn me about what's coming.

I didn't have a clue. None of us did.

A year ago we took the boys camping over spring break. We went to the park down the street and

visited the ER with our youngest after he decided to swallow a steel bolt. I called you about it and we laughed.

Facebook kindly reminded me that just the other day (a year ago) I joked about the 'worst right of passage' I never expected to move through, with the weirdest 'treasure hunt' ahead of me... it was all so funny.

The present-day me presses my face and hands against the glass, scrutinizing every decision I made - or more specifically - the decisions I didn't make. I'm screaming at her with a growing knot of frustration in my stomach but she can't hear me.

"For fucks sake, get on a ferry and go see Dad! Why aren't you going? What are you doing that's SO important to NOT go and see him?! What are you doing?!"

"It all seems so pointless and painful being forced to sit in the front row watching missed opportunities to see you one last time."

It was Easter weekend and we'd normally be with you. It's only a short ferry ride away. I was off with the kids for TWO WEEKS before you died and did nothing! I never saw you. Why? My heart aches watching all the missed opportunities I had to squeeze in more time with you.

The regret weighs on me like a lead blanket. Each inhale and awareness of what I did and didn't do, brings a frantic sense of angst and panic covered in remorse. The present-day me fights against reality as if I could change the way things went down.

I also know there is no way I couldn't have... and can't. I can't change anything about it. The hate I have for truth burns my throat to breathe in.

So I watch, wishing and begging I'd made a different choice. Remembering every detail about the days, minutes and seconds leading up to your death, painfully aware that given the chance, I'd exhaust myself trying to change the



Surviving Sudden Death

outcome if I knew it were possible.

Why didn't I go see you?

I find it difficult to be in my own skin with this question looming over me. It's so heavy, it hurts. It hurts because there's no answer good enough or acceptable to ease the pain. I just didn't go. The regret and remorse feel like poison and leave a thick layer of resentment that settles and slowly burns away with blame. Even though my logical brain tries to clean up the mess appealing to be released desperately, "But I didn't know! How could I have known? I couldn't have known!!"

As much as I know logically I had no clue you were going to die, I can't shake this tug-o-war that's tearing me in two.

I try to think of better questions that might bring new answers, wondering 'why would these memories be shoved in my face so clearly without me being able to do anything about them? What can I do about it now?'

It all seems so pointless and painful being forced to sit in the front row watching missed opportunities to see you one last time.

OUR LAST MEMORY

The last time we 'saw' each other was two days before you died. It was Easter Sunday. Me and the boys were sitting on our bed and we called you to wish you a Happy Easter.

We FaceTimed you and I was surprised to see you driving instead of in your chair at home. My first thought was "how the hell is this even possible, I thought FT only worked when both people were connected to wifi!" I shrugged it off and got on with our conversation.

The best moment of this call is remembering how happy you two were and that you let out the BIGGEST belly laugh when Beau yelled into the camera "Happy Easter Santa!"

Your thick head of white hair was several inches longer than we'd ever seen it and you had the scruffiest, patchiest beard I never witnessed you

grow in my entire life. I now understood why you never grew a beard. It was awful.

I heard you were growing it out a week before from Mom, but to see it was another thing entirely. Why? We laughed at you as you drove with the goofiest smile on your face. You told us it was simply to indulge Mom's morbid curiosity to see what you'd look like. So, you indulged her. This was how you entertained yourselves and it cracked you both up to shock people. But Dad, you looked like a hobo... the happiest hobo, but a hobo none the less. You really would do anything for her, even if it made you look ridiculous.

I also noticed Mom seemed to be purposely turning the camera on you and not her - as if you were more important than her. I almost said something but decided to leave it be. I'm now glad I listened.

This memory is short, sweet and good. I know each of us got to say that we loved you before we hung up. I know you said it back. I know we felt complete.

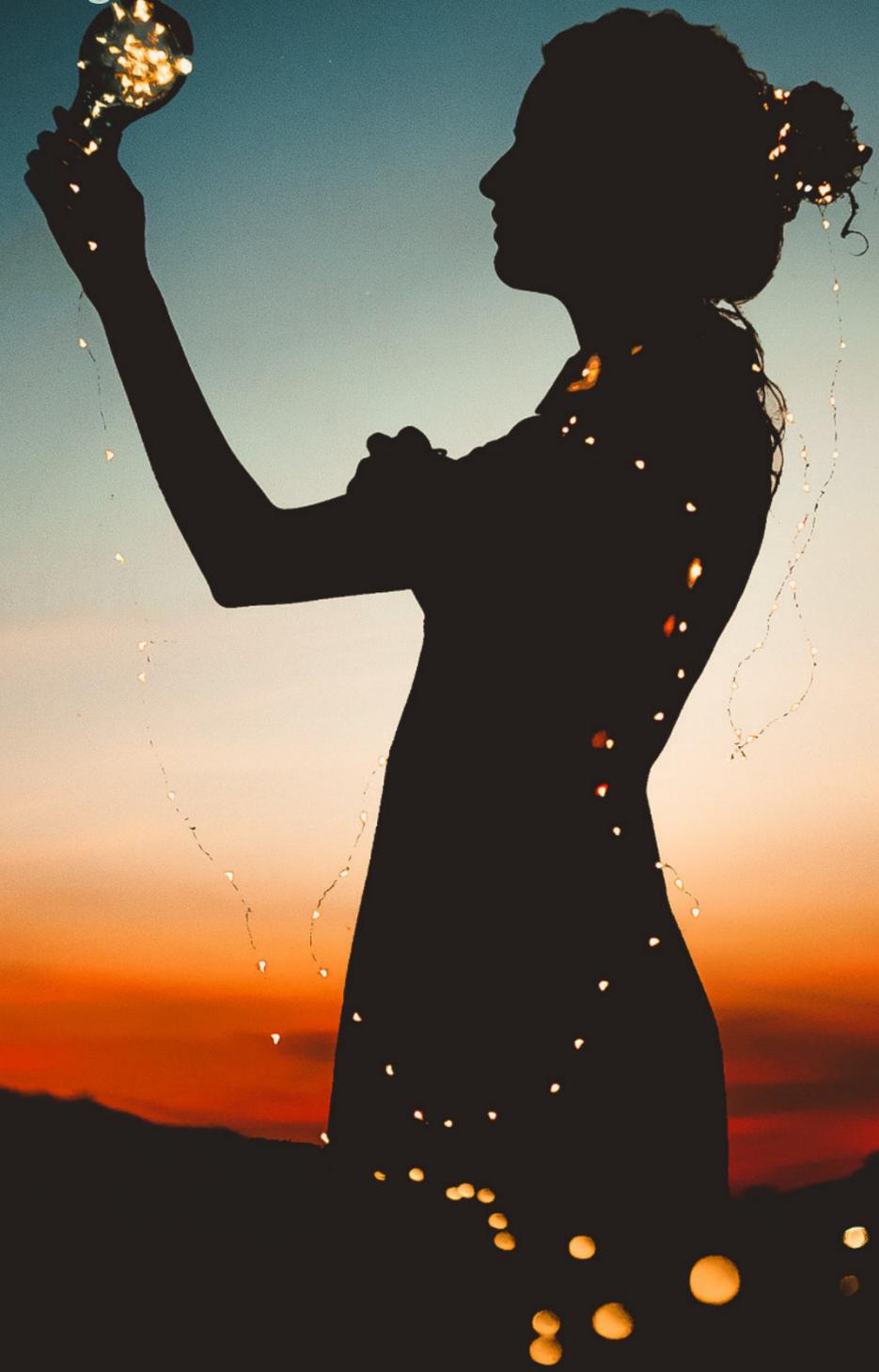
DIVINE SIGNS

I posted an image on Instagram the night you died (a year ago) when I walked pasted my bedside table to find my 6 year old had been playing with my crystals and amber necklace. He turned them into a smiley face and placed wooden coaster next to it that read It's all good. I had no idea it might have been a sign or a needed anchor to hold onto for all that was to come the following day.

Nothing prepares you for the call. Mom couldn't wake you. She was frantic, lost in the trauma and it was obvious from her description that you'd been gone for hours by the time she found you. There was nothing she, the paramedics or anyone could do to stop the truth from being true. You were gone. And everything changed.

Your sudden death was like a silent atom bomb went off in our lives, sending invisible shrapnel flying in all directions leaving us to come to terms with a world that would never come back together in quite the same way again.

"I also noticed Mom seemed to be purposely turning the camera on you and not her - as if you were more important than her. I almost said something but decided to leave it be. I'm now glad I listened."





But that's with any sudden loss or change, not just death. Death is just the big one, that gets all the attention. And you don't realize how much things will change until after the dust settles and you try to put your old life back on only to discover nothing fits anymore.

Nothings where you left it, nothing feels familiar and everything feels new, awkward and uncomfortable.

THE UNEXPECTED GIFTS OF DEATH AND GRIEF

I watched your death take each one of us on a very unique journey that had some of us question who we are now, what we care most about and who we want to be as a result of the rug being pulled out from under us. We were each invited to look, learn and become something new in the wake of your devastating departure.

Some of us deepened our faith, our connection to spirit and trusted in a bigger plan. Some were faced to see who we were without you and to face limitations we didn't know we had while you were here. Some questioned faith and asked why you left us alone with only our self to rely on. It felt cruel without you as the buffer, our gentle sturdy rock and reliable force to call upon for answers or just to feel your solid presence close by as comfort. Some felt tetherless and forced to find a new anchor.

It was only after you left, we discovered how much you were relied on and in that familiarity, we somehow forgot we came here as Souls to explore life on our own two feet to give us the experience to see, feel and know on an even more visceral level, what we are made of and capable of - without you. And to consider that this could be important for us to experience in this lifetime and a part of us fulfilling our own destiny.

It's funny how well-meaning our definition of love wants to be and how entangled and dependant we can become on each other without realizing it. And that love sometimes creates behaviours and ways of interacting that don't always serve

our greater good.

I see that in some ways your death was an incredible gift that pushed us out of a nest we'd grown comfortable in and even though it hurt hitting every branch on the way down it also offered a new lease on life opening up new and radically different experiences of ... well, everything.

Sudden loss created an entirely new normal and that as a result of death new life comes along with it. You also showed me that life and death are gifts and powerful tools of transformation for our Soul to not only fulfil it's destiny but to serve as a catalyst for the growth and learning for others.

THE GRIP OF GRIEF

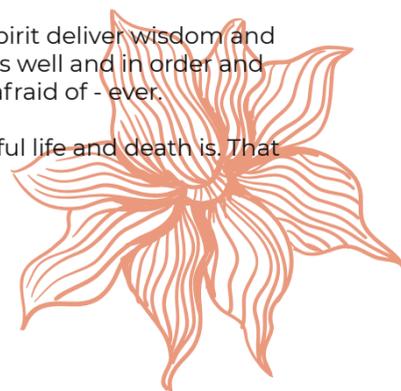
The unpredictable grip that grief can have over us, and its unexpected arrival in the most awkward of times (like picking up milk at the store and your favourite song comes on) is unsettling to say the least, and one I'm continuously getting schooled by. It's like one minute I'm walking confidently in public, fully clothed and the next, a wind of grief comes tearing all my gear off in one blow for every fleshy nook and cranny to be seen by anyone around me. Bare naked, cold, out of control and trying desperately to find cover!

Yes, you leaving has brought me moments of gut-wrenching grief and sorrow, feeling the bottom drop out of my life - with an unhinged desperation to hear your laugh, hold your hand and feel your arms around me so fierce it makes me want to unzip my skin to come and find you.

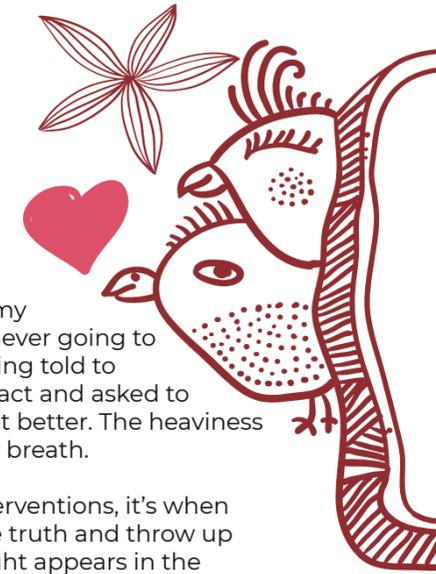
It's also beautifully dismantled me and put back together by moments of raw vulnerability, to feel the strength of an open heart, the rebirth in radical receiving and have a faith in humanity to show up for one another in moments of shock and despair.

It was in grief I felt your spirit deliver wisdom and words that insisted all was well and in order and that I had nothing to be afraid of - ever.

You reinforce how beautiful life and death is. That



Surviving Sudden Death



both are powerful tools for change and to pay attention to all the glorious WTFs along the way. That there are gifts in all of it. I feel blessed to hold this range of perspective and that I can offer my experience to others who are open to receiving it.

WHEN OUR TOOLS DON'T WORK ANYMORE

The horror that haunts me here is 'How can I forgive myself for not doing different? For not seeing what I couldn't see? Or knowing what I couldn't have known? How can I free myself from the crushing remorse and regret of being naturally blind to the unknown, when the grip of blame, shame and guilt wrap around me so tight that nothing helps loosen it?'

As someone known for helping others clear their path to walk it unapologetically, I have (up until now) been able to free myself from big blocks by dialoging with them more intimately. I'd get closer, allow them to have a voice and breath them in and be undone by them in order to understand them better. And from that humbling understanding, a new perspective. A new insight or wisdom that would allow the freedom of forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption to come.

... but not now.

None of tools I use could move the weighted blanket of "I should have" or "could have" off my helpless heart.

ADMIT YOUR SHIT AND WAIT FOR "IT"

Yesterday, I admitted defeat to a coach I trust. I confessed that the work I offer others no longer worked - on me or at all maybe. I shared that no matter what I did, said, wrote, hit or cried... the heavy grip of grief and regret your death brought would not release me. And the closer the anniversary came the more vivid the memories of me not making a different choice came and more visceral the pain.

The regret was growing into deep resentment on my heart and all it ached for was ONE MORE

MOMENT with you which my logical mind insisted was never going to be possible again. I was being told to resign to that unmovable fact and asked to hope over time it would get better. The heaviness in me increased with every breath.

As with all good Divine interventions, it's when you finally surrender to the truth and throw up the white flag, a sliver of light appears in the dark...

"What if it was possible to give you that chance? Where you DO choose to go home at Easter and have that last visit? She responded.

Hearing these words felt like a locked door inside me flew open, bringing a blast of cool air that blew the cobwebs, dust and darkness from the suffocating corner I'd been suffering in the past few weeks watching me not see you a year ago.

It also confused me. Just hearing her words and letting them land hinted this was something big. I had not idea how or if it would work but I suddenly felt a rush, like the kool-aid man breaking through the wall from those two simple and glorious words, "What if..."

As the medicine of her words kicked in, my heart and soul grabbed hold and ran with them like a track star with the finish line in sight. Things started moving again.

What if I could go back using my imagination to rewrite our last memory - just to see what might happen? Daring to suck at regret? It certainly couldn't feel any worse ...

Even in just considering and playing with this idea , I didn't feel trapped anymore. I felt movement, creativity brewing and a willingness to try its.

The possibility brought immediate relief and a wave of warmth washed over me as if my imagination and creativity stepped forward giddily clapping, eager and proud to help with a message "Of course it's possible! Let's get started!"

Surviving Sudden Death

DIVINE DO-OVERS

I spent the good part of the day breathing into and writing our 'alternate ending' and to my relieve, my imagination and willingness showed up in full force to make it as real as every other memory I've had with you. I watched the me (a year ago) travel home to spend that last weekend with you, and our family as we've done in the past. I thought I would have had us do something over the top but when it came to writing it, that wasn't the case. It all wanted to be so normal and typical. The more basic and predictable I made the weekend events, the better it felt and more detailed it got.

To be fully transparent, it felt a weird and even a silly thing to do at first, because after all I was pretending - but a part of me showed up to say it only felt that way because I'd never allowed myself to do something like this before and it was just incredibly unfamiliar. And with that potential stumbling block acknowledged, more details flooded the page.

It was incredible - amongst the basic things we did, like have dinner and watch TV, there were unexpected jokes, curious conversations and connections happening all over the place - some spoken, some not. The images and scenarios came easily and I was captivated as it flowed. Like watching (and being in) the BEST home video ever. Some moments had me laughing in tears and so happy; and the next a sobbing mess with wisdom delivered that humbled and brought waves of goosebumps along with.

What I assumed would be a simple exercise in writing had become a full body experience. The process was humbling, healing and helpful AF.

SURPRISES ALONG THE WAY

I was delighted how easy it was to get into, how smoothly it flowed and how good it felt to create from thin air. Whether it was my imagination, my own intuition or your spirit directing the conversation and interactions, the intuitive intelligence and guidance was palpable with every exposed and raw nerve soothed along the way. The more I surrendered to the experience and followed what showed up, the better it felt.

I wondered how I would ever be able to "end" our visit without being peeled off the floor, but that

was a surprise also.

Our "last moment" came with you taking us back to the ferry as you normally would. You hugged the boys, said goodbye's and hugged me in a way that seemed to explain and exchange the meaning of our entire relationship from beginning to now - not the end. The moment was full of Love and went for as long as we needed it to. There was no rush or demand for me to go. And as a result I felt comfort and completeness knowing there'd be no issue getting me on the boat to head back home.

Right before I turned to leave, you gave me a gift. I looked and felt it in my bones.

TRUST AND FAITH.

You told me to trust that you are always here and to have faith that when we stand in love, we will see the beauty in everything. The joy and the pain. And that each are gifts given for our growth and connection to ourselves and through one another. And that love is the only way through.

I also became aware that this isn't just a new memory - it's a new understanding and agreement about how it is and can be moving forward if I let it be. To know in every fibre of my being that the door is always open (and always was) and in receiving this, another gift given.

I feel settled and at peace but more importantly, I feel proud of myself.

Proud for not accepting suffering as my only option and for staying open to what else these moments humbly invite us to do and be that's new or different.

And that daring to explore a Divine-Do-Overs like this, when necessary, isn't silly or "not real" - these imaginal moments help us heal, help others and humbly get the most out of this human experience.

Thank you Dad, for all you gave me in your life but most importantly what you continue to give me in your death.

Love your proud daughter,

x Babe

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS, LEARNING AND WISHES

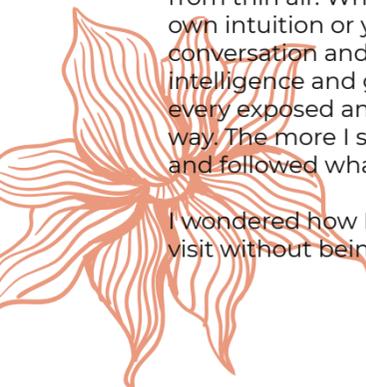
This may not sit well with you if you are in the midst of your own struggle. This exploration is personal and not as simple as it may seem to read but it's offered as an idea to consider and try on through two simple words - what if? If you take away anything, my wish is that you look for places you can create something new - anything that brings movement and healing as none deserves to be stuck in the cycle of suffering.

- You are continuously dared to speak up and admit your truth for inspiration, help and the next stepping stone to appear. The question becomes, will you dare to see what might be there for you?
- Looking for the 'gifts in everything' doesn't mean you are bypassing or a flaky 'positive' thinker - it makes you a possible thinker. I am all for feeling your real feels and also considering if there's something you might not be seeing and to stay open and humbled to be shown.
- Sometimes we have to let weird to lead the way. Our mind, logic and intellect are brilliant tools in their own right, but so freaking limited. They want proof, validation, receipts and everything to have the correct label. If I'd decided to stay with was was "real" I know I would still be stuck, suffering and frankly withholding freedom from myself and not even knowing it. Getting weird was worth it.
- You are walking around with (weird) weapons of mass transformation that inherently help, heal and expand you and anyone you share them with. But only IF you choose to give them a try! (damn you free will!) This intuitive intelligence travels in your instincts, images, ideas, creativity, resourcefulness, imagination and intuition.
- No matter what experience of loss, frustration, regret or pain you feel stuck in, your heart wants you to know... You aren't a problem to be fixed or figured out. You are art to be experienced and explored with curiosity and a deep appreciation for your gifts and truth, just as you are. Period.

Thank you for letting me share the last day of the biggest year of my life.

With deep gratitude and much love in daring (to live this life fully - even when things suck),*

Keri-Anne



Me. My Crazy, and I

Musings by Wrama Willis



Love. That's it. Everything I have ever known all comes down to love.

(Lana you helped this sink in for me) Or not enough love, or the wrong love, or too much love, if that's even a real thing. Never the less, love is the root of all things....or at least it is for me.

When the opportunity to write for the magazine came my way, I thought hmmm I am definitely someone who has something to say, but it was more a matter of whether or not I was willing to put myself out there. For a long time fear ruled over me, my desires and dreams. I had invited it in and fed it, helped it grow into a great big monster that I allowed to run my thoughts. Which is funny considering since I was a child I was very aware of the power of love, and all of its beauty. But unfortunately I was living the way many of us do, I was denying myself the full benefits of love. Luckily for me one day I had a wake up call. well actually it was more like getting the blankets ripped off while I was sleeping in my warm bed in the middle of winter. A day that I am so incredibly thankful for. So now I have one rule, law, and truth I try to live by, LOVE. Love is everything and it all comes back to love. Being open to love means being open to feeling everything else life has to offer. If you're gonna feel, you're gonna feel it all. In knowing all that, I still choose love. Always.

I don't know how you feel about race, racism and all the colorful commentary around the deep and layered subject. I, however, feel quite strongly about it all, and not in an angry black woman kind of way, but in a matter of fact kind of way. Yes, I am a black woman, and yes sometimes I do get angry. At times it has to do with the fact that I am black, but more times than not it has to do with the fact that I'm a human being. Luckily, this is a safe environment where I can get my thoughts out, and you can take or leave what I

have to say. You can even disagree with my feelings that are mostly based on my experiences. Although I've never quite understood how you can disagree with another person's feelings.

It's like when I was little, my brothers and I would be messing around and eventually someone would get hurt. The unscathed one would say; "That didn't even hurt".

My Mom would always say: "How would you know, you are not them or in their body." I would love it when she would say that. For me, it was validation that only I could know how I felt and that it was my truth. Little side note confessional: sometimes I wasn't hurt at all but just exercising my decent dramatical skills and incredible ability to cry on demand. Either way, thanks Mom!

I am the youngest of four children, both parents are immigrants from Ghana, West Africa. Not the country of Africa. The continent of Africa, that's made up of many countries, 54 to be exact. At least that's what Mother internet just told me. I am first

generation Canadian African, whose parents spoke very little, and not nearly enough about the real Africa. The beautiful Africa that they once called their own, but left and never really considered it home. My siblings and I only speak English, which is unfortunate. I would say both my parents did a really good job of assimilating and settling into the Canadian way of living. We learned how to skate, both my brothers played hockey until it got too expensive. We did the whole dress up on Halloween thing, even though it was a completely foreign concept to my Mom. We lived a "normal Canadian life", we tobogganed, and even had frost bite a time or two. My Mother rarely cooked the foods she ate growing up. We ate spaghetti, cabbage rolls and

"For a long time fear ruled over me, my desires and dreams. I had invited it in and fed it, helped it grow into a great big monster that I allowed to run my thoughts."



Me. My Crazy, and I

pizza all of which were homemade. We ate pancakes and cereal. (Not the good and sugary kind, I'm talking Shredded Wheat.) My Mom even bought the big tub of No Name ice cream sometimes. We had lots of rice, (Jollof, a delicious tomato based rice.) fish sometimes and of course lots of chicken. It's true, black people eat a lot of chicken. I wouldn't even consider that to be a stereotype, it's just a fact. My mother grew up with my grandmother who raised chickens, so that was her go to source of protein. There weren't many options for raising cattle on the Ivory Coast. So aside from peanut butter soup, Jollof, and something very interesting by the name of 'foo foo', my siblings and I weren't exposed to many traditional West African dishes. While other kids came to school smelling of tide maybe accompanied by a slight hint of bacon, I came to school wearing the scent of food. To this day the base of all my Moms cooking is onions, usually with garlic and ginger...which in my opinion is a potent combination that requires clothes to be soaked and washed on the heavy duty cycle.

Unfortunately my Mother didn't have much for support here, and not much of community that helped to foster her quickly fading cultural ways. So some of what I

did "learn" about Africa was in social studies with the rest of my class. And our lessons on Africa were basically videos of tribal men and women pretty much naked and topless. Only ever showing the desert, poverty and scarcity. Over time I have learned that is not all Africa is. Not even close. The beauty is as vast as the land itself. But how sweet it was to be the only black person in class and feel like I was watching everyone watch me staring at the made for school educational video. I remember thinking and hoping I was successful in sending my non verbal subliminal messages to my class mates saying, "that's not what I look like naked". I barley had breast buds let alone boobs at the time. I couldn't believe what I was seeing as I watched the women in the video with kids wrapped around them while working and breast feeding at the same time. I realize now, just how difficult that actually is. That was multitasking at its finest. But back then I just remember being so embarrassed, and thinking that's what Africa is? There was no wonder or beauty shown in those videos that would lead anyone to believe that we were beautiful people from a beautiful land. A majestic land rich in resources. The land where it all started. The Mother Land. Making it one more thing I would add to the ever growing, decades

long list of reasons why -for many years- I questioned my value and worth simply because the color of my skin.

It's not easy growing up and rarely seeing someone that resembles you represented in a positive way. Or being a young girl who only ever had blonde haired, blue eyes barbies. And I loved my barbies, played with them until I was 12 years old. I learned to think that beautiful didn't look anything like me, and sad as it is, that's something I believed for many years. And it all came down to me being black, and my hair. (That's a whole other conversation)

It's a hard pill to swallow knowing that you are disliked because of how you look, or called mean and hateful names. Like most of us, I was led to believe it was because of my "Race". Race; this grand idea that society created. It's really just an easy way to slap a label on someone, and the lazy way of thinking you're on the fast track to knowing who someone is because of the pigment that tints their body. When in fact, we are all of the same race. The human race (Lisa you opened my mind to that) Somewhere along the way we as people have been misled to believe we are either inferior or superior because of the color of our skin. And unfortunately, on some level we have all subscribed to the idea that we belong in this box or that box, or some box. The truth is, we belong in no box. So please stop politely climbing into the box. Set

yourself free. I will say, as much as my chocolatey shell has influenced and even shaped my experiences in life. I work every day to make sure it doesn't dictate or determine who I am, my path or place in life. This is something I have just recently come to truly believe. It's one thing thinking and saying we are all equal, but entirely different believing it. Just being helpful Harriet with some free and friendly words, equal doesn't have to look the same. And how boring this world would be if we all looked

"...not much of community that helped to foster her quickly fading cultural ways. So some of what I did "learn" about Africa was in social studies with the rest of my class."

the same. It took me a long time to like me and the skin I'm in, but man I'm glad I got here. Throughout the seasons I go from milk chocolate to 60% cocoa and sometimes even 75% cocoa, my skin is many shades of chocolate and I love it. How lucky I am to be me, and how lucky you are to be you. We really are one of a kind. And that is magical, there will only ever be one of me and one of you. There are no mistakes in that, and that's a beautiful thing.

So what I have to say about it all is, let's talk about it. Let's educate one another. It doesn't

have to be awkward or uncomfortable. Because it is what it is. Let's learn from our history so we can heal, move forward and do better. We are all different shades of the rainbow, yet all part of the same rainbow. Let's talk about it with our children and never stop. Seek out and learn about other cultures and religions. The more we know the less we will be afraid. Let's create a broad and inclusive open circle of community which accepts people from all walks of life. Learn about people who's traditions are entirely different from yours. Let's show our children to be accepting of one another. Education is power, so go get empowered. Let's listen more than we speak, so we can learn more than we knew yesterday. One of the best one- liners I've heard (thanks Shawna) Just give a shit!

I'll leave you with a couple of parting gifts.

1. Someone's opinion of you is none of your business.

2. Don't ever eat shrimp at a party after 11Pm, if it was on the table when you rolled in at 7pm. Back up off the shrimp. It's not worth the violent scene that will follow.

*TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF....AND SAY HI TO A STRANGER TODAY. **

W.E.W

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