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HAPPY · LIFE

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WELCOME TO HEALTHY LIVING, HAPPY LIFE MAGAZINE: A LETTER FROM THE CURATOR

By Denise Stegall, CEO & CO-Founder, Living Healthy List



Baby, it's cold outside!

I know those are the lyrics of a Christmas Song but Frank Loesser, the man who wrote one of the most memorable holiday songs was lived his entire life in New York City. He had no idea that February is the coldest month here in Minnesota, home of Living Healthy List.

Despite the cold February is quite amazing here. The low temperatures are a result of bright sunny and cloudless days. Snowshoeing, cross country skiing and ice castles are popular this time of year. Cold is relative, it depends on where you are and who you are with! In February we are focusing on being S.O.B. Wait, wait it's not what you think. We're looking at how we can be Strong, Open-minded, and Brave.

When I think of being strong, I think of resilience, the ability to bounce back from difficulties, not necessarily physical strength, though that is important, too. In this edition, Suzanne Taylor How to let go of the past, to grow from mistakes can affect how we show up in our life and business.

Nowadays being open-minded can bring family and friends together again and heal our nation. Michelle Boss discusses how it can also help you acquire wealth in her article, Self-care for your Finances. Andrea Haley Sankaran helps us think more clearly about how an open mind can provide the foundation for good health in her article "How Positive do you Feel About your health."

Bravery comes in many forms. In January 2003 I moved to Minnesota in the dead of winter. The temperature sat at -9 for nearly a month. BRRR. Now that was brave! Bravery takes on another form when it comes to your health. Especially when you go against modern medicine and listen to the signs and signals your body is sending. Read more in Emily Kirkwold's article, Do You Trust Your Body?

On February 14, we celebrate St. Valentine's Day by exchange cards, chocolate, or flowers and a romantic dinner with our special "valentine". Spice up your relationship with love tips from our Relationship Guru, Lori Bryant Woolridge.

I know things have not to go back to normal and that's OK. You have the perfect opportunity to do things differently, think about things differently, and do things you never thought you'd do before. That said...I wouldn't recommend moving to MN just yet. Wait until Spring If you haven't already, join our community here <http://www.livinghealthylist.com>.

Until next month, Healthy Living, Happy Life,

Denise

Living Healthy List

PS: Living Healthy List is your resource for health, wellness, personal development, and fun. We welcome feedback and your suggestions for articles or topics that you would like for us to cover. Connect with me at LivingHealthyList.com Thank you!!

**LIVING HEALTHY,
HAPPY LIFE:
ARTICLES BY OUR
EXPERTS**



**BEING DEEPLY LOVED BY SOMEONE GIVES YOU STRENGTH WHILE
LOVING SOMEONE DEEPLY GIVES YOU COURAGE.**

-LAO TZU

ALL YOU NEED FOR SENSUOUS LOVE IS YOUR FIVE SENSES

By Lori Bryant Woolridge

Boredom is often cited as a top reason why sex in a long-term relationship fizzles. In your attempt to enhance your sexual experience, you may introduce sex tricks, sex toys, sex talk to your love life. While tricks are great treats to throw into the mix every now and again, they cannot sustain the thrill in the long run. Novelty acts never win over the real thing.

Don't throw away your toys, but understand that for the long haul you need something else. Sensuous love requires your individual Fantabulous Five. Using your five senses can and will provide hours of sensual/sexual bliss in a natural and distinctively personal way. Yes, all you need for sensuous love is your 5 senses.

Living life through your five senses is what puts pleasure in the mundane details that dominate our lives. Sensuous living keeps you grounded in the moment and makes you happier and more appreciative of the world around you. The same is true of sensuous love. Staying mindful of all that you see, feel, hear, smell, and taste while making love increases your pleasure and keeps your mind and body in the present, thus making you more responsive to your partner. Sensuous loving also helps you create memorable sexual experiences together, rather than simply engaging in sexual acts.

Stimulate Your Senses

Incorporating anything that stimulates your five senses will boost your lovemaking experience to another level. Try different music, textures, locations—things that incorporate your mood and individual preferences at the time. Not every lovemaking session need not be candlelight and roses though that can be nice as well. Feeling raw and passionate? Turn on some music with a pumping beat. Make love on the sisal rug in the living room, and enjoy the rough, sensual side of your passion. Feeling cozy and

romantic? Make love wrapped in the cool feel of cotton sheets, with the rain as your soundtrack.

Studies show that certain scents like rose, patchouli, and sandalwood increase sexual desire. Have your favorite scents ready to ignite with the flick of a match or a quick spritz adds another sensual layer to your lovemaking. The scents radiating from your partner are perhaps the sexiest of all. Take time to breathe in your lover, from the hint of shampoo left in his hair to his natural body smells.

Food and drink may be tools for your lovemaking, but don't feel pressure to make every romp in bed a buffet. Different flavored breath mints add sensory variety to your kiss. Experience the variety of natural tastes of your lover's skin and body on your tongue.

Great sex need not always be a major production full of props and preplanning. It really is as simple as being mindful of the sensory stimulation available in your surroundings, tuning in to your present mood, and using your imagination to incorporate these elements into your lovemaking.

Read here for a little more let's say, motivation. Aside from everything else enjoy!

Questions? Connect with me [here](#).

Lori





HOW DO YOU SHOW UP IN LIFE AND BUSINESS

By Suzanne Taylor

If The last 12 years of growing my business have really been about growing myself. Life coaching yourself and deciding to show up how you want to be in the future, that best version of yourself, is the most powerful thing you can do for your business and your relationships.

Wondering what it has taken, I decided to put this personal reflection together of the traits that I have been cultivating over the last 12 years especially! First, let me say it has not been easy. I have been tested with anxiety, depression, weight gain, weight loss, illness, and many, many failures!

#1 passion

To help others succeed, this all-consuming, energizing almost obsessive purpose to let others in on the things I have learned, the rules I have broken. This purpose to change beliefs, habits, and BS rules that keep others from self-love and success! It doesn't have to be hard!

#2 Belief in myself

Whew, this one was (is) hard sometimes. Just when you feel success or healing begin, that's when another struggle or challenge begins. Having this belief in myself has not come easy or without a price. I have lost friends, business relationships, and even a boyfriend because of my entrepreneurial journey. When I lost a business due to divorce in 1997, I gave up an 800K per year salary, a house, 2 cars, and my beloved dog....all for my personal safety and wellbeing. This business and that relationship had been compromising my moral values, my mental strength, my self-worth, and my internal compass. I had to leave it behind to find myself, to believe in myself again.

#3 Stop winging it

My strategy in life and business had to grow, I could not just wing it anymore! I had to plan, execute and deliver awesome results for my clients, not just teach, talk and post on social media. I actually wanted to make a difference and that required strategy! It didn't come easy at first, the freedom junkie in me resisted the planning!! Our pasts can be filled with many negative experiences that we'd like to forget. If we aren't careful to address our past, those less than happy experiences can go on to shape us in negative ways. However, we don't have to let the negativity of our past define us. Instead, we can decide to use our past for personal growth. By doing so, we make the best out of a bad situation and go on to live meaningful and fulfilling lives. Another way to stop winging it is to cultivate daily practices for a happier more mindful life. Read more [here](#).

#4 Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is an idea that failures are simply a stop on the road to success. Adopting a growth mindset helps us to embrace the past by accepting that some negative experiences and choices are simply a part of life and learning. This frees us from the negative emotions of guilt, and shame, and getting stuck in the past. When we can accept our past as part of our overall learning and development process, we can learn and ultimately move forward (Mandel, 2020).

#5 Forgiveness

Forgiveness is about giving ourselves and others grace so that we can move forward. Often when we've experienced negative things or have made poor choices, we can get stuck in a cycle of unforgiveness towards others or ourselves that keeps us stuck in the past. Making a conscious choice to forgive others or yourself frees you from the event or mistake and allows you to heal so that you can move forward, versus remaining stuck in the pain of that moment. Forgiveness is essential to releasing emotions like anger, shame, bitterness, sadness, guilt, and others that can keep you bound and stuck (Lindberg, 2018). Thus, working towards forgiveness should be a priority.

#6 Perspective

Our perspectives play a vital role in shaping our ability to move forward. A pessimistic outlook will keep us stuck in the past and focused on the negatives. But an optimistic outlook can cause us to view our lives and circumstances through a positive lens and propel us forward in life. A positive perspective can help us see our past as a building block or a learning opportunity, and thus something that we can use to help us. Thus, cultivating positivity is important so that we can use our past to our benefit rather than being held back by it (Rampton, 2016)

#7 Gratitude

Gratitude is about a choice to find those things in our lives we are thankful for. When we have experienced negative experiences in our past, this can be hard to do. However, embracing a mindset of gratitude is a strong strategy for using our past for personal growth. Gratitude is a more direct way to alter perspective because it refocuses our attention on the positive things that we are grateful for and shifts it away from those less than positive experiences. By thinking about those things, we have to be grateful for we can pivot from the past and think more about moving forward in life (Rampton, 2016).

#8 Don't Dwell

The most important step in being able to use the past for personal growth is learning not to dwell in the past. You can never adequately move forward if you continuously think about the past. The best measure is to take whatever lessons you can learn from the past, apply them, and then move on. This keeps you from getting stuck and being unable to make progress in life as a result. The past doesn't have to be a stumbling block. Instead, it can be a stepping stone towards a brighter future. If we adopt a growth mindset, embrace a positive perspective, come from a place of gratitude, and learn to forgive and move on then we can use our past to progress and become our best selves.

Resources

[how to let go: 12 tips for letting go of the past. Healthline](#)
[How to grow from mistakes and stop beating yourself up](#)
[8 steps to move away from the past you need to leave behind](#)

ACCEPT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TAKE BACK YOUR POWER

By Lisa Tuccio

Did you know that a biographer made up the story about George Washington confessing to cutting down the cherry tree? Yet, it's easy to believe based on his character. This story has been useful for generations of parents as an example of accepting accountability.

As a child, you may have learned that it's more honorable to own up to your actions rather than blame others or make excuses about why it's the tree's fault. On the other hand, holding ourselves responsible can feel risky. Admitting our faults may threaten our self-image and open us up to criticism from others. It may seem safer to focus on external circumstances instead of looking at our own actions.

The truth is that you could be missing out on more happiness and success by trying to evade responsibility.

How can you develop personal accountability?

Benefits of Accountability:

1. Accept Accountability and Take Back Your Power confidence.

True self-esteem requires having the courage to take an honest look at yourself. Accept your weaknesses and missteps, as well as your strengths and accomplishments.

2. Make positive changes.

Taking responsibility puts you in control of your life. You can learn and grow. You'll show yourself that you're capable of adapting to change and handling the consequences of your actions. You can take action to resolve negative circumstances.

3. Strengthen your relationships.

Earn trust by living up to your commitments. You'll deepen your connection with family, friends, and coworkers.

4. Reduce stress.

In the long run, facing the truth usually creates less anxiety than trying to cover it up. Being responsible allows you to enjoy greater peace of mind.

Tips to Accept Accountability:

1. Evaluate your performance.

Make it a habit to assess your role in any situation. While external events do matter, focusing on what you can control is more productive.

2. Monitor yourself.

Pay attention to your behavior even when there are no other witnesses around. Assume equal responsibility for successes and setbacks.

3. Set realistic goals.

Do you sometimes excuse your conduct because you're trying to juggle too many activities? Respect your limits and shorten your to-do list. Creating priorities will help you to accomplish more.

4. Listen carefully. It's difficult to hear what others are saying when you're on the defensive. Listen with an open mind, so you can understand their position even if you disagree.

5. Apologize skillfully. Express regret promptly and sincerely when you let someone down. If possible, try to make amends and avoid repeating your slip-ups.

6. Consider others. If you need another reason to work on accountability, think about your impact on others. Remember how you feel when a business or a loved one harms you and refuses to take responsibility.

Tips for Fostering Accountability:

1. Communicate clearly.

Encouraging a more accountable culture makes it easier to assume responsibility. Start by clarifying your expectations and the consequences for not meeting them. Ensure that you understand what others expect of you as well.

2. Be forgiving. Help others to be truthful. Respond with mercy rather than anger. You're bound to need a second chance sometime too. Need a little more guidance when it comes to forgiveness? [Click here!](#)

3. Exchange constructive feedback. Talk with others about how to make progress moving forward. Share specific observations, praise, and criticism. Be grateful for any insights they give you.

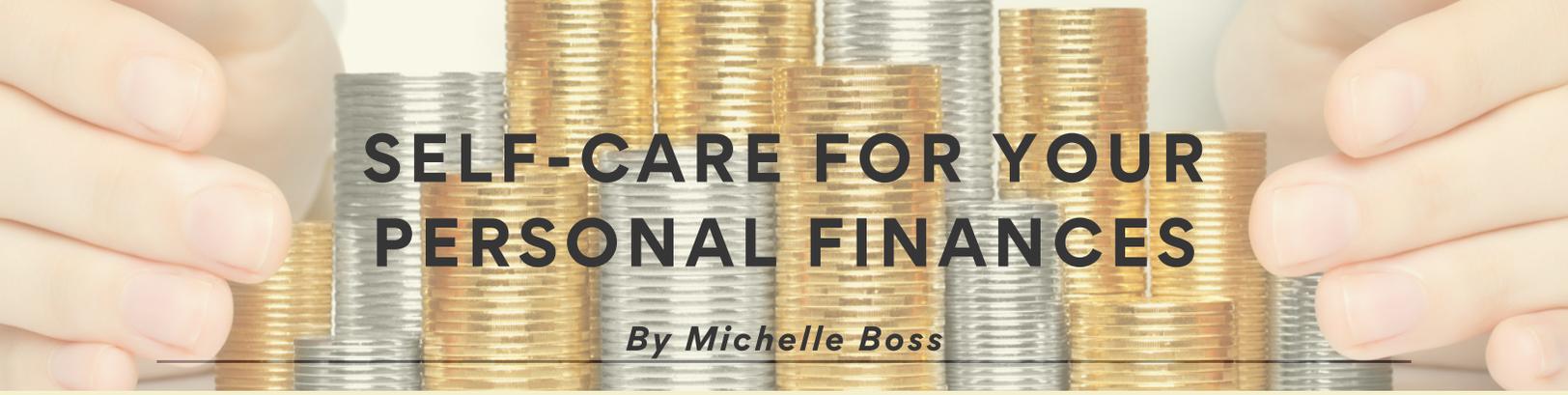
4. Provide a role model. By assuming more accountability, you can automatically have a positive impact on others. You'll be teaching your children an important life lesson and contributing to a healthier workplace and society.

Accountability is a skill that grows stronger with practice.

Take charge of your life by assuming responsibility for your actions. You'll empower yourself to build the future you really want.

Hack your way well,
Lisa





SELF-CARE FOR YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES

By Michelle Boss

This year for Valentine's Day, give yourself some love and self-care via attention towards your finances. Here are some how-to ideas.

Your personal finances are likely not the first thing you think of when you hear self-care. Coming out of a year like 2020, self-care is a term that is both over-used, but cannot be overrated. It's a term that means different things for different people, so I want to add a different perspective here, to what you may consider self-care.

As a personal finances coach, self-love or self-care most definitely must include an aspect of personal finances. Money, after all, is such a big part of our daily lives. Its energy gives us options, freedom, and the capacity not only to provide for ourselves and our families but do a lot of good. Are you now starting to see why being a good steward of our money ties really well into self-love and self-care? It is an essential part of our lives that needs care and attention. When we neglect our finances, we neglect our own self-care.

Make it a Personal Finance Date

One of the best ways I've found to work-in self-care around money is to make it a date. This is also known as a money date. Don't worry, single or in a relationship, money dates can happen with just yourself, or a spouse. And they should be fun!

Don't stop at just one either. Having money dates on a consistent basis gives you dedicated time to really pay attention to all aspects of your financial matters.

To make a money date happen, ensure it gets scheduled on your calendar(s). Weekly money dates are ideal. Semi-weekly or monthly dates can work really well too.

Try to anchor it to another activity or standing appointment as well. It's really easy to let missing one week slip into another and then another. If you associate a reward with the completion of your money date you can increase your chances of success. For example, every Saturday morning, with your morning coffee you must sit down with your money matters for a set time, and cannot get dressed for the day until you do it!

Or, every Wednesday afternoon between standing meetings where you have a floating hour in between where you can drink a favorite beverage during your money date, is perfect.

Sticking with It

Habits can be difficult to form. We wouldn't have New Year's resolutions every year we complain about breaking by February if it were easy. Here are 3 pro tips that can help you stick with it. Your personal finances will thank you.

1. Make them Brief. Breaking money dates into weekly sessions ensures you focus on just one aspect of your finances, for a brief period of time. If your time is defined and as painless as possible, it is more likely that you will repeat the behavior. Aim for just 30 minutes each week.

2. Make it Feel Good. Feeling either intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external) rewards, or both is also critical to sticking with the money self-love. For example, when sitting down with your finances, you find that invoices to one particular agency you've been billing have not been paid in 3 months! By following up, and catching the error, you have put money back into your pocket. That feels satisfying that you caught the error (intrinsic reward) and having \$1,600 more in your bank account than before you noticed the money was missing is reinforcing as well (extrinsic reward).

3. Accountability. Whether it is to yourself (some of us are good at this), or a partner, having accountability for your money dates will help you to do them! Accountability partners should be someone who will follow up on your commitment, not let you off the hook, cheer you on, and celebrate your wins. Friends, spouses, family members, co-workers, and children are great potential accountability partners! If you are ready to step it up and want professional support, let's [talk](#).

What to Do on a Self-Care Money Date?

Once you have money dates on your calendar, you may be wondering about what you actually look at from session to session. Here are some ideas:

Your Why.

What motivates you to get up in the morning? What are you working towards and saving? Does your life today match up with where you want to be? Can you identify just 2 or 3 action steps you can take to move or shift closer to that dream? The deeper you go and more emotion you feel in association with your “why”, the closer you are to what is truly motivating you.

Spending.

In the words of our newly elected U.S. President Joe Biden, *Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget and I'll tell you what you value.*

You can tell a lot about what you value by taking a look at where your money is going. From the investments you have in your portfolio (if you have one yet), to the businesses you support on a regular basis, where you spend your money is revealing. It can also help you identify where you need to make changes.

Net Worth.

Your net worth is simply a snapshot in time of the net of your assets minus your liabilities. Taking a look at this every 6 months or year tells you quickly and easily if you are growing your wealth or not. Although you may be able to intuit this, sometimes net worth is not so straight forward. Over time, it can also be very encouraging to see what seems like a snail's pace towards your financial goals, is actually happening!

Action Items.

When sitting down to review other financial aspects, you may find several new action items on your to-do list. For example, your insurance coverage, savings, credit, or net worth. When this happens you then have ideas on what to focus on in your next session.

If you would like a theme for each month to follow, which will guide you through an entire year of money dates, you can find that in my January 2021 Living Healthy List article. Click [here](#).



HOW POSITIVE DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR HEALTH?

By Andrea Hayley-Sankaran

I was challenged by Denise Stegall this month to think about what it means for a woman to be successful, open-minded, and brave. After a few minutes of reflection, it occurred to me that these attributes are directly related to this one thing, how positive you feel about your health.

Especially these days, I find that the people around me oscillate between feeling hopeful about their health and the future and feeling completely hopeless.

Let me tell you a quick story. I was talking to my parents a few days before Christmas.

My dad picked up the phone and seemed to only be able to muster a grunt in response to my many questions. Finally, I got frustrated.

“Where’s mom?” I asked.

“In bed,” he answered.

“What? It’s nearly 10 a.m.”

“Yep.”

“Oh man,” I said. You guys are really depressed.

Distancing from others, not wanting to get out of bed, not feeling like communicating. Sound familiar? Well, that’s not healthy.

Just because we can’t go out exactly where we want, or spend time with people in exactly the way we want, doesn’t mean we need to feel depressed. How positive do you feel about your health if you are struggling with depression or malaise?

I think the way out of this mess starts with being open-minded.

What I always tell the people in my life that I love is to keep up the faith, and to remain hopeful. This isn't the most obvious solution, so it requires an open mind to consider it.

In stressful situations, our first response is usually to close down and protect ourselves and our loved ones, which is the opposite of being open-minded.

We may feel like we don't have any control over the current situation, and that's true in some respects.

It is exactly at times like these that we are invited to deepen our faith in the divine, a higher power, whatever you believe—but believe!

When you have faith you have hope.

Faith helps a person to feel safe, secure and supported, regardless of what's happening.

When things feel out of control, then cede your control to a higher power that you sincerely believe has your best interests in mind.

The key is to know in your heart that the source of your belief is genuinely good. If you don't have this faith, then you can search your heart and find it.

It is very important to keep your mind stable, no matter what. An open mindset can directly affect how positive you feel about your health

It is my belief—and my experience—that when it comes to your health, the most important factor in getting healthy and resisting disease is the state of your mental health.

I'm not sure what the science says. I am sure it is very hard to prove this, but someone that I have faith in very much says that 70 percent of illness is in the mind.

This means that your mind can make or break your health.

If you are struggling with fear and anxiety you may find this article by Sheree Clark useful.

That brings me to bravery.

You have to be brave to exercise your faith in this way.

It takes courage to choose to believe, to choose to believe that no matter what happens, you are going to be okay.

What if you are wrong?

Let me ask you two questions about that.

1. What do you have to lose?
2. What other option do you have?

Let me address the first question:

What do you have to lose?

You have nothing to lose by letting go of your unrealistic exercise of control over every little thing. You're okay, right?

Nobody is asking you to stop following the mandated precautions related to mask-wearing and social distancing.

Use your common sense and follow your intuition while continuing to live your life as normally as possible while staying safe.

How about the second question?

What other option do you have?

You should realize that the opposite of living with faith and hope, is living in fear.

You likely already know this, but I assure you that living your life in fear of the unknown is very painful. It is painful to the conscious mind, as well as the unconscious mind.

This is not how you want to live. It isn't going to help you at all, but it sure can hurt you.

People don't talk enough about the negative effects of fear on immunity and overall health.

Let's review them here. Chronic fear leads to

- A weakened immune system
- Cardiovascular damage
- Gastrointestinal problems such as weak digestion, food intolerances, ulcers, and IBS
- Decreased fertility
- Accelerated aging
- Impairment of long-term memory
- Chronic anxiety
- Intense and uncontrollable emotions
- Dissociation from self
- Irrational actions
- Difficulty learning
- Chronic fatigue
- Sleeping disorders
- Clinical depression
- PTSD
- Bitterness, loss of trust, confusion, disgust, and despair about your faith



If any of these sound familiar in the last year or so then please do your best to let go of fear.

Chronic fear also leads to chronic stress, and the high levels of cortisol stress generate in your body suppresses your immune system by reducing virus-fighting cells.

Psychology Today comes right out and says, "When stress, anxiety, worry, overwhelm, depression and isolation are left unchecked, they actually reduce the effectiveness of your immune system and make you, and those around you much more susceptible to getting sick."

Fear isn't a solution or an option. It's part of the problem. How positive do you feel about your health if you live in fear?

So what can you do?

I already suggested a powerful solution to vanquish fear, and that's faith. Can you think of any others?

No, not denial. It is important to stay as clear-minded as possible.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Reach out to your friends and family more often?
- Join an online class and dedicating yourself to learning something new?
- Recognize the gift of feeling close to those in your personal hunkering zone?
- Go out for a walk and meeting neighbors safely on the street?
- How about upping your self-care practice?
- Your mind is the most powerful defense you have against illness of all types.
- Stay strong. Have faith. You will definitely be successful!

Resources:

<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/impact-fear-and-anxiety>

<https://www.ajmc.com/view/the-effects-of-chronic-fear-on-a-persons-health>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/healing-stress-the-inside-out/202003/your-panic-is-increasing-your-risk>





PUT YOURSELF ON "THE LIST"

By Lisa Medley

Are you on “the list?” You know, the items that you check off, or hope to, throughout your day? This list makes up your life...you want to make sure you are on it. Optimally, at the top!

As an energetically sensitive being, personally, I can only take in so much external stimulation at once. Otherwise, my nervous system gets overloaded, and my circuits blow. It’s not pretty. I have learned (learning) to pace myself between doing and being, on-the-go and off-the-clock. I am also a wife, daughter, and mom of a 12-year old son, so I get LOTS of opportunities to practice pacing!

When I’m stressed, and even when I’m not, Nature is one of my go-to’s to find sanctuary and feel solace. It’s Q-U-I-E-T. The external environment reflects my inner nature. Allows me to breathe in and out, to put an ebb in my flow. Also to remember that I am made up of the same stuff as the trees, the sky, the sun. If my position on the list drops, or fallen off altogether, this time-out strengthens my ability to tune in and be able to hear myself think, feel, and be.

PUT THIS IN YOUR TOOLBOX

When I engage with Nature this way, as well as other body-centered tools in my toolbox, I get to practice a powerful tool that allows me to re-establish my place on the list, and be in two places at once! It is called: Dual Awareness – being present to what is occurring internally and externally at the same time. I acknowledge, without judgment, what I am experiencing – the good, the bad, the beautiful, the icky. Whatever it is, is. Then, I can discern more easily what I need to feel good, or even better, and get back on the list. All the while, the external is still doing its thing, the planet is still spinning, and no blaming, shaming, or should-ing is required.

This practice strengthens the ability to hold space for both/and, instead of either/or. For example, I can feel my impatience when my son not listening (again) because he was distracted by technology. AND I will always love him to the moon and back AND I need a break.

To strengthen dual awareness, you must place equal, if not more, attention on your inner world, so you can more easily be with the outer world.

Inner World = (or >) Outer World

It's not always easy to tune in, I know. This is why Nature as well as other supportive environments are essential. A really good friend, trusted advisor, or sacred community is vital. They provide a bigger container that allows stress and struggle to dissipate. It also permits your inner wisdom to be heard and tended.

Amidst the loud, overwhelming, and relentless world, you have a choice to re-establish a connection to your inner world. Choose often.

Sometimes you overthink things and life doesn't need to be that difficult. Stop overthinking.

Feel free to let me know what helps you to strengthen the voice of your inner world – as well as if you are stuck or don't know where to start.

You got this!

Lisa!





NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING- TRUST YOUR BODY

By Dr. Emily Kirwold, PharmD

When it comes to your body do you listen? Your healthy body sends signs and signals to let you know that as it needs something or that something isn't quite right. If you pay attention it will also let you know when things are good and it is functioning at its best. Most of us are pretty in tune with these signs. However, when it comes to our hormone health and family planning things are not always so clear. Too often our mothers and our doctors tell us that we should rely on medicine for these things instead of our intuition. With Natural Family Planning you can trust your body?

Hormonal Contraception

In 1960 the FDA approved the first oral hormonal contraceptive tablet. Women were looking for an option other than the outdated "rhythm method," diaphragms that required a physician visit for fitting or relying on male condoms. With "the pill," women got to take control over family planning.

While it was empowering to have this kind of control, I question whether the women of this time realized the trade-off? Consider this, "The pill" was and still is the only medication approved for a healthy person to take to alter the natural function of her body. Is it really empowering to shut down your body?

The Research

According to an American Experience article, the male scientists developing the pill decide on the regimen of 21 active medication tablets and 7 placebo tablets to be able to allow for the woman to still have a monthly bleed.

“They know the Pill will be controversial and want oral progesterone to be seen as a “natural ” process, not something that interferes with the normal menstrual cycle.”² Because the hormonal contraceptive stops ovulation, a woman does not have a true period every month but gets this illusion by the bleeding caused by withdrawing from the synthetic hormones.

In pharmacy school, I was taught that hormonal contraceptives were the only effective way to avoid pregnancy. I hear this same message repeated by physicians in their offices and in health classes.

I will be honest, there is no denying that hormonal contraceptives are effective to avoid pregnancy. That they are the ONLY effective contraceptives is simply untrue. Birth control pills have a reported effectiveness rate of 91%³. The reported effectiveness for Natural Family Planning methods is 86-98.5%. NFP looks equally as effective if not better!

Something Else to Consider

On a side note, we’ve learned so much about the gut as our second brain and how the birth control pill negatively affects gut health. Read more about that in this article by Dr. Taryn Stittleburg!

Natural Family Planning

Let’s look at the “official ” definition of Natural Family Planning (NFP). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, NFP is “a method of birth control that involves abstention from sexual intercourse during the period of ovulation which is determined through observation and measurement of bodily symptoms.”¹ In short, it means paying attention to your body’s natural signs of fertility and then using that information so you know exactly when you can get pregnant and when you should avoid unprotected intercourse.

Your Fertility Window

Did you realize there are only certain days you can get pregnant? It is a common myth that we are fertile every single day, and that’s just not true. Technically there are only SIX days in each cycle that you can become pregnant; the 24 hours of ovulation and the five days before that; referred to as the “fertile window.”

Natural family planning teaches you to recognize your own fertile window. You understand how your body was designed to work and understand the messages it sends. Based on that information you can make decisions about achieving or avoiding pregnancy. I don't know about you, but that feels way more empowering to me.

I hope that I have opened your mind to consider natural family planning as an option? Are you brave enough to trust your own body's information?

If you are interested to learn more about natural family planning, visit www.nfp-pharmacist.com or listen to the [“Wholly a Woman” podcast](#), available on all major podcast players.

References:

[“Natural family planning.”](#)

[“A Timeline of Contraception.”](#)

[“Effectiveness of Family Planning Methods](#)

[Fertility Appreciation Collaborative to Teach the Science. “What is Charting?”](#)



*Know your body
Trust your body
Love your body*



5 TIPS TO KEEPING YOURSELF CALM AND HEALTHY THIS YEAR

By Luk McLeod

If there is one thing we all need in 2021 it's to introduce calmness into our lives.

Calmness is vital to good health. There is still so much uncertainty in the world so introducing practices to keep you healthy is key.

Here are 5 Tips for keeping yourself calm and healthy this year.

Breathing Exercises

Breathwork is used by many of the leading athletes all over the world. It is a great tool for bringing energy into your body and also releasing tension at the same time. One of my favorite techniques is called Fire breathing. Short, sharp in & exhales for 2 minutes followed by a sustained breath-hold for around 30 seconds. It is a great exercise to do in the morning or before I do an activity that requires a lot of focus.

Meditation

This may be an obvious suggestion from me, however, I wasn't always fond of meditation. In fact, the first people who told me about it made it sound very woo-woo which didn't resonate with me. Then someone whom I admired a lot recommended it, explaining how it had helped him achieve his goals, and that's where my journey started. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is often misquoted: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change". Meditation may be the gateway to embracing change and help manage the anxiety and stress that global events create – looking at you, COVID19. Stress, anxiety, and burnout are some of the biggest problems that individuals struggle with, but if we can learn to take a few moments to pause and reset we are likely to be happier, healthier, less stressed, sleep better and as a result perform better.

Exercise

When life gets busy the first things that we neglect are exercise and meditation. However, they are instrumental in dealing with stress without burning out. Make sure you take time every day to move your body, even if it is just a 30-minute walk or stretch.

Exercise is important for your body and health. It's also vital for your mind and for helping you get a better night's sleep.

Write it down

I am big on journaling and goal setting. I highly recommend that you begin these practices especially when you are starting to feel more stressed and/ or more out of control.

If you are stressed, try this 4 step exercise.

- Write down what is stressing you out.
- Then write down why you think it is stressing you out.
- The next step is to write down 5 things you are grateful for and why?
- What are 5 things you would like to change and why?

Take a break, then come back to what is stressing you out and what you would like to change and write a number of solutions to your problem. It may take a while to come up with a game plan, but at least you have identified the problem so you know what you are working with.

Sometimes when we get stressed and feel as though we are on a merry-go-round. It can be hard to identify exactly what is going on. Take a quiet moment, write it down, that's where journaling comes in. You may even find talking to a therapy helpful. Either way, sort out your issues as they arrive rather than let them fester

Gratitude

Even if I am not stressed, I start most days with a walk, deep breathing, meditation, and journaling. Get into the habit of writing down 3-5 things you are grateful for in the morning. It is a great way to set your day upright

About The Guest Author-Luk McLeod is a meditation and mindfulness instructor. He is the founder of [Soul Alive](#)

**LIVING HEALTHY,
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Martha has been practicing and teaching yoga for 21 years to thousands of students in both the United States and Canada. Martha received her first 300- hour yoga certification with The American Yoga Academy in the year 2000.

In 2001 Martha received her yoga certification from The Yoga and Healing Center in New Jersey with Wendy Grosse, who specialized in Soul Sweat Yoga. In 2003, Martha was certified in Prenatal Yoga with Janice Clarfield at Kripalu Yoga, and in 2008, her Yoga Ed Certification in Ontario.

Martha's teaching has been inspired by David Life and Sharon Gannon, the founders of Jivamukti yoga, and she has attended several intensive training and summer camps with them. Martha also spent a week-long intensive with Bikram Choudrey at Kripalu Yoga, as well as her Baron Baptiste Level 3 Teacher Training and most recently a Yoga With Weights Certification with Danielle Diamond, the Founder of Xen Strength Yoga.

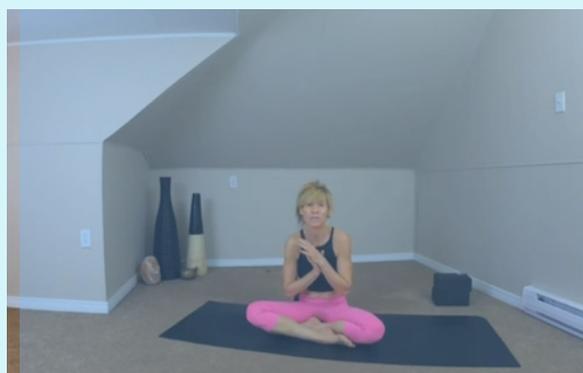
Martha just completed her level 2 Life Coaching Course with Brian Johnson and is looking forward to helping her students grow into their Optimal Selves, moment to moment to moment.

LIVING HEALTHY LIST'S FEBRUARY RESOURCES

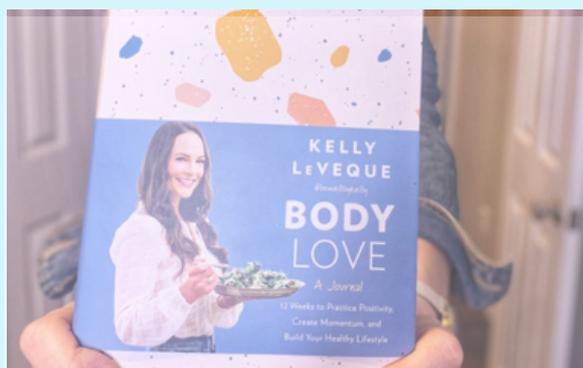


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