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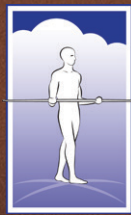
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Pathways Productions is a full-service advertising, marketing, event and publishing company serving the mind, body, spirit community since 1979. From the start, we have been a small, family-run business. Today, we have a women-led team dedicated to helping all businesses — local, small & independent — succeed and thrive. Over the years, we have expanded our offerings to include live events, most notably the widely successful and always popular Natural Living Expo.

The articles and resources offered by Pathways Magazine and its affiliated hosted events demonstrate a common belief on the part of local individuals, businesses and contributors that sharing ideas and expertise builds community and commerce in a spirit of unity, cooperation and understanding while maintaining a high level of integrity, responsibility and service. Our content embraces these ideals; we are a conduit — a pathway — for the most loving and dynamic insights and information that enable all of us to live more consciously.

The views and opinions expressed in Pathways Magazine, and by vendor materials for our hosted events, are those of the contributing writers, editors and merchants, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Pathways ownership or any Pathways staff. Any content provided by our contributors is of their opinion and is not intended to malign any religious, ethnic, or cultural group, organization, company or individual. Furthermore, the products and services presented herein and at our hosted events do not necessarily constitute an endorsement of use or a recommendation on the part of Pathways and its staff, and are largely paid advertising and vending.

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Join our Pathways Community! Through our quarterly and online publications, and our scheduled hosted events, we are committed to providing the public with free or affordable access to local resources focused on holistic health and wellness practices, spirituality and personal growth, community activism and outreach, and stewardship to the environment. We foster these opportunities through information, ideas, events, goods and services.

Our goal is to provide a platform for businesses to reach the public in a comprehensive and cost-effective way. Through advertising, packaged marketing, live events and retreats, and event planning support, we offer businesses opportunities to market themselves through a variety of channels, and use our expertise to facilitate this growing network. Pathways is your one-stop resource to make connections, nurture growth and achieve success.

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Pathways Magazine print edition is distributed through dozens of outlets in Maryland, DC and Virginia. Visit our “Where To Find” page online for the nearest locations to pick up your print copy. More distribution outlets are being added with each issue. We also provide an online digital edition with interactive links to references, resources and businesses for each issue. Our website features our current issue, as well as a magazine archive, where you can view issues dating back to 2010.

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Crystals are Earth's first living beings. Annie Larson explores the evolution of our understanding of crystals, and how they are still popular and potent elements for our enjoyment and healing. *Page 18*



Science is rediscovering what ancient movement traditions of Sacred Circle Dancing have always known: Experience shapes biology. Olga Brazhnik explores how through rhythm, breath, and touch, dance creates epigenetic spaces where cellular renewal mirrors communal harmony. *Page 46*



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PATHWAYS MAGAZINE • CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN PRINT! A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PATHWAYS TEAM

Plus Save the Dates for Our 2026 Natural Living Expos

What a year it’s been! As we end our 50th Anniversary celebration of the magazine, we want to thank our entire Pathways Community for five decades of loyalty, love and support. This issue is a reflection of the community we’ve built and the collective coherence we’ve forged. Our resources provide bridges between science and spirituality, and continue to educate and enlighten as we all evolve. Our journeys carry on and we’re so grateful to have all you along for the ride as we work for a better world.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will be gathering our people in community once again with three Natural Living Expos – Spring: March 22, Summer: June 7, and Fall: October 25— and hope you’ll join us! These wondrous days of inclusion, exploration and connection are our Radical Resistance to all the tumult around us, so we invite you to come and add your energy. Until then, and from our families to yours, we wish you all a wonderful winter season, and peace and blessings for a prosperous and joy-filled New Year!

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The Healer Within Spiral: A Framework for Understanding Your Journey of Healing

BY TANIESHA GARRISON, EDM

As much as we would like the opposite to be true, the healer's path doesn't begin with certainty. It begins with a spark, a conflagration even, moments when life tilts just enough to make pretending impossible, initiating us with the strident clarion call to heal. This call — maybe wrapped in crisis, often painfully inconvenient — holds the promise of something sacred: Life isn't breaking us down. It's breaking us open. Again.

But here's what no one mentions in those raw moments: A key feature of the healing journey is ambiguity. You're not supposed to have things figured out yet, and certainly not at the outset. The confusion is part of it. In fact, trying to understand everything right away might be the only thing standing between us and actual healing.

To clarify, healing operates on two levels, and we need both. **Healing work** refers to the specific practices that help us feel better and stronger in the moment — the energy sessions, the bodywork, the therapeutic practices that realign us when we're wobbling. The **healing journey** is the ongoing, sometimes maddeningly slow process of returning to our full awareness of our wholeness, especially when we feel anything but.

This distinction matters because you can have a profound healing session (healing work) and still be very much in the middle of your healing journey (the path). One is an event; the other is a path that pretzels back on itself. You'll revisit the same themes, the same wounds, the same questions you thought you'd already resolved. But here's the beautiful thing (and the horrible thing, depending on where you are): Each time you come back around the bend, you're not starting over. You're elevated, with more tools and greater awareness at your disposal. What overwhelmed you the first time becomes recognizable the second time. The recognition that took months before might take weeks this time around.

Wisdom traditions across cultures have been teaching this truth for centuries: the Medicine Wheel's four directions; the cyclical descent and return of the Hero's Journey; nature's endless spiraling seasons. The Healer Within Spiral draws from this ancient understanding while offering a lens specifically for those navigating healing work. It maps the cyclical nature of transformation, as well as the distinct support needed at each phase, helping us discern whether we need a healer, a teacher, a community, or a guide. Each phase calls for its own kind of companionship: healers to hold us when we Stand; teachers to activate our Sense-Making; community to help us Sync; and guides to support our Sustaining.

The Four Phases of the Spiral

1. STAND: Present Yourself to Be Held

The spiral almost always opens with an act of standing. This isn't the triumphant, fists-in-the-air stance, though if you've got that energy, more power to you. This is the trembling, uncertain, "I'm-not-sure-my-knees-work" kind of stance that happens when something inside ruptures before you have language for what's happening. Your primary job here is to present yourself to be ministered to, witnessed, helped and held. When the ground feels unstable and you're not sure which way is up, standing becomes your greatest offering to yourself.

The support that serves best in this phase comes from practitioners



Photo by Raphael Brasileiro, pexels.com

who can help fortify that shaky stance: energy workers, intuitives, bodyworkers, somatic therapists, grief counselors, anyone who can hold steady space as they help you figure out how to breathe again. Here, you are slowly orienting the scattered pieces of your experience into new coherence. Someone holds a mirror up and says, "You're still here. You're still whole. Let me help you remember."

One woman described her Stand phase this way: "I showed up to acupuncture appointments when I could barely leave the house. I didn't understand what was happening to me, but those needles and that practitioner's steady presence gave me something to anchor to while everything else was shifting."

That's the phase. You stand, let yourself be held, and begin to stabilize.

2. SENSE-MAKING: Follow Curiosity into Understanding

After being fortified by healing work, your legs grow steadier. Let's be honest. They still wobble, and there's wobbling for a while, but curiosity starts to emerge. Little flashes of inspiration and wonder whisper: *Wait, how did that work? Why did I feel that shift in my body? What's actually happening here?*

This is when the Sense-Making phase begins, and it's a delightful rabbit hole. Suddenly you're diving into podcasts, devouring books, signing up for courses, attending workshops. You might find yourself pursuing Reiki certification, learning about somatic practices, studying ancestral healing modalities, exploring herbalism, diving into astrology, practicing breathwork. The impulse is often to learn everything at once, and that's okay. This phase can feel overwhelming, and many people worry they're doing it wrong: "Should I focus on one thing? Am I spreading myself too thin?" But here's the secret... Drink from the firehose, and trust you will absorb what you need to absorb. Your system is smarter than you think.

The teachers who serve best here aren't necessarily those with all the answers (though they often have many), but rather the ones who activate. Look for the practitioners who inspire deeper curiosity and make you want to keep going. Their role is to open doors, not close them; they say, "Here's what I know, and here's where you might look next."

As your learning deepens, the heart and brain start talking to each other more clearly. Things begin to cohere, creating a new pull: the call of community.

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Eudaimonia and Happiness

BY BENJAMIN BREGMAN, MD

Have you ever come across a word that captured and crystallized an idea that had been just out of reach? Throughout my career as a psychiatrist, I struggled to find a word that contained the concept I was trying to convey to my patients in their search for a better life. No, it wasn't happiness they were seeking; it was something more profound, something more meaningful, something that turned the pain and suffering of life into something sweet and precious. That word, stumbled upon in a cursory Google search turned out to be....

Eudaimonia (*you-day-mone-ee-yah*) — εὐδαιμονία

On August 13, 1963, just three months before his assassination, President John F. Kennedy published a report titled *Progress Report by the President on Physical Fitness*. In it, he wrote:

“The Greeks defined happiness as the exercise of vital forces along lines of excellence in a life affording them scope.”

I first came across this quote as a teenager, and it left a lasting impression, both inspiring and confusing me for many years.

At the time, my understanding of happiness was simple: the feeling you get when you pet your dog, hug your partner, get a raise, pass a test, or watch a great movie. Happiness was subjective, pleasurable, and fleeting. It was the opposite of sadness, rooted in novelty, pleasure, comfort, and an escape from life's everyday discomforts. It was something we were told, as Americans, that we could *pursue*, but never truly possess.

Like many psychiatrists, I once had the hubris to think that kind of happiness could be delivered through psychotherapy and dopaminergic or serotonergic medications. Just treat the depression, I thought, and happiness would reveal itself.

But JFK's Greek version of happiness seemed altogether different. There were no “vital forces” in my clinical understanding of mood. No “lines of excellence.” No mention of “scope.”

A Turning Point

That changed about a year ago. While looking up the roots of other Greek-derived words, like *euthymia* (“good mood”) and *eurythmia* (“good rhythm”), I came across *eudaimonia* again. Don't ask me why I was looking those words up — it's one of the perks of being a word nerd with a background in psychiatry. I had seen the word before, most memorably as the name of a game store in Berkeley, but never explored its meaning. Curious, I dug deeper. What I discovered blew my mind.

Eudaimonia (sometimes spelled *eudaemonia*) comes from the Greek:

- “**eu**” — true or good
- “**di**” — across
- “**mon**” — spirit

More poetically, it translates to something like: **“being true to your whole being.”**

In classical philosophy, *eudaimonia* was a central concept for Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. They saw it not as a fleeting emotional state, but as the ultimate goal of human life: to live in alignment with one's authentic self, and to exercise one's full capacities with excellence and purpose.

Somewhere along the way, likely in an imprecise translation from Greek to Latin in the 15th century, *eudaimonia* became simply “happiness.” That's the word JFK used in his 1963 report. But what he attributed to the Greeks was far more nuanced than our modern conception of happiness.



JFK - created by ChatGPT for Ben Bregman

What Matters Most

So what does this older articulation of happiness mean? What are these “vital forces,” and how do we define “excellence” or find “scope” in our lives? How does this classical notion of fulfillment compare to the Western pursuit of happiness that often chases stimulation or ease?

At its heart, *eudaimonia* is less about feeling good and more about **being whole**. It's not a momentary mood, but a lifelong practice: the ongoing work of becoming who you truly are.

The “**vital forces**” are the deepest and most animating parts of you. They're your talents, your curiosities, your longings, your capacity to love, to create, to persist, to understand. You could think of them as the inner sources of energy and meaning that move through you when you're doing something that feels purposeful or deeply right, when you're fully engaged, not just entertained or distracted.

Many of us experienced this **harmony** as children, through creative play, intense curiosity, or moments of quiet joy. Yet somewhere along the way, we're taught to ignore those impulses or abandon them for more practical concerns. But those vital forces don't disappear; they lie dormant, waiting to be reclaimed.

To **exercise** these forces means to use them, actively, intentionally, and regularly. Just like muscles, they grow through movement, effort, and challenge. *Eudaimonia* is not effortless. It requires cultivation, training, and exertion. It's not just about doing what feels good, or what we're naturally talented at; it's about moving toward what brings meaning and depth to our lives. The journey itself becomes the reward.

Excellence, in this context, doesn't mean perfection or competition. It means striving toward your own highest expression of integrity and capability. It means doing things well, not to win, but because they matter to you; and because the act of doing them well brings your being into alignment.

And importantly, the excellence of *eudaimonia* doesn't exist in a vacuum. Our personal fulfillment is most complete when it intersects with the needs of the world. The “lines of excellence” along which we express our gifts should not only elevate our own lives, but contribute to something beyond ourselves. In that way, *eudaimonia* becomes both a personal and ethical pursuit.

Scope refers to the range of your life, the arenas in which your vital forces are allowed to operate. That could be work, relationships, creativity, service, play, contemplation, or even healing. Without scope, even the strongest inner forces wither. A person might have

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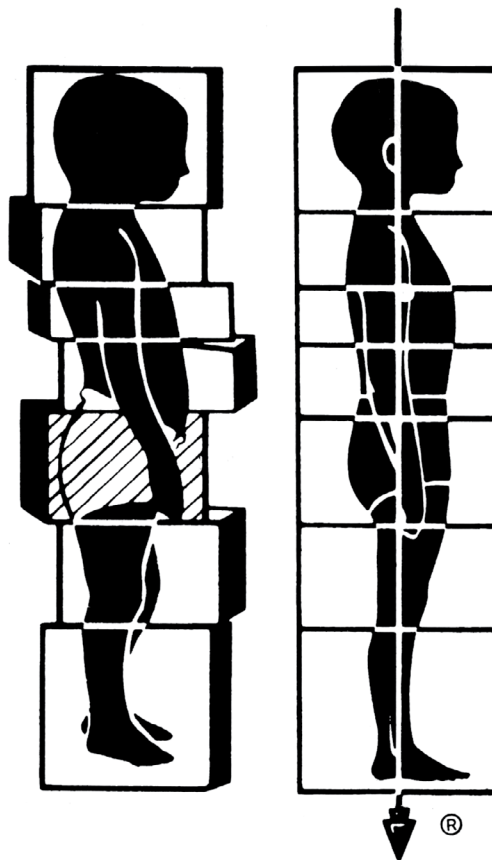
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Genes That Listen: Epigenetics, Memory, and the Biology of Participation

BY RUSLANA REMENNIKOVA

For generations, we've been told our genes hold the final word on temperament, talent, behaviors and identity, which ascribes an oversimplified role to heredity. But that certainty is giving way to something far more interesting: a biology that *listens*.

DNA has long been portrayed as a rigid blueprint, a fixed script. Yet modern science suggests genes are not dictators; they are listeners, interpreters, negotiators. Life is far more improvisational than textbooks let on: identical twins growing apart into radically different adults; childhood stress leaving chemical fingerprints on genes; meditation and compassion rewiring inflammatory responses and life longevity; and human connection shaping biology in real time.

Epigenetics, the study of how experience influences gene expression, reveals that our bodies record life's patterns. Genes don't simply exist; they respond. They respond to our diet, our sleep, our stress, our love. They respond to the rhythms of our relationships, the attentiveness we offer ourselves and others, even the environments we inhabit. In this light, biology begins to feel *participatory* — less a predetermined script and more a dialogue, a co-authored story between organism and world, body and field, self and collective.

Moving Through Genetic Determinism

For most of the twentieth century, biology told a single story: you are your genes. The Human Genome Project was meant to decode what makes us human — to read, base by base, the book of life itself. But when the sequencing was finished in 2003, a confusion followed. The human genome turned out to have only about 20,000 protein-coding genes, hardly more than a nematode worm. The complexity of human consciousness, emotion, memory, art, and moral imagination didn't fit the math.

The story had missing pages. Part of the problem was how genetics had been framed.

Genetic determinism held that genes invariably dictate outcomes, leaving little room for environment, experience, or chance. Genetic essentialism claimed that genes are fixed essences defining who we are, and genetic reductionism treated genes as the ultimate explanation for human traits (Kampourakis, 2017, p.6, and Kampourakis, 2021, pp. xvii-xviii). These simplified notions not only misrepresented biology but also fueled harmful misconceptions, from claims of innate differences in intelligence between sexes and races (Geary, 1998; Kimura, 1999; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) to the mistaken belief that our traits are preordained rather than responsive.

In the wake of that revelation, a new question began to arise: If genes aren't the full story, *what else* is shaping life? The emerging field of epigenetics offers a different premise: It is not individual genes alone, but the genome in context, responsive to environment, emotion, and experience, that shapes biological development and evolution. Stress can silence certain genes; compassion can awaken others. Nutrients, toxins, breath patterns, even social bonds leave chemical notations along the DNA, influencing which sequences play and which remain dormant.

A mother's touch, a lover's absence, or the spinning bob wheel of daily stress leave molecular fingerprints. Research in both animals and humans shows that early experiences can alter gene expression in ways that persist for years. Rat pups receiving nurturing maternal care develop increased glucocorticoid receptor expression through DNA methylation, which helps regulate stress into adulthood (Meaney &



Photo: *Trânsito (Movimenti)*, 2015, analogue exposures, by Mari Amman; <https://mariamman.net/transito/>

Szyf, 2005). In humans, the children and even grandchildren of Holocaust survivors or famine victims carry DNA methylation marks in stress-related genes, suggesting that trauma, and by extension care, can reverberate across generations (Heijmans et al., 2008; Yehuda et al., 2016).

Practices of attention and care also leave biological traces. For instance, compassion meditation has been shown to alter the expression of genes involved in inflammation and stress regulation, effectively tuning the body's response to the environment (Kaliman et al., 2014; Bhasin et al., 2013). Empathy, kindness, and intentional presence, far from being abstractions, have measurable impacts on biology, demonstrating that our interior states are translated into molecular signals.

The field between us participates, too. When groups breathe together, synchronize movement, or engage in shared attention, physiological coherence emerges: heart rhythms align, stress markers drop, and emotional states stabilize across participants (McCraty, 2017; Ruiz-Blais et al., 2020). These findings hint at something profound: consciousness and matter, long imagined as separate, may be interwoven in resonant fields that extend beyond the individual.

Life as Participation: Agency, Intention, Relationships, Environment

Epigenetics, relational resonance, and biofield coherence converge on a single insight: Life is responsive. Genes converse, cells adapt, and the human body senses, interprets, and communicates, translating experience into chemical marks, and attention into energetic rhythms. Experience leaves molecular traces, while attention offers energetic ones. Together, these form different registers of the same music — molecular, relational, and resonant.

Every act of attention, care, or intention becomes a note in the body's evolving score. The tone of our thoughts, the steadiness of our breath, the warmth or tension in our exchanges are transcribed into living tissue. Empathy, conflict, and attunement each become molecular dialogues, teaching cells what safety, belonging, or vigilance feel like. Early caregiving leaves enduring imprints, shaping stress regulation and emotional resilience well into adulthood.

The environment adds another layer of context. Nutrition, toxins, light cycles, urban noise, and social surroundings influence which genes play and which remain silent, while perceptions of safety, pur-

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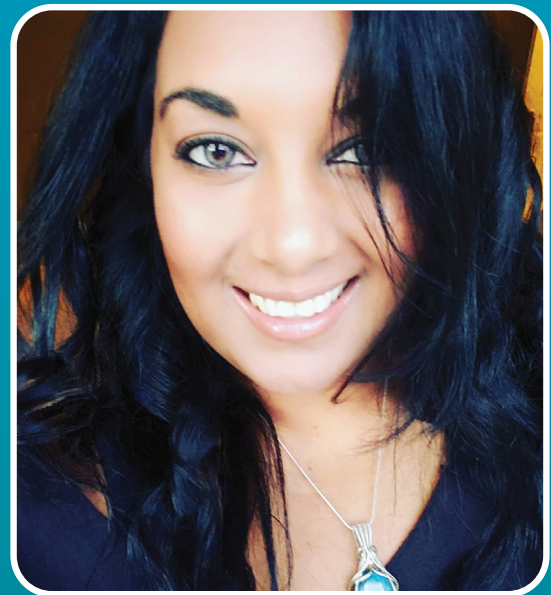
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Winter 2025: Realizing Dreams Versus Creating Reality

BY MISTY KUCERIS

Over the past several months you may have found yourself reviewing your past to create plans for the future. And while that continues with the full Moon that occurs on December 4, 2025, you'll find your energy shifts in this Winter Quarter from generating plans based on inspiration and dreams to implementing plans based on reality and desires.

The full Moon that occurs on December 4 has the Sun in Sagittarius and the Moon in Gemini. When the Sun is in Sagittarius, you start thinking about your goals, and with the Moon in Gemini, you want to talk about those goals as much as possible. You may even decide some of your goals need more details. Being true to yourself is important as the Sun is surrounded by Venus and Mars in Sagittarius while the Moon in Gemini opposes these two planets. Simultaneously, with the full Moon forming a very close square to the Moon's Nodal Axis in Pisces and Virgo you realize it's important to review your past experiences to determine if your stated goals are on track with what you want in life; or have they changed?

Normally when Neptune turns direct, as it does on December 10, 2025, that's not very important; but this time, it's a bit different. Neptune re-entered the sign of Pisces in retrograde motion on October 22, 2025, and you found it important to review your dreams and get a better sense of your aspirations. You found some instances of illusion where the reality didn't support the dream. But you also found signs of inspiration where your dreams could be brought into reality. Over the next several weeks as Neptune in Pisces continues its pathway towards entering the sign of Aries on January 26, 2026, you'll find that creating a plan for implementing your dreams of reality becomes increasingly easier.

Most new Moon time periods are when you receive more clarity about the next steps you need to take, but it may be a little different on December 19, 2025, when the new Moon occurs. That's because the Sun and Moon in Sagittarius form square aspects to Saturn and Neptune as well as a quincunx to Uranus retrograde. Instead of getting the clarity you seek, unexpected situations will pop up that have you questioning some of your milestones to achieving your goals. This can create some emotional disruptions since you thought you knew it all. However, these unexpected circumstances may actually be beneficial because they'll bring up important points you didn't consider.

The Winter Solstice occurring on December 21, 2025, when the Sun enters the sign of Capricorn is always a critical spiritual time period. It is the last quarter of the astrological year as well as the shortest day in the Northern Hemisphere. From this point on, the days begin to get longer.

During this Winter Solstice, the Sun forms a conjunction to Mars as well as a square to Ceres. Meanwhile, Mars forms an exact square to Ceres later in the day. Normally there is this sense of unrest when the Sun forms a conjunction to Mars and a square to Ceres. People want to take matters into their own hands. They let passion drive them. But Mars is in Capricorn and exalted in that sign while Ceres is in Aries, the sign that Mars rules. Instead of taking matters into your own hands and acting without considering the consequences, you pull back. You take time to deliberate on the best course of action. You don't want to take any steps that might inflict pain or create more problems.

As you ring in the New Year and the full Moon occurs on January 3, 2026, you realize your plans need to ensure your professional aspirations and your family concerns have balance. Work is important,

especially with the Sun in Capricorn forming conjunctions to Venus and Mars. At the same time as the Moon in Cancer forms oppositions to Venus and Mars, you realize you won't let work interfere with your family priorities. "Me time" with people you care for becomes more important.

Discussing your plans with important people in your life helps so much during the time of the new Moon on January 18, 2026. With both the Sun and Moon in Capricorn forming conjunction to Mercury and Mars, you understand the importance of sharing information so you can engage other people to support your plans. As a matter of fact, they'll be able to help you discern what is illusion, what is aspiration, and what is realistic.

On January 20, 2026, Saturn forms a sextile to Uranus and you finally start feeling on the right track. Saturn represents the need to create structure while Uranus represents the desire to try new things and approaches that you never have before. When this aspect occurs, you start looking at how you're living your life. Do you feel you're getting what you need? Or, do you feel it's time to let go of some routines that prevent you from moving on? You finally realize you do have answers to those questions.

January 26, 2026, is an important date astrologically because Neptune finally enters the sign of Aries for the next 12 years. In your personal charts, Neptune represents your need to take your dreams and make them into a reality. It indicates where you can use your creative talents to move forward. But it can also represent where you let illusion guide your path rather than reality. Those illusions can be of your own making when you can't accept your dreams aren't realistic. Or, those illusions can be brought about by other people who are operating in

their best interests, not yours. Still, Aries represents you, the individual; and with Neptune in Aries, you develop more confidence in the importance of your dreams, your plans, and your ability to implement them. There is only one drawback to Neptune in Aries and an important spiritual lesson to remember: Often when Neptune is in Aries you believe you have to do things on your own. Neptune in Aries also represents the ability to inspire others to believe in your dreams; so if your dreams are realistic, you'll find you don't have to do things on your own. Others will be there to help you — all you have to do is ask.

If you feel a sense of conflict when the full Moon occurs on February 1, 2026, it may be because you're not letting others know you need their help. With the Sun in Aquarius forming a conjunction to Venus and Mercury, and the Moon forming an opposition to these same two planets, you want to be allowed to live on your terms. At the same time you want your abilities and talents recognized. It's not that other people are ignoring your efforts; it's that other people may not be aware of your efforts. If you feel you need recognition, let people know what you're doing. If you don't feel like discussing anything with others, just take pride in your efforts.

On February 13, 2026, Saturn enters the sign of Aries and remains in that sign for the next 2.5 years. Saturn represents rules and regulations, which define society. It also represents the standards you set for yourself so you can find your place in society. Because being an individual is so important when Saturn is in Aries, you may find it easier to define who you are and what you need. By doing so you may come to a better understanding of your boundaries. You may realize you're only responsible for those matters involving you and people you love. Realizing you don't have to do it all on your own, it may become easier



Image by George Chernilevsky from Pixabay

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Winter Astrology...

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to delegate.

The solar annular eclipse occurring on February 17, 2026, is the first of four eclipses to occur in 2026. While this eclipse will not be seen in the United States, you'll still feel its energy. During any solar eclipse, the Moon blocks the Sun and you feel the need to retire from daily activities for a while in order to grow or even survive. It's a shame we won't see this specific solar eclipse because a solar annular eclipse resembles a "ring of fire" — the Moon covers the center of the Sun and the rays of the Sun splay out around the Moon like fire from a hearth.

This eclipse, with the Sun and Moon in Aquarius, represents the need to understand other people in a way you can accept them for their differences while still finding common ground for compromise. At the same time, this eclipse represents the importance of maintaining your individuality, which at times can make it difficult to find that common ground. In actuality, if you know what you need on an emotional level, you will find that common ground is easier to gain.

Now that both Saturn and Neptune are in the same sign of Aries, they form a conjunction on February 20, 2026. What's interesting about these two planets is how they represent two completely different dynamics: Saturn, the creator of reality; Neptune, the master of illusion. Yet, when these two planets meet, Saturn becomes the builder of systems and structures while Neptune provides the inspiration to put these new systems into reality. What this means is you'll develop some great ways to implement your plan and make it real.

When Mercury in Pisces turns retrograde on February 26, 2026, you find yourself turning inward. Reflection and understanding becomes more important. Mercury will be retrograde until March 20, 2026, the day of the Spring Equinox. It will be a great time to see if implementing your plans is on track. And, if you need to pull back a little bit from

some of those plans, you'll find by the time spring arrives, plans will be running smoothly.

Finally, as this winter quarter ends, the second eclipse of the year occurs on March 2, 2026. This eclipse will be visible in the DMV and something you won't want to miss. It is a Total Lunar Eclipse where the Moon turns blood red at its height. It will start at 3:44 am EST with the maximum visibility occurring at 6:33 am EST. By 6:39 am EST the eclipse will end and the Moon will return to its normal color. (By the way, this will be the last total lunar eclipse until December 31, 2028 to January 1, 2029.)

Lunar eclipses occur at the time of the full Moon which means the Sun will be in Pisces and the Moon in Virgo. In this case, the earth is what blocks the Moon. This means we need to find a realistic way to approach life if we want to feel connected with others, especially with this March eclipse. In addition to the Sun being in the sign of Pisces, Mars, Mercury retrograde, and Venus are all in Pisces. This means as you implement plans for the future, be true to those dreams that are realistic. With Neptune and Saturn in the early signs of Aries, it's important to be true to yourself and remain optimistic you can find support while implementing your dreams. With the Moon in Virgo, you may feel you have to take care of everything yourself, but that's not necessarily true. Communicate your needs with others to find support as you implement your realistic dreams and aspirations.

© 2025 Misty Kuceris | Misty Kuceris is a Certified Astrological Professional, a Reiki Master, and Co-founder of the NOVA Astrology Group. She has contributed to Pathways for over 30 years. See her website for monthly astrological reflections: www.EnhanceOneself.com. Contact her at: misty@EnhanceOneself.com.



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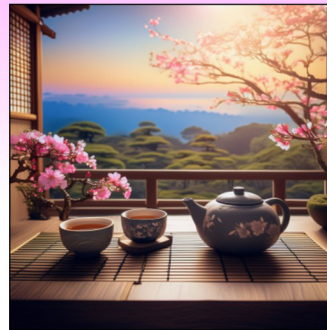
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Crystals: Earth's First Living Beings

BY ANNIE LARSON

In a crystal we have clear evidence of the existence of a formative life principle, and though we cannot understand the life of a crystal, it is nonetheless a living being.

~ Nikola Tesla

Our ancestors, the early hominids, engaged in collecting minerals tens of thousands of years ago. Archaeological sites show early hominids made arrowheads and hand axes from flint, chert, and obsidian. While their motivations were likely practical, their selection of specific stone types shows they understood material properties.

As the opening quote suggests, Nikola Tesla's conjecture about crystals being living beings highlights what was his lifelong fascination with the natural world and its fundamental forces. Tesla is well known for his inventions, such as the alternating current and the Tesla coil. The renowned inventor, electrical engineer and futurist saw crystals as potential in his quest to harness energy and develop groundbreaking technologies. His predecessors Jacques and Pierre Curie's work in 1880 discovered quartz could produce an electric charge under mechanical stress; Tesla believed crystals, especially quartz, had unique properties for energy transmission and storage.

Quartz crystals vibrate, and they do so at a very precise frequency. This property makes quartz crystals great for timekeeping devices like watches that use quartz crystal oscillators. This precision is also used in space travel. According to NASA, in order to know a spacecraft's location within a small margin of error, astronomers rely on atomic clocks, made from a combination of quartz crystal with mercury atoms



that can measure billionths of a second.

To understand more about the fascinating world of minerals, it is essential to recognize that they serve as the fundamental building blocks of rocks and crystals, forming the very foundation of the Earth's geological structure. They come in an astonishing variety of forms and compositions, each exhibiting its own unique characteristics such as color, hardness, luster and cleavage. This diversity results from the various environmental conditions under which they form, including temperature, pressure, and different chemical elements. Quartz is the most common mineral on earth, and it comes in many varieties. Each variety of quartz possesses its own set of physical and optical proper-

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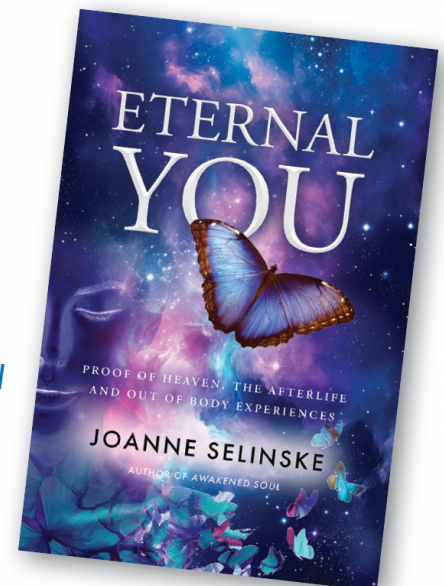
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ties, making them sought after in various applications, from industrial uses to ornamental gemstones.

An Evolution of Understanding Crystals

Beyond their use as tools, rocks held symbolic significance. Cave paintings and artifacts decorated with stones and crystals show an earlier recognition of their aesthetic and spiritual value. In his renowned book, *The Human Condition*, prehistorian and cognitive archeologist Robert G. Bednarik compiles decades of research on human evolution and expertise on paleolithic rock art, and he notes, “None of those crystals were used as tools, nor worked on, nor do they even have perforations or signs of use as jewels. They were objects that the hominins considered valuable in themselves. In summary, 700,000 years ago (perhaps even earlier if other discoveries are confirmed), the brain of *Homo erectus* felt so attracted by the shapes of quartz crystals that they decided to treasure them.” (Bednarik, 2011)

Neolithic societies mined gemstones for decoration. The ancient Greeks and Romans amassed collections, inspired by mythology and the protective qualities of gemstones. The Chinese honed the art of jade carving, elevating it to a cultural icon.

Like early hominids, Tesla’s interest in crystals went beyond practical use; he saw them as conduits for Earth’s cosmic energy. He believed their vibrational frequencies connected to universal energy fields, aligning with his vision of harnessing Earth’s natural energies for humanity’s free, limitless power.

Tesla further believed in the concept of “ether” as a medium for transmitting energy, and he saw crystals as potential tools to manipulate these vibrations. [Summaries of articles](#) found in his published work, *The Tesla Papers*, assert, “Tesla’s crystal oscillators could harness and stabilize the vibrational energy of quartz while allowing him to produce frequencies that were stable and controlled. His experiments established the powerful radio technology. These precise frequencies were used for signal transmissions.”

For understanding, note from Suntsu Electronic’s [Quick Guide to Oscillators](#) that “Oscillators work by converting direct current (DC) power to alternating current (AC) power. To do this, DC power is connected to the circuit which then flows through the oscillator circuit and becomes AC signals at specific frequencies that are called sine waves. These waves act as informational signals in electronics and, since it changes over time as it oscillates, they become integral in all devices that need accuracy.” In the present world, these crystals are used in radio and telecommunication technologies. These are serving as the heart of oscillators in many electronic devices, including radios, clocks, and computers.

Because of their ability to vibrate, Tesla believed crystals could influence consciousness and well-being, and he explored crystals’ metaphysical aspects. His holistic approach considered crystals as tools for both technological and personal transformation. Although Tesla discussed the potential of crystals in his writings and lectures, there is no documented evidence of him conducting specific experiments in his lab using crystals for healing or other metaphysical purposes. Detailed records of his experiments, most of which were seized when he died in 1943, are scarce.

Rockhounding For Hobby and Healing

Like Tesla, I developed a strong passion for collecting crystals and minerals from a young age, a fascination that traces back through my ancestors. In 1965, I gathered my most rare crystal specimens. My father was overseeing the Alamogordo Air Force Base in New Mexico. I collected rare crystals known as “Trinitite” during the dedication cere-

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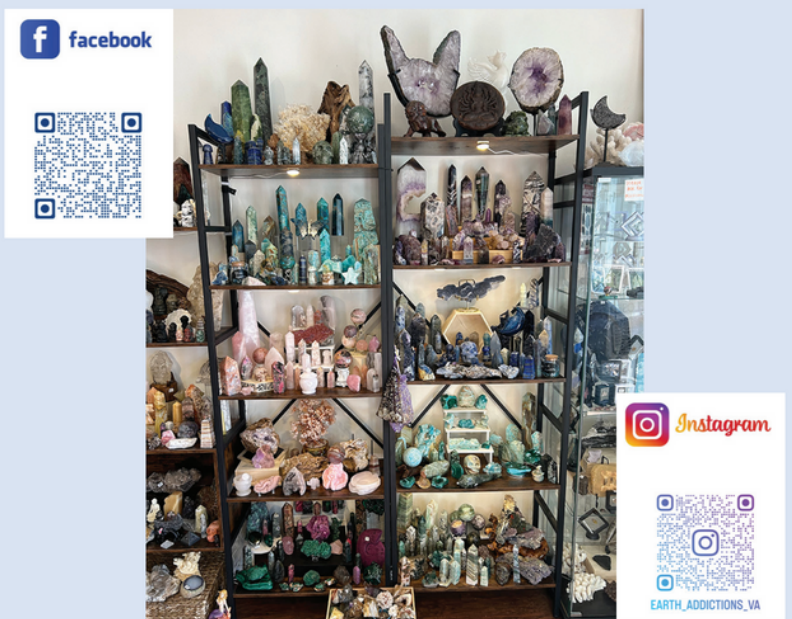
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Crystals...

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many of Trinity Site at White Sands Missile Range. This site is famous for detonating the first atomic bomb explosion on July 16, 1945, as depicted in the Oscar-winning film "Oppenheimer." Twenty years after the first atomic blast, at age five, I walked on the white desert sand, which had turned into a pale green glass layer because of the bomb's intense heat. Robert E. Hermes, a scientist from Los Alamos National Laboratory, suggested in his 2005 article in the *Nuclear Weapons Journal* that "much of the glass was formed by sand which was drawn up inside the fireball and then rained down in liquid form." You can still visit this site today, although collecting specimens is no longer allowed. It is open two days each year, in April and October, as it remains radioactive.

My own collection, some inherited, became integral to my life, enriching my Reiki energy healing practice with the energies and healing properties each specimen offers. As a dedicated "rockhound," I seek unique specimens in nature and through exchanges with fellow enthusiasts and specialized crystal shops. Coined in 1922, the term "rockhound" describes collectors who are always on the lookout for distinctive geological discoveries. My adventures often lead me to remote mining locations or gem shows, providing opportunities to deepen my geological knowledge. Over the years, by keeping my gaze downward, I've uncovered countless treasures in unexpected places, turning collecting into an exciting crystal hunting quest.

Rockhounding also connects me to my ancestral Finnish heritage, where Saami shamans believed crystals shared a structure with the human brain, long before the discovery of DNA. Stones called "sieidis" were revered as sacred and believed to be inhabited by helpful spirits. Saami families and clans made offerings to these stones for protection and good fortune. Finland started a tradition of using special rocks called "kiuaskivet", like basalt or peridotite, in saunas for their heat retention. Finlanders may have originally used native spectrolite, related to labradorite, for its healing properties, highlighting ancient practices now mostly forgotten. While most of these cultural healing practices are lost to time, the allure and mystery deepens my appreciation for crystals.

Exploring rocks and minerals is a fascinating hobby. If you're drawn to their charm, you might be a budding rockhound! Start by nurturing your curiosity and wonder, as each crystal tells a story of geological processes that took millions or billions of years to unfold. Beyond their beauty, crystals carry metaphysical properties, adding another layer of significance.

Tesla's anecdotal work with crystals highlights his innovative spirit and quest to understand technology's relationship with nature and the universe. His pioneering efforts continue to inspire research into crystals' potential in energy and holistic healing. As you collect crystals, enjoy the journey and remember that every piece you add to your collection is a small fragment of the earth's incredible history.

Annie Larson is a psychic medium, speaker, and healer featured in TV, radio, and print outlets including The Washington Post. She offers mediumship sessions providing evidence of the survival of consciousness, meeting clients in Sterling, Virginia, by phone, or online. MediumAnnieLarson.com

The Healer Within Spiral...

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3. SYNC: Find Yourself Through Others

In the Sync phase, something widens. The desire to connect with others on similar paths begins to pour into the energetic space carved out by your healing and learning, and your journey transforms from solitary to shared.

Here, you re-access that primal truth that holds two realities at once: We are one, and we are distinct. We need each other to fully return to ourselves. In community, you hear your truth echoing in someone else's story and recognize the interconnection, while simultaneously noticing how uniquely that story lives within you. This is how that sacred knowing deepens: through dialogue, through witnessing the same healing unfold differently in different bodies, and through the sharpening that happens when your experience meets another's. Community doesn't blur your edges; it helps you find them.

This is when group practice becomes essential — not as education, but as crucible. These types of containers — ceremonies, meditation sanghas, ancestor circles, training cohorts, coven meetings — hold the paradox you've just remembered, allowing intellectual understanding to transform into lived experience. You start to recognize how your healing echoes through the group while remaining distinctly, irreducibly yours.

4. SUSTAIN: Integrate the Change

And then comes the final turn of the spiral — the phase that simultaneously marks an end and a beginning; the phase where you stop thinking about your healing and start being your healing.

Sustaining involves the intentional practice of letting the healing change you, allowing it to show up in how you move through the world. It's about operating in your reality informed by those deep shifts rather than compartmentalizing them as “that thing I experienced in ceremony” or “that insight I had in therapy.”

This might look like a daily practice that didn't exist before: lighting a candle each morning and checking in with your body before the day begins; or setting boundaries that honor your energy in ways you couldn't have articulated six months ago; or recognizing the moment anxiety rises in your chest and having the tools — breath, movement, grounding, compassion — to meet it rather than be overtaken by it. Sustaining is the healing living in your choices, your rhythms, your way of being.

This phase asks vulnerable questions: *How does this healing want to live through me? What practices sustain this new way of being? How do I anchor these insights when life gets chaotic again?* As those of us who've been around this spiral a few times know, this degree of embodiment requires discernment. You learn to listen to what your own system needs, not what you think it should need.

Look for practitioners who can walk alongside you as you create the awareness and structures to become your own guide. A good guide offers suggestions; a great one helps you develop awareness of the structures that are most aligned to your rhythms — mentoring, integration coaching, accountability partnerships, and development of new practices that support your transformed way of being.

And yet, as profound as this Sustaining work is, it's not the end.

When The Spiral Continues (Because Of Course It Does)

It would be lovely to assume the journey ends with this sustaining work of integration, to tie it up with a bow, declare ourselves healed, and move on with our lives. Except that's not how this works.

With each new wave of grief, unexpected loss, tower moment, or threshold crossing, we enter the spiral again, only from an elevated perspective. You meet these challenges differently every time, with greater tools and awareness to navigate the complexities of your journey. The second time through Stand, your instincts are sharper about who can hold space for you. The Sense-Making you've already done deepens your understanding of the practices to explore. Previous Syncing experiences inform who you need in your corner: the quiet energy of a meditation group? the fiery spirit of a local coven? And earlier Sustaining work means you're revisiting and adding nuance rather than building from nothing.

The steady invitation of the Healer Within Spiral calls you deeper and deeper into the fullness of who you are: centered, connected, and whole. The path curves back on itself, yes. But each return brings you home to yourself with greater capacity to hold it all. That's the sacred promise of the spiral: Each time life asks you to begin again, you'll remember that what once broke you open will eventually break you through.

Taniesha Garrison, Ed.M., is the founder of The Healer Within Collective, where she guides others in remembering their innate wholeness through energy work and reflective practice. A healer, teacher, and coach, she created The Healer Within Spiral to illuminate the cyclical nature of personal and spiritual transformation. Holding a master's degree from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, she bridges intellect and intuition to help others heal, grow, and lead from within. www.thehealerwithincollective.com



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Excavating Hidden Jewels With Past Life Regression

BY JOANNE SELINSKE

Perhaps you have heard someone mention Past Life Regression, seen a movie depicting a session, or consulted a psychic who had a psychic reading which referenced one of your past lives. Like many other therapeutic techniques, there are many misconceptions about what Past Life Regression is and is not. So let's start with a shared understanding.

Past Life Regression is a type of transpersonal hypnotherapy that enables recovery of memories from a past life. These sessions are a gateway to understanding what lessons, balancing or healing a soul has embedded to progress on in their current life.

People schedule sessions for a variety of reasons. Curiosity motivates some, but most are interested in furthering understanding. Many schedule after exhausting all other avenues to explain patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior.

A typical session begins with a relaxation exercise before hypnotic trance is induced. The objective is to direct the attention of the person being hypnotized beyond everyday awareness and into their eternal memory bank. Once in trance, the hypnotherapist begins to question the person, gathering background details about themselves and their circumstances.

A common misconception is the idea that many people recall lives as famous people. Interestingly, in the hundreds of regressions I have facilitated, only two people mentioned someone well-known. In both cases, the historical figures were infamous, and both clients rejected the possible association. The overwhelming majority of people reexperience lives as common folk, living ordinary lives in circumstances that are often not ideal. This is not surprising, given that over the millennia there have been comparatively fewer kings, queens, famous scientists or military leaders. I could go on with the list, but you get the idea.



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Many are fascinated to learn who they were, where and when they lived, and the contours of those everyday lives. People recall dramatic events that were traumatic and remain unhealed. Others evoke important lessons unlearned. Still others revisit situations and circumstances that created imbalance. Said simply, people reexperience what was left unfinished in a prior life and what calls out for completion and resolution.

The therapeutic value of the session is found in the *jewels* excavated from it – the beliefs formed or reinforced, the associated emotions, and the coping behaviors those two elicited in the past life. These are the clues for the pattern that is likely impacting the current life.

Hidden Jewels Unearthed: Three Case Studies

The power of Past Life Regression to help us heal, learn and balance is well documented. The following examples are illustrative and may give you some idea as to how past life themes are showing up in your current life. Mindful of confidentiality, the names and identifying details in the following are fictitious.

CASE ONE: Recurring Themes

Thirty-year-old Jonathan works in the chemical industry, voicing a love and interest in *cutting edge* science. He scheduled a session with hopes of understanding his reluctance to voice his opinion in personal and professional matters. Although he doesn't believe this tendency affects his friendships in any major way, he knows it is impacting his career and is worried over time it will become a problem in his marriage. Despite having a wife, friends and a career, Jonathan noted he finds it curious he prefers to spend most of his time alone.

Once in trance, Jonathan found himself nearing the end of what he described as a long but unfulfilled life. Although he lived amidst people, he repeated several times that he always felt alone. In an effort to uncover the origin of the feelings, I instructed him to move back in time to explore their beginnings. He next recalled a life in medieval times. Few details about this life were gathered other than the dramatic realization that he was killed for speaking out.

Seeking understanding, Jonathan jumped to another life. A drama unfolded as a result of his outspoken views about what he believed was the church's mistreatment and censorship of scientists. His once prominent family had disowned him because of the shame and embarrassment that his actions brought. For similar reasons, his fiancé broke their engagement. His trust was shattered. After what he described as a life devoid of love, connection or fulfillment, he died alone concluding it was not safe to voice his opinion.

Jonathan's regression is an example of someone who revisits more than one life during a single session. When this occurs, the person's focus is on a theme that repeats in the multiple lives they drop into. The multiple lives visited may not be sequential, but together end up

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painting a more complete picture. Although they may gather fewer details about each of the various lives, the information about how the theme played out in more than one life underscores its relevance in their current lifetime.

In Jonathan's case, the repetition illustrated how personal trust shattered, and not speaking up was reinforced. His choice to live lives in solitude contributed to his repeated sense of being unfulfilled. Gaining this clarity empowered him to rebuild his trust in himself and to dismiss silent worries that voicing his opinion was not safe.

CASE TWO: Reinforced Beliefs

Now let's turn to Jeanette. I worked with Jeanette several years ago. She's a northern Virginia resident, working for an accounting firm who travels a good deal both domestically and internationally to handle client accounts. Her divorced parents were in their late eighties, frail and living independently, with around-the-clock caretakers in separate homes in northern Montana. Jeanette assumed primary decision-making for their care and held medical and financial power-of-attorney for both parents. Although two siblings lived near the parents, neither were involved with their care. The around-the-clock calls from caregivers, geographic distance and her work travel brought the situation to a near breaking point. Her health and mental health were suffering and her company was being less than supportive with her recurring need to take time off to respond to parental crises.

In her Past Life Regression, Jeanette revisited a life in which she had been orphaned as a young child. She was neglected and lived in circumstances that could have been considered subhuman. Absent parental love and protection, she learned that survival required extraordinary effort and sacrifice. Despite her best efforts, she died before turning 12.

The trauma of Jeanette's harsh life reinforced beliefs that love is not a birthright and that pain could be lessened and possibly avoided if one exerted extraordinary effort. Working in tandem, these beliefs fueled her relentless caretaking, leaving her without time or energy for self-care. Uncovering their origin and how these beliefs drove her behavior became a major first step in learning to balance her own needs with the needs of others.

One of the most common issues that prompts the scheduling of a session is love. It shows itself in many ways – lost love, dashed hopes for love, unrequited love, neglect and/or abandonment, etc. Another case dramatically illustrates this scenario.

CASE THREE: Love Story

Rosa, a 35-year-old published author, agreed to her mother's request to accompany her to the session. In return, the mother gifted Rosa a session, which she reluctantly accepted. Rosa informed me of this, adding that she did not believe in Past Life Regression and was only there to appease her mom.

After multiple failed attempts to get Rosa in a trance, I shifted gears and used a technique that built on her success as an author. She responded to the invitation to create a story, selecting the main character, setting, and time frame. A few scenes into the story, Rosa was in a trance recalling in great detail the past life of a young woman living in London in the 1800s. She had fallen in love with someone she met at the market, eventually married and had two children. Rosa's idyllic life ended abruptly when her beloved husband died at age 40. She spent the remainder of that life single, unwilling to risk the heartache of losing love again.

Once out of trance, Rosa remarked about the story's relevance. She shared that anytime she found herself dating someone she really liked, an inner voice would tell her that she had to end it before she got hurt. This belief was so strong that she put little effort into dating and imagined she would never marry. Although quite surprised, she finished the session less doubtful of the value of the past life experience and prepared to examine her relationship avoidance.

Rosa, Jonathan and Jeanette's stories show us how the strong emotions elicited by trauma form beliefs and shape coping mechanisms.

Unresolved, all three cascade through time awaiting resolution. Past Life Regression's power as a therapeutic technique lies in its capacity to zero-in on the source of the patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior that are causing dis-ease and dismay.

For most people these insights are accompanied by an energetic release. Combined, they set the stage for future decision making and action. No one session should be thought of as a panacea. Many patterns have been reinforced so often they crystalize and risk becoming petrified. The more often a pattern is repeated, the harder it is to break and the more effort it will require.

Discovering the origin of a pattern is a giant step toward breaking it and freeing yourself from its grip – the hidden *jewels* excavated from this work. Past Life Regression is more valuable than panning for gold or mining for other precious elements. The reward that awaits is truly life altering and well worth the effort.

Joanne Selinske, Ph.D., Cht, is a Certified Hypnotherapist specializing in Transpersonal Hypnotherapy – Past Life and Life Between Life Regression. She is the author of Awakened Soul: Discoveries of Healing, Self-Love and Spiritual Growth and Eternal You: Proof of Heaven, the Afterlife and Out of Body Experiences, as well as coauthor of Wisdom of Souls and Llewellyn's Little Book of Life Between Lives. www.theSoulSource.net | www.JoanneSelinske.com



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Farinaz Amirsehi is a Registered Nurse, Licensed Professional Counselor, and a Nationally Certified Counselor practicing at the Healing Light Center, LLC in McLean, VA.

Trained as an EMDR Therapist, Emotional Transformation Therapist, Clinical Hypnotherapist, Deep Memory Process/Regression Therapist, Reiki Practitioner, Somatic Integration Therapist, and Ancestral Family Constellation Therapist, Farinaz combines the principles of Eastern philosophies, Transpersonal Psychology, Body Psychotherapy, Subtle Energy Fields, and cutting edge technology in facilitating the healing process of her clients.

Additionally, Farinaz has extensive experience with severely traumatized populations such as survivors of politically motivated torture as well as a wide range of somatic, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual issues. Farinaz is also an established presenter at national and regional conferences. She has provided trainings for professionals of different disciplines on the impact of trauma on body, mind, and spirit.

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Support For Anti-Aging and Your Longevity

BY HELENA AMOS, M.A.C., L.A.C., EURO. PHYSICIAN

What is anti-aging, *really*? True anti-aging is not about chasing youth or masking the signs of time — it's about **restoring vitality from the inside out**. As a European-trained physician, acupuncturist and Functional Medicine practitioner with several decades of experience, I view aging as a dynamic process influenced by cellular health, hormonal balance, inflammation, detoxification, and energy flow. Real anti-aging medicine focuses on identifying and correcting the underlying causes of premature aging, whether they arise from oxidative stress, nutrient depletion, chronic inflammation, or emotional burnout.

When the body's internal systems are harmonized, and its regenerative capacity re-activated, the results naturally reflect outward: radiant skin, sharper mind, balanced mood, and renewed physical energy. Therefore, anti-aging is not a single treatment — it's a **philosophy of longevity, resilience, and self-renewal** that unites modern Functional Medicine with timeless healing traditions.

Aging Effects on Major Organs and Systems: How to Restore Their Function

Aging is not isolated to the skin or appearance — it is a *whole-body process* that touches every organ and system.

1. Cellular & Mitochondrial Health

Every symptom of aging begins at the cellular level. Mitochondria — our energy powerhouses — slow down due to oxidative stress, nutrient deficiencies, and toxin exposure. To reverse this, we use mitochondrial-support nutrients such as CoQ10, NAD precursors, PQQ, magnesium, and targeted detoxification. Acupuncture and microcurrent therapy further enhance oxygenation and cellular repair.

2. Hormonal System

With age, hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, DHEA, and thyroid hormones naturally decline. The result is fatigue, loss of muscle tone, mood changes, sleep disturbances, and skin dryness. Functional medicine offers hormone-balancing strategies through nutrition, adaptogenic herbs, natural equivalent of hormone support when indicated, and acupuncture to stabilize endocrine function and adrenal resilience.

3. Digestive & Detoxification Systems

The liver and gut are key to longevity. Over time, enzyme activity and bile flow diminish, the microbiome becomes imbalanced, and toxins accumulate, all of which accelerate aging. Restoring digestive function through GI-MAP testing, elimination of food sensitivities, probiotics, fiber, bitters, enzymes and bile production support, as well as gentle detoxification protocols helps clear inflammatory metabolites and improves nutrient absorption for skin and tissue regeneration.

4. Immune & Inflammatory Systems

Chronic, low-grade inflammation — known as *inflammaging* — silently damages blood vessels, joints, and collagen. Using anti-inflammatory nutrition, targeted antioxidants, acupuncture, and stress reduction techniques, we calm the immune system while strengthening defenses against infections and autoimmune triggers.

5. Circulatory & Microvascular System

Healthy circulation is essential for radiant skin and energy. With age, microcapillary flow declines, leading to dull complexion and sluggish healing. Acupuncture, cupping, and microcurrent facials stimulate blood flow and lymphatic drainage, while nutrients like Omega-3s, Vitamin C, and nitric-oxide-boosting foods support vessel elasticity.

6. Nervous System & Brain Health

Cognitive clarity, emotional balance, and stress resilience depend on neurotransmitter balance and nervous system regulation. Aging can impair these pathways. Functional neurology and acupuncture restore parasympathetic balance, while nutrients such as B-complex vitamins, phosphatidylserine, Omega-3s, and mindfulness practices help maintain mental sharpness and emotional calm.

7. Skin & Connective Tissue

Externally, collagen and elastin decline, circulation slows, and cellular turnover weakens producing wrinkles, sagging, and uneven tone. Integrative aesthetic protocols like facial acupuncture, microneedling, microcurrent lifting, LED and ultrasound therapies, as well as micro- and nano-needling stimulate collagen and restore firmness. These are complemented by internal support: collagen peptides, Vitamin C, silica, and adequate hydration.



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Restoring the Face Through Integrative Facial Rejuvenation

True facial rejuvenation begins long before a needle ever touches the skin. The face is a mirror of internal health — reflecting hormone balance, circulation, digestion, hydration, and emotional well-being. A fully *integrative* approach like the one I provide combines modern regenerative natural aesthetics with acupuncture and Functional Medicine lab testing and supplementation.

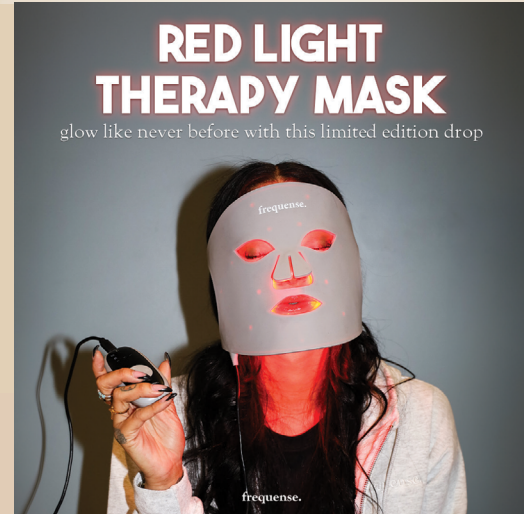
When the following modalities are combined — acupuncture for energy balance, microneedling for collagen induction, nano-needling for nutrient delivery, and microcurrent for muscular tone — the results are profoundly natural and long-lasting. The complexion becomes brighter, pores refined, and facial contours lifted. Patients often notice that their skin not only looks younger but functions better — holding moisture, healing faster, and radiating.

Facial Rejuvenation Acupuncture

This time-tested technique stimulates microcirculation, collagen, and lymphatic flow by using ultra-fine needles in facial and body

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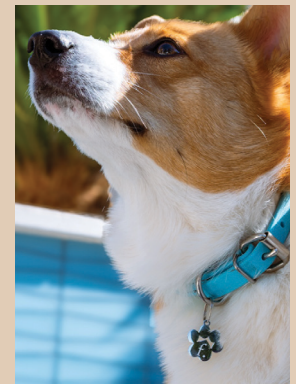
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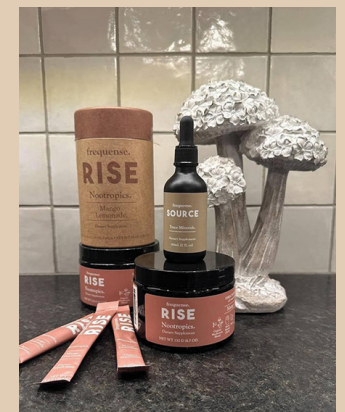
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Support for Anti-Aging...

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points that connect to organ systems. It improves muscle tone, reduces puffiness, lifts sagging tissue, and restores natural radiance without surgery or chemicals. Each session also balances the nervous system — reducing stress hormones that accelerate aging.

Microneedling for Skin Renewal

Microneedling uses a professional-grade device equipped with sterile micro-cartridges to create precise micro-channels in the skin. These channels trigger a healing cascade that stimulates collagen and elastin production, refines texture, and minimizes fine lines, scars, and pigmentation. In my clinic, microneedling is performed in sterile, medical conditions and often combined with peptide-rich serums, growth factors for enhanced regeneration. The results are smoother, firmer, and more youthful skin that continues to improve over several weeks.

Nano-Needling for Deep Nutrient Infusion

Nano-needling is a gentler, no-downtime alternative ideal for thin, sensitive, or delicate skin. Using microscopic silicone pyramids rather than needles, it creates thousands of superficial channels that allow active serums — such as hyaluronic acid, peptides, and botanical stem-cell extracts — to penetrate deeply without irritation. This treatment refines texture, brightens dull complexion, and enhances absorption of regenerative nutrients. When performed as part of a series, it provides a beautiful maintenance option between microneedling sessions.



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Hair Restoration with Microneedling

The same regenerative principle applies to the scalp. Microneedling for hair restoration stimulates dormant follicles by improving micro-circulation and oxygenation, while creating channels for nutrient serums to reach the follicle root. It helps strengthen existing hair, reduce shedding, and promote new growth in both men and women — naturally and without drugs.

Microcurrent & Energy Therapies

To complete the integrative rejuvenation process, I often add microcurrent and LED therapy. Microcurrent gently tones facial muscles and enhances ATP energy production in cells, giving an immediate lifting effect and long-term firmness. LED red-light therapy promotes

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Resist Internal Paralysis: Dare To Be HOPE

BY MARY OLSON; EDITED BY CAM MACQUEEN

Since 1945, more than 2,000 nuclear weapons have been tested worldwide. About one quarter were detonated above ground and produced fallout, a radioactive pollution that fell back to earth or came down even more quickly and highly concentrated in rain. Most above ground tests took place between 1945 and 1963 and continued below ground after. There was also fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power reactor explosion in Ukraine; from three nuclear power reactor meltdowns and explosions in 2011 at the Fukushima Daiichi site in Japan; and at a lower level, from every nuclear industrial site, i.e., nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons factories, day in and day out.

Invisible, orderless, and without tactile sensation (except at extremely high levels) this radioactivity is in all 50 states, all nations, and impacts all ecosystems to this day. The levels are subsiding due to radioactive decay, but are still not safe, and will not be in our lifetimes, or that of our grandchildren.

My work is to help raise awareness to prevent unnecessary and undisclosed exposures of our bodies, families, and communities to ionizing radiation, as well as to protect the living web that is Nature struggling to survive us. The question is: How do we resist what we can't see / hear / smell / feel, and what we don't understand and barely know is there? The short answer is we don't. It lingers and causes cancers across our whole population. Radiation can also end a pregnancy in early, middle, or late term. In some instances, the pregnancy can end so early it was not even detected; so, radiation is also a cause of infertility.

Radiation is cumulative. We now know that radiation contributes to heart disease and heart attacks, and vascular disease including stroke. Furthermore, we now also know from a [2024 major research report](#) that I coauthored with Dr. Amanda Nichols, published by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, that radiation causes disproportionately greater harm to children, and to females of all ages compared to males of all ages.

After the end of the Cold War and the end of the nuclear arms race between the USA and the USSR, we had a brief time of cooperation with the former Soviet Union. People born during this time are often deeply confused and left wondering, "Were all the nuclear weapons destroyed when the Berlin Wall came down?" To be blunt: No. Some nuclear weapons in Russia and the USA have been dismantled under forward-looking agreements, but thousands are still here, still ready to go. There are hundreds pointed at Russia from the U.S., and in Russia pointed at us. The rest are circulating above and below, on planes and submarines, all still there.

The potential for complete destruction of industrialized life, everything, in an afternoon or in a matter of months to a couple of years is an all-too-real possibility. On a bad day, I can feel the threat of our extinction, like the dinosaurs, almost like prickly heat on my skin. Check out the major-impact basis for all Earth's major extinctions. We are potentially that next big impact, with all our radioactive bombs making so much smoke it blocks the sun. After all, dinosaurs who were not initially vaporized either starved or froze to death from a nuclear-like winter.

If you don't know about Nuclear Winter, I urge you to look it up. Renowned astronomer and planetary scientist Carl Sagan wrote extensively about the devastating effects of a nuclear war on earth, including as co-author on the 1983 paper that proves a nuclear war never has a winner. It is a planetary death pact.

The last nuclear test (below ground) by our government was in 1992, and marked the beginning of a span of time that was leading us away



from total annihilation. But on October 30th, 2025, the President of the United States announced on social media that he wants to resume testing nuclear weapons. Let that sink in. Then I will invite you to understand that the BIGGEST thing we have to resist is the desire to look away... to fall into depression... to be paralyzed. Again: No one wins in a nuclear war - prevention is the cure. Just posting that short message could be enough to break through the difficulty of resisting something you don't even know is there.

To Resist, BE HOPE

My recently departed friend and mentor, Dr. Joanna Macy wrote a book called *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* (1983).

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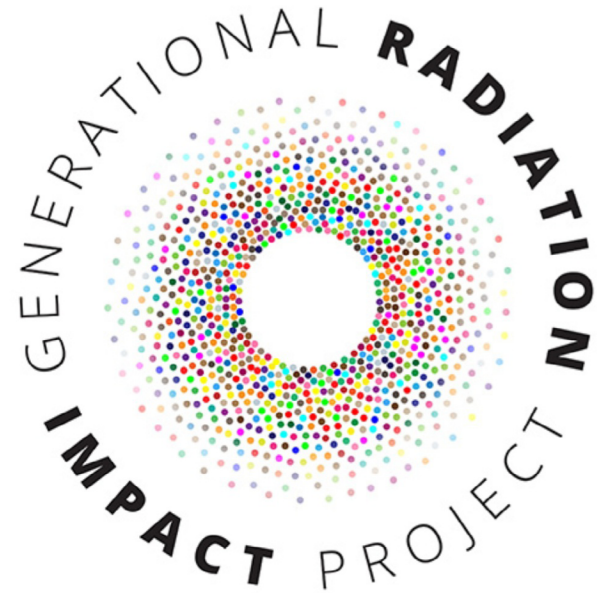
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Joanna was truly a healer. She invited everyone to get to know their despair and see it as a source of energy. We never lose our energy, but it can be diverted or distracted, keeping us down and powerless. Facing that allows us to reclaim our energy, our power, and figure out what we can DO. It is easy to feel that despair as immovable, and yet, there are signs of real hope today.

In the years since Joanna wrote that book, the world has been busy. Unless you are active outside the U.S., you likely don't know that nearly half the nations of the world have now signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This pact has made weapons of mass destruction — like chemical, biological, land mines, anti-personnel weapons and those that the US now intends to go back to testing — illegal. The treaty also “includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.” The TPNW is a growing community of Nuclear-Free Nations with an open invitation for all to disarm — there is no plan for the United Nations to march in and remove the nukes from any nation. The call from them to join is alive and ongoing for all nations to choose a shared future where we are all more secure because the nuclear threat has been eliminated.

I had the great honor of supporting that work; and I later delivered a talk about my research on the gender differences from radiation harm at the first meeting of the TPNW participating nations in Vienna, 2022.

Simply learning more about this amazing new development at the global level, and finding out how you can support more awareness of



it in the U.S., has given many of us tools for calming anxiety and moving into a positive space. Many think that working on dark things like nuclear weapons will compromise those capacities — after all, there is a strong call to only focus on “the light.” Well, if that is you, you likely have already stopped reading this. However, if you are still here, I will offer the option of seeing “the light” while continuing to engage with the nuclear suicide, which is arguably one of the greatest existential threats that humans have created, as is the Climate Crisis, which is right there, too, as “both/and.”

So, I extend to you this invitation: BE HOPE.

Hope is your birthright. It is so much more than saying something tentative or the text of a greeting card. When we internalize hope as something aspirational within us, we realize its power.

In these challenging days our brilliant brains and our deep convictions are vital. Love, courage, wisdom, compassion, and generosity are like the resonances of a big bell — many levels of sound — and never as simple as two hands bound by “this or that.”

Hope is also one of these resonating foundations... and it's a verb! Just as we understand courage as a verb, hope is equally an action. And hope does not depend on how recently we have seen it in our life. Hope is part of us, woven in... it's with us in our collective cellular memory, always there.

If we go one step further, we can also BE LOVE. Think of it as a seedling. With proper care, it will grow! It will provide many new possibilities, and give back more than it takes from our care.

Our society is so bereft of hope... There is so much going on. How DARE we be hopeful when the evidence is so darned hopeless? It could also be said, “How dare we forsake hope in these dark hours!”

I experienced HOPE for the first time in a long time one night when I was in a room full of people who were taking action, working together on the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Our voices and plans to protect our collective future had a loving tone. We were acting with great courage, and inexplicable hope. I felt like I was breathing oxygen after being deprived... I vowed then and there to bring my “hope seedling” home, and let it grow.

Hear this unequivocally: Hope itself is not a negotiated deal, or something we earn, or a word we use for something that seems unattainable or in jeopardy. Hope came with me when I was born, and comes with each and every one of us. It is a part of us, and we can choose to turn it UP. We can BE hope. For hope is the antidote of fear and paralysis. Hope shared equals resistance.

Right now, in this moment, each of us IS HOPE for someone else. A roof over our heads... hot water — hell, water at all. BEING HOPE is a version of “counting our blessings” and I invite you, today, for even thirty seconds to do this. Here. Now. RESIST.

Mary Olson is the Founder (2019) of the Generational Radiation Impact Project (www.radiationproject.org). She is an evolutionary biologist with a focus on radioactive waste policy since 1985 when she became aware of radioactive contamination in public areas in a major research institution. Information from Physicians for Social Responsibility on radiation inspired Olson to help onsite maintenance workers to institute radiation detection and protective protocols while servicing buildings with radioactive materials. In 1991 Mary was hired by Nuclear Information and Resource Service, a national education and advocacy organization. For 27 years, she worked with communities impacted by nuclear waste plans or already existing sites for storage or burial. As a Senior Radioactive Waste Policy Analyst and Staff biologist, her focus was education of elected officials and other decision-makers about the impact of ionizing radiation on human health as well as building networks and organizational coalitions to impact policy decisions and outcomes. Throughout her career Olson has been a frequent speaker at Federal, state and local government proceedings and has addressed the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies.

Cam MacQueen, MSW, is the creator and manager of Cultivating Compassion. This year's columns are a 4-part series dedicated to RESISTANCE that aims to energize readers in order to defend against the current indefensible, daily onslaught of cruelty and insanity.

This quarter's column is inspired by Cam's viewing of Netflix's "House of Dynamite", which seeks to reignite the nearly-vanished conversation on the topic of nuclear weapons and nuclear annihilation. Two days after watching the movie, as if on Hegseth's cue, Trump announced the resumption of nuclear weapons testing, ignoring the 1992 nuclear test ban. This dangerous, historic moment is our collective wake-up call to stop the madness of a president gone rogue. Cam hopes Mary's article will add to this critical, timely conversation and motivate readers to learn more and do more — in the DMV and beyond.

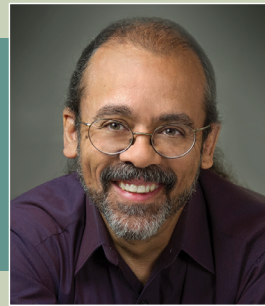
The next 4 quarters in 2026 will continue to focus on various forms of resistance. Topics currently under consideration are: Art as Resistance, Community as Resistance, Multiculturalism as Resistance, and Optimal Health as Resistance. Themes are subject to change.

As long as our neighbors, communities, the planet and animals are under threat, Cam's column will focus on ways to conjure our inner superhero and spiritual warrior. This energetic requires a lot from each of us, such as: assisting your wider community; creating conscious, compassionate awareness and communication; developing strategic, creative campaigns; building lasting, broad-based alliances; maintaining on-going dedication and perseverance; staying serious about self-care, remembering the importance of both breath and humor; plus your own personal ways, large and small, to be the most effective activist possible.

So stay tuned, stay informed, keep fighting the good fight, and most importantly, "Don't let the bastards grind you down!!"

If you have thoughts and suggestions, please contact Cam at nem.advocacy@gmail.com, with the subject line: Cultivating Compassion.

Maybe your next therapist shouldn't be a therapist



Eric Weinstein
It's Not Therapy
(It's Problem Solving)

Did you know that:

- Licensed therapists are limited to certain approaches by “standards of care” that leave out a number of highly effective healing and personal growth modalities?
- Even if you're paying out-of-pocket for your sessions, your therapist might be unable to use anything “different” because of insurance company requirements and state regulations?

I'm not a therapist, but I always have a therapist or two among my clients. They come to me for:

- the most ancient healing modality (shamanic healing)
- proven, but less conventional modalities (hypnosis/ NLP [NeuroLinguistic Programming] and Eye Movement Integration [similar to EMDR, but gentler])
- the most exciting new energy modalities (Energy Psychology, such as EFT or “tapping” on meridian points, biofield work, and chakra manipulation)
- Voice dialogue (which one therapist referred to as “Internal Family Systems on steroids”)
- intriguing coaching modalities (including True Purpose coaching and Archetypal coaching)

And they come for all the same problems they might see a conventional therapist for – as well as problems and questions of a spiritual/energetic nature.

So, whether you've gotten what you can from talk therapy, want action-oriented approaches, or want a holistic body/ mind/spirit approach, why wait to find out how your life can be better?



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How To Create A Mutual Aid Network

BY MARY ZERKEL, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

In challenging times, mutual aid is one way that communities can come together to support one another when the government can't or won't.

Everyone deserves to have access to food, health care, housing, and other basic needs. These are fundamental human rights. Government safety net programs have long fallen short of what is needed. Throughout our history, communities have found power in coming together, creating networks of mutual support to help each other when the government won't.

By forming mutual aid networks, we can take immediate action while continuing to advocate for change. Mutual aid builds solidarity, helping everyone involved by creating new communities of care with our neighbors to redistribute wealth and share skills and material resources with those who need help.

There are many examples of people working together to keep their communities safe and healthy through mutual aid (read about efforts in [Chicago](#) and [West Virginia](#)). Here's how you can get involved in building these vital networks of support.

Solidarity, Not Charity

For people and communities who are marginalized and/or criminalized, organized mutual aid can be a way to survive and thrive. [The Black Panther Party free breakfast program](#), which served 20,000 meals a week to Black children in 1969, is a great example.

The Black Panther Party free breakfast program was just one ele-



Photo by [Ismael Paramo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

ment in a series of projects that worked to not only meet basic needs for Black communities that faced divestment, redlining, and systemic racism, but also provide space for shared analysis, movement building, and liberation.

During the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and '90s, queer communities [took matters into their own hands](#) and created their own health clinics, [therapy groups](#), needle exchange programs, and food pantries. The solidarity built with allies and community members who were criminalized and ignored by the government helped build a movement for change that grew for decades and achieved real wins.

Currently, Chicago and [Los Angeles](#) are using mutual aid to support communities targeted by ICE. Groups have formed to go grocery shopping for immigrants who are worried about leaving their homes, signing up to watch corners for ICE activity during school drop off and pick-ups, and support each other in many other ways.

[Community bail funds](#), [bystander intervention](#), and [Cop-watch](#) are all recent examples where the strategies for mutual aid are intertwined with public education about the underlying systems of oppression that create the need for community response.

Why You Should You Start A Mutual Aid Network Now

At this moment of global change and uncertainty, it is evident that structures in our society leading to inequality and systemic oppression create chaos and harm for everyone. [We cannot count on the U.S. government to solve the crises that we face](#). Creating new structures of collective care can help us through this period, and engaging in mutual aid is a way for us to build new social relationships that recognize our ability to have agency, creativity, and solidarity!

Here are some inspiring examples of mutual aid projects:

- [Saving lives in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands](#) by providing direct aid to migrants. No More Deaths is a volunteer-based organization that prevents migrant deaths and suffering by leaving water and supplies in the desert and more. (<https://nomoredeaths.org/en/>)
- [Responding locally to natural disasters](#), when the government cannot move quickly enough. After Hurricane Helen hit North Carolina, the queer mutual aid organization Pansy Collective responded within 48 hours. (<https://linktr.ee/pansyasheville>)
- [Financial solidarity projects](#) for those who can help with financial assistance to reach folks who need cash directly. During the

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COVID-19 pandemic, organizers in Chicago created a simple way for people to ask others for assistance.

- Food distribution projects that collect donations from grocery stores, restaurants, or individuals and then distribute them to people in need. Food Not Bombs is an all-volunteer movement that recovers food that would otherwise be discarded, and distributes free vegan and vegetarian meals in more than 65 countries in protest to war, poverty, and environmental destruction. (https://foodnotbombs.net/new_site/index.php)
- Neighborhood pods that are self-organized groups of folks who can count on each other for support. This practice became widespread during the acute days of the pandemic, but it is great to form a pod when there isn't an emergency so that you build relationships of support around everyday tasks or needs. Then if or when there is an emergency, you are already in a position to work together.

5 Ways You Can Get Started

1. Start your research with the Mutual Aid 101 toolkit with organizer-Mariame Kaba and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Developed during the pandemic, the toolkit includes step-by-step instructions for how you can create your own mutual aid network while maintaining health precautions.

2. Check to see if someone is already organizing mutual aid in your community or work through your own networks to see if others want to join you to create a new project. If you have an AFSC office in your area, staff may be connected to efforts, as well. Don't forget safety practices for mutual aid food and supply distribution.

3. Develop a pod of support if you don't have one already. You can do some pod mapping of people that you already know, or create a neighborhood pod, by reaching out to people who live in proximity, whether you already know them or not.

4. Dig a little deeper and learn about the history and essential elements of mutual aid from Dean Spade's book "Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next)."

5. Download free graphics from justseeds.org to help spread the word.

No matter what the future brings, the multiple challenges we face call for us to engage in solidarity and resistance. Mutual aid is a great way for people to get involved. The creation of these networks will continue to provide support for community care and organizing, opening new ways of shared well-being that will far outlive any crisis we face.



Mary Zerkel is the Associate Regional Director of the Midwest Region and also supervises two programs in the West Region. She is Coordinator of Communities Against Islamophobia, which works in partnership with the Muslim community to train allies to recognize and counter anti-Muslim policies and practices — with the long-term goal of reducing profiling and surveillance of the Muslim community. Mary formerly directed the Chicago Peacebuilding program, which works toward the demilitarization of U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

Mary has worked for AFSC for 28 years on a variety of issues and projects including coordinating the internationally acclaimed Eyes Wide Open exhibit, as well as the nationally touring Cost of War and Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the War in Afghanistan exhibits.

Mary has published articles and op-eds in the Huffington Post, Truthout, Radical Teacher and Signs: The Journal of Women and Culture in Society. She is the author of Critical Thinking for Meaningful Action, and co-author of Economics Education, both published by AFSC and is the co-director of "Benaat Chicago," a widely viewed documentary about the lives of Arab youth on the south side of Chicago.

This article was originally published online in October 2025 by the American Friends Service Committee (<https://afsc.org/news/how-create-mutual-aid-network>), and is reprinted here with their permission. See the digital edition for the live links to more online Mutual Aid resources.



DMV Mutual Aid is a virtual space for collecting and sharing mutual aid resources, initiatives, & groups from all over the DC metro area (occupied Piscataway land).

Our main objective is to make mutual aid accessible to those who may be new to the area, recently galvanized, or simply wanting to engage more with causes around them. The DC metropolitan area is uniquely geographically positioned in that many groups across state lines are very close to each other, allowing for collaboration.

Mutual Aid is solidarity, not charity.

DMV Mutual Aid does not collect or redistribute any funds at this time, unless otherwise specified in a post to our social media.

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In Plain Sight: Opportunities to Connect Abound

BY THERISIA “TRISH” HALL

We have, in plain sight, an opportunity to create a world that works — a world that supports itself by connecting and nurturing all aspects of creation. The common phrase “hidden in plain sight” applies to much of our human experience. Life in all its messy diversity is blatantly in front of and all around us. We are immersed in it. We can pretend it is not, and such pretense will only cause greater and greater rifts.

Used by Edgar Allen Poe in his short story, “The Purloined Letter,” the idiom “hidden in plain sight” demonstrates the limits of human perception and the importance of observation, suggesting something can be both conspicuous and inconspicuous at the same time.

Buddhism addresses the concept of “hidden in plain sight” by suggesting the path to awakening is not about seeking something external or extraordinary, but about recognizing the truth already present in our experience.

Christianity guides followers to see the “hidden things of God” hidden in plain sight for those who have opened their eyes to see and their ears to listen.

Similarly, we often miss opportunities, such as the possibility of changing the whole world, because we go through life so preoccupied with routine activities. We miss the richness constantly presented to us. The admonition, “slow down and smell the roses,” advises us to take respites from our busyness to appreciate what is right in front of us.

Within current times that are often described as “tumultuous,” some of us withdraw into our personal cocoons, isolating from others,



Photo by Diva Plavalaguna; pexels.com

resulting in loneliness. Alternatively, we join communities with which we have a lot in common, and which exclude people unlike ourselves. To insulate from perceived dangers, these groups can take on the nature of gangs clustering together against assumed enemies.

With either approach, barriers emerge that block our ability to connect with the richness of Creation. The sense of separation — separateness — arises as fear and loneliness. Loneliness has been labeled a pervasive epidemic. Whether individuals isolate or withdraw into the assumed safety of cultural/community bounds, a shared fixation on contrast and differences, causes “othering.” Hostility and aggression ensue, and the chasms between peoples grow.

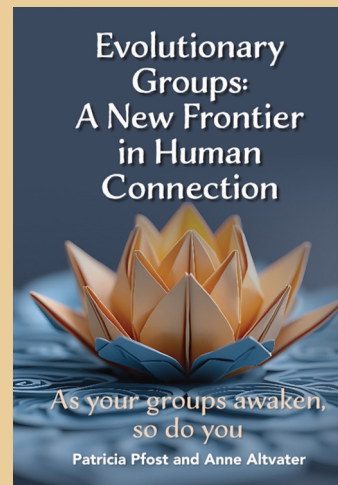
The opportunity presenting itself is to become cultural connectors — bridge builders.

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Must reading for building new communities and healing relationships.



Evolutionary Groups is an invitation to bring a new quality of awareness and care to every gathering of two or more. Families, partnerships, teams, friendships, spiritual circles, and healing encounters benefit when we attend to how we gather—not only why.

This guide offers a bird’s-eye view of familiar habits and reveals new possibilities for connection, meaning, spirit, and creativity when we participate from a wider, more unitive perspective. Practical applications translate deeper intuitive truths into everyday choices and conversations that make life together feel more safe, kind, and meaningful.

Drawing on decades as teachers and group facilitators in personal transformation, business leadership, and personal training, Patricia Pfof and Anne Altvater offer language you can use today and practices that mature over time.

~ Available on Amazon ~

Creation is immeasurably diverse. Whether you count insects, reptiles, birds or mammals, including humans, there are myriad individualities – each one-of-a-kind! When we hide among those with whom we have an affinity, a resemblance or cultural connection, we rob ourselves of the opportunity to experience the richness of the creation.

Cultural blindness refers to the lack of awareness and understanding of cultural differences, often leading to the imposition of one's own cultural values on others. It's a state of being unaware of, or actively ignoring, the diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices present within a group or society.

Unfortunately, the practices of ignoring and/or othering are exceedingly common. If we ignore those who are different from us, not only are we denying them recognition, we deprive ourselves of opportunities to learn and connect. If we engage in othering – labeling – we are judging, devaluing and relegating them to something unacceptable. We are separating them from us. We are denigrating and discarding them. Who are we to judge others based on our assumptions?

Whether you consider yourself a humanist, deeply religious, or somewhere in the middle, it makes sense to interact with everyone and everything for the betterment of all. Inclinations to divide stem from fear based on biases, preconceived notions, or a lack of critical thinking.

Building Cultural Bridges

I am inviting you to consider enhancing how you see the world. Even if you already embrace the concept of oneness (not to be confused with "sameness"), hidden biases probably are lurking within you. The way we humans learn is to observe, compare and store all our experiences. The moment we compare we are filtering our observations. That

filtering function is the imposition of unconscious biases. Unless such biases are addressed at the conscious level, they alter perceptions, like bugs in software that can cripple our operating systems. Although people often assert, "I'm not biased," their internal controller adds "provided people live their lives within my comfort zone."

Does your heart yearn for a world composed of individuals, families, neighborhoods, cultures and communities living together in peace? Mine does. John Lennon's song, "Imagine," immediately comes to mind.

Wayne Dyer taught, "When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change."

Life is composed of myriad cultures, so cultural differences are ubiquitous. You may encounter communication disconnects within your own family, neighbors, religions, partisan perspectives, ethnicities or internationally. It's important to acknowledge gaps exist everywhere, and all too often within our closest relationships. Many disconnects have taken on proportions that seem wider than the Great Rift Valley in Kenya.

When we shift how we see our world, we shift the world – we radically change relationships: interpersonal, interfaith, intercultural and international. A colleague stated, "How you see them is how you serve them." *How we see each person in our lives impacts how we relate to/with them!*

The opportunity to change the whole world by shifting how we relate to our fellow humans and all creation is right in front of us, in plain sight.

Cultural diversity abounds around us. We get to be trailblazers, changing the world by starting conversations even when we feel scared,

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In Plain Sight...

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and especially when we feel unsure about whether our presence will be welcomed. Actually, our internal dialogue is a bold indicator that a situation is the perfect one to enter.

To foster and strengthen healthy intercultural connections requires we step out of our own comfort zone to offer new ways of connecting. Such an approach requires sensitivity to bridge the gaps. It doesn't matter what your color, geography, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, age, station, economic/community, or any other way in which you identify yourself... *Everyone is different!* Bridging such divides requires we enter our pursuit with compassion, gently gleaning a sense of how it is to be someone.

The task is huge and complex. It requires commitment, determination, kindness and compassionate perseverance. The process requires delicacy and loving boldness.

The components are surprisingly simple. The application of those components can be challenging. The arena in which we need to apply those components is fragile. The essential element is *trust* undergirded by Love. Trying to reassemble trust, if broken, is much like trying to put Humpty-Dumpty together again, so let's avoid breaking trust.

To build a bridge, we must assess the current situation:

- What are we moving from? *Feeling discontent*
- What are we spanning? *Perceived differences/separation*
- What is our desired outcome? *Supportive interconnection*
- *Peace and equity will only come to pass when we learn from and with people of other perspectives.*

Together, we get to be bridge builders, initiators. Now is the perfect time to establish new patterns and new ways of relating — to embrace oneness boldly so an observer would neither doubt our belief in it nor our commitment to create a world that works for all.

Like love, our embrace of oneness cannot be conditional. It cannot depend on our comfort. Knowing that, as cultural connectors, we are facilitating the emergence of a world that works, and supports itself by connecting and nurturing all aspects of creation.

Engage in “witness consciousness” — observe yourself and others without forming opinions and jumping to conclusions. Not easy yet incredibly rewarding!

Embrace “beginner mind” and open to how it is to be someone of another culture or perception. Be flexible and adaptable. Identify shared values and common concerns. Open to possibility.

Encourage others to join you by creating a tsunami of connections. Barge out of your comfort zone. Accept that any stories you are carrying about other cultures are rooted beneath your conscious awareness, so you need to consciously release the hold they may have on you.

Now is the perfect time to embrace that YOU are a Cultural Connector — a transformative force in the universe creating a world that works for all.

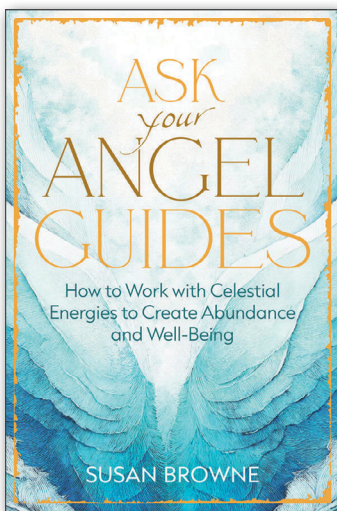
Therisia “Trish” Hall, D.Div., is an insightful international best-selling author, speaker and coach, who blends wisdom, authenticity, humor, and compassion in furtherance of her passion - conscious inclusivity. A renowned educator, facilitator, consultant, mediator and subject matter expert and trainer in government and industry, Trish has been honored to be a two-time (so far) presenter at the Parliament of World Religions. Whether addressing audiences, facilitating communication among diverse populations, working with students or individual clients, she thrives on awakening the unique magnificence within each, empowering all to live their “best yet to be.”



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Eudaimonia and Happiness...

...continued from page 11

great passion or skill, but if their life doesn't allow room for that expression, they feel stifled. Finding scope is about creating or reclaiming the space to live fully.

So, to live in *eudaimonia* is to allow the deepest parts of yourself to move freely and meaningfully in the world, **with excellence, within real space, over time.** It's the difference between surviving and thriving. And it's the kind of well-being that therapy, at its best, can help make possible.

What's striking about this shift in the meaning of happiness is it provides us with an opportunity to redefine how we look at our lives. Happiness is not a temporary destination, but a perpetual natural resonance that occurs when we live in harmony with our inner nature.

Eudaimonic Psychotherapy

This old/new idea dovetails nicely with how I generally think about and practice psychotherapy. By rediscovering lifelong narratives of personal meaning-making, and identifying obstacles (or traumas) that disoriented a person from them, we are able to create a more focused and coherent road map people can follow towards healing. As a result, the deeper aim of our work becomes something more enduring: helping people live lives of meaning, purpose, and integrity; helping them remember and then moving toward who they truly are.

This psychotherapeutic lens can be transformative. So many people come to therapy during periods of disconnection and disorientation: career shifts, relationship changes, grief, or existential uncertainty. In these moments of flux, they discover they have forgotten who they are, what they value in life, and how the vital forces they once exercised call out to be made excellent once again.

When we invite them to rediscover what gives their life meaning, we don't just help them feel better, we help them remember themselves. And once they do, once they recall their all-encompassing truth, and once they come to see their suffering isn't an obstacle to happiness but the crucible in which their wisdom was forged, they begin to reclaim what has always been theirs.

In doing so, they find a happiness that is uniquely their own.

Dr. Ben Bregman is a psychiatrist and founder of Washington Integrative Mental Health Services (www.washingtonimh.com), where he integrates psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, and integrative approaches to mental health to reshape modern models of care. He also chairs the Maryland Task Force for the Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances, contributing to statewide policy development and ethical frameworks for the future of mental health care. His work is guided by a commitment to reimagining healing through interdisciplinary dialogue, narrative, and a deeper understanding of human consciousness. This article is adapted from Dr. Bregman's original blog, and is printed here with permission.

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Genes That Listen...

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pose, or connection ripple through the body, shifting physiological patterns at the cellular level. Beyond the individual, relational and energetic fields emerge; shared attention, synchronized rhythms, and collective focus shape coherence across groups and communities. Practices like meditation or compassion amplify these effects, demonstrating that the body does not exist in isolation.

Life is neither solo nor linear. It is improvisational, relational, and resonant. When signals converge, whether through love, intention, or attention, they ripple outward, forming patterns that extend beyond a single organism. Every thought, act of care, and presence carries weight: physiological, relational, and potentially epigenetic impact. Within these convergences, something new emerges. Biology hums; invisible currents long dismissed as metaphor, reveal themselves as instruments in an ongoing, participatory composition.

We exist as fields within fields, waves within waves, stories in motion. The genome is attuned. The body resonates. The collective vibrates. And somewhere in that listening, life writes itself anew.

Ruslana Remennikova is a former bioanalytical researcher for the Fortune 100-ranked company ThermoFisher Scientific where she worked across vaccine sciences, cell-based assays, and immunochemistry. In a 2016 leap of faith for a more meaningful life, she left the world of corporate science to later open a practice in sound therapy while writing her first book, Activating Our 12-Stranded DNA. Today, she bridges the realms of science and spirituality, exploring human potential to unlock deeper levels of healing and growth.

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Support for Anti-Aging...

...continued from page 26

The Future of Anti-Aging Medicine

The future of anti-aging lies in *integration* — not imitation. It's no longer about chasing youth with temporary fixes or invasive procedures; it's about activating the body's innate capacity to regenerate and stay vibrant at every stage of life. The next generation of rejuvenation is *cellular, energetic, and personalized* — addressing hormones, mitochondria, inflammation, stress, and emotional balance alongside advanced aesthetic therapies to bring together whole body harmony to support longevity.

When science and ancient medicine work together, I've seen that the results transcend surface beauty. Patients experience brighter skin, sharper minds, stronger immunity, and a renewed sense of purpose and confidence. The essence of anti-aging is not about reversing time, but *awakening the body's timeless intelligence* — helping each person look and feel aligned with their truest, most radiant self.

Helena Amos, M.Ac., L.Ac., is a licensed acupuncturist and European-trained physician with 30+ years of Natural Medicine and clinical experience. She is Founder/Owner of the Rockville Acupuncture, Natural Medicine and Anti-Aging Rejuvenation Clinic where her goal is to offer a path to ageless vitality — where Functional Medicine, acupuncture, and regenerative aesthetics blend seamlessly. She combines modern approaches with Traditional Oriental Medicine, as well as provides the BioSET protocols, Biomeridian and other in-depth lab testing, and treatments using natural, safe herbal and nutritional approaches for individualized care. Rockvilleacupuncturemd.com

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Stay educated, enlightened and engaged all season long with these offerings from the Pathways Community. To see these events and more, visit our interactive **ONLINE CALENDAR** updated regularly throughout the quarter. **Be sure to tell them you saw them in Pathways!**

Have an event to promote? Calendar listings are just \$5 per listing, and accepted any time to run online. Submit listings online at: www.pathwaysproductions.com/calendar/.

DECEMBER

— 5 —

Dr. Ivy's Frequency of Love Sound Bath Experience, 6:30-8pm, online. Join Dr. Ivy for an extraordinary penetrating and powerful healing experience using sound frequencies, positive thought forms and intentions for personal transformation and shifts in consciousness. Dr. Ivy brings a breakthrough concept called "Sound Vibronics" and "Sonic Mind Streaming," creating an immersive surround sound experience using crystal alchemy singing bowls, exotic musical instruments, aroma therapy, and her angelic voice. Free Event hosted by Meditation Museum, 9525 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD; www.meditation-museum.org.

Reiki Level I Certification, 10am-2pm. Learn to channel Usui Reiki, as taught in the tradition and lineage of Mikao Usui, to activate the natural healing energy processes of your mind, body, and spirit to restore physical and emotional well-being. You will receive a Reiki Level I Attunement and certificate. After this introductory course, you will be able to give Reiki to yourself, family, and friends. No prerequisites to attend. Led and hosted by Annie Larson, in office: 46191 Westlake Drive, Sterling, VA. More info & to book: www.mediumannielarson.com/book-online.

— 7 —

Connect to Your Spirit Guides, Angels, and Helper Guides, 9am-12pm, online. This course is designed for those who are pas-

sionate about wanting to develop their own connection to their Spirit Guides, Angels, and Helper Guides. This hands-on class is perfect for those who suspect they have guides around them but have been unable to connect with them. Through lessons, observations, practice, and guidance you will learn how to work with your guides to receive valuable answers and guidance. Build a foundation for long-lasting connections. No prerequisites to attend. Led by Medium Annie Larson; www.mediumannielarson.com/book-online.

Donkey Cuddling: A Heartfelt Experience with Our Gentle Herd, 45-min. sessions available. Spend time connecting with our lovable donkeys and finding joy in their company. Experience the many mind-body-spirit benefits of cuddling with amazing animals. Hosted by Campbell's Lane Farm, Preston, MD. More info, tickets: <https://campbellslanefarm.com/events-at-the-farm>.

Green Burial with Michael Judd, 10:30am. Making plans for the end of life can be an emotional topic with many factors to consider.

While traditional casket burials or cremation are familiar, there is now a more sustainable option available in Frederick County called green or natural burial. Hosted at the Unitarian Universalist congregation of Frederick, 4880 Elmer Derr Road in Frederick, MD. Bring your questions and concerns. All are welcome. FREE Event; RSVP required: morrisorchardnaturalburial.com/events.

— 8 —

Psychic Development: Intuitive Oracle and Tarot, 7-8pm, online. Tarot & Oracle cards don't require memorization — they require awakening your intuition. Whether you're new or experienced, this class teaches you to read cards intuitively & confidently without looking up meanings. Learn to see the energy behind the image and let the cards speak to you. Includes a 15-20 min teaching, intuitive techniques, and partner practice in breakout rooms. Bring any deck, a journal, and an open heart. With Uma Alexandra Beepat; register at <https://bit.ly/PsychicDevelopment1225>.



Meditation Museum in Maryland
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Silver Spring, MD 20910



Brahma Kumaris in Virginia
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2nd & 4th Sunday of the month, 11 a.m.
and offer a mix of inspiration, meditation,
music, and mediumship!

Classes and other special events are listed on our homepage.



— 10 —

The Power of Breath w/ BK Shila (Breathwork/Gentle Stretches), 10-11am, online. Breath is one of the most powerful tools at our disposal for self-regulation. Join us for our monthly session as we practice yogic breathing and stretching exercises as a tool for rejuvenation. Free Event hosted by Meditation Museum: <https://shorturl.at/qmajD>.

You Are the Gift w/Sister Jenna (Talk & Holiday Celebration), 6:30-8pm. As we approach the holiday season, a time for reflection, gratitude, and giving, we invite you to a special session that reminds you of the most important gift of all - you. "You Are the Gift" is a celebration of your unique strengths, talents, and the impact you can make in the world. Hosted by Brahma Kumaris Virginia, 14020 Thunderbolt Pl., Suite 200 2nd floor, Chantilly, VA. www.meditationmuseum.org

— 12 —

Remote Viewing, 10am-12pm, online. Learn to transcend the physical world to view people, places, and things remote in time and space. Develop extrasensory perception and tune into the energies of the universe to experience places and times outside of your immediate environment. This class is perfect to teach remotely. Learn how to increase your intuition and psychic ability, learn the history and the work of famous remote viewers and their experiments using remote viewing for spying and warfare. This class will be filled with exercises to test your skills. No prerequisites. Led by Medium Annie Larson; www.mediumannielarson.com/book-online.

— 20 —

Access Bars One Day Certification Class, 10am-4pm. Struggling with negative thoughts? Ready to shift from reacting to observing? Access Bars® is a powerful, easy-to-learn healing modality that helps release limiting beliefs and open space for clarity, peace, and possibility. With Uma Alexandra Beepat, you'll learn the Bars, give and receive sessions, and become a certified practitioner. Great for healers, coaches, or anyone seeking change. Hosted at The Lotus and The Light, 9256 Mosby Street, Manassas, VA. More info: <https://bit.ly/AccessBars1225>.

— 21 —

FREE Shape Her Summit, 10am-4pm online. A free one-day virtual event on Winter Solstice with Uma Alexandra Beepat, Soul Alignment Coach, to help women enter 2026 aligned and empowered. Six speakers guide you through the SHAPER Framework: Spirituality, Healing, Abundance, Purpose, Expression & Relationships. Featuring talks, tools, and a closing panel, this summit supports women ready to release the old, rise into truth, and shape their lives with clarity and courage. Register to receive the Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/ShapeHer2025>.

— 29 —

Soul Alignment for Women Entrepreneurs, 7-8pm, online. December is a powerful threshold. This one-hour masterclass blends soul alignment with practical planning to help you close the year with intention and step into Q1 clear and energized. Release what no longer serves, clarify what you're calling in, align your message and offers, and map a values-driven January action plan. Perfect for women entrepreneurs, coaches, creatives, and leaders ready for heart-centered strategy and grounded momentum. With Uma Alexandra Beepat, Soul Alignment Coach. Register: <https://bit.ly/DecemberMasterclass2025>.

JANUARY

— 4 —

Sacred Lotus Pathway 2026: Stage I — Learn & Observe, Sundays through Feb. 22., 10:30am-12pm, online. Begin your New Year spiritual journey with an 8-week immersion in self-discovery, healing, and deprogramming. Release conditioning, reconnect to soul truth, and build the foundation for intuitive awakening. With Uma Alexandra Beepat, Soul Alignment Coach. More info & registration: <https://bit.ly/SacredLotus2026-1>.

— 6 —

The Evolutionary Group in Practice, Zoom course, 12 Tuesdays, 5:30-7pm starting Jan. 6. An intimate class for eight people who want to bring a new quality of awareness to every gathering in their lives. Study *Evolutionary Groups: A New Frontier in Human Connection* and apply its essentials to family, friendship, work, spiritual or healing



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Sunday Services:

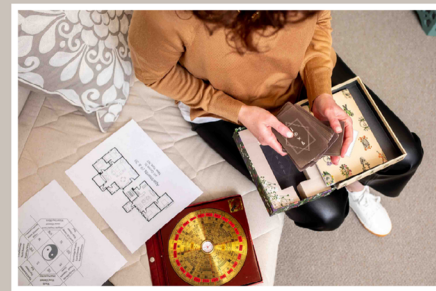
- 1st Sunday: 12:30 pm (In-Person & Zoom)
 - The Palisades Hub
5200 Cathedral Ave NW, Washington, DC
- 2nd – 5th Sundays: 11:00 am (Zoom)

Upcoming Event Offerings:

- Guided Meditation - 1st Wednesdays: Each month (Virtual)
- Psychic Readings - Saturdays: 1/10 & 2/14 (Virtual)
- Winter Solstice Service - Sunday: 12/21 (Virtual)
- Christmas Eve Service - Wednesday: 12/24 (Virtual)
- Exploring 2026 Through Numerology

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— 8 —

2026 Numerology Forecast, 7-8:30pm, online. Join us as we investigate the prevailing energy & favored events for this year. The insights you receive will prepare you to experience 2026 to the fullest! Hosted by the Institute for Spiritual Development (ISD); more information at <http://isd-dc.org>.

Natural Green Burial, Online Q&A, 6:30-8pm. Discover Morris Orchard, and take part in a conversation about green natural burials. Get to know our team of stewards. Learn more about the process of natural burial and its significant impact on our environment. Virtual Zoom link sent before the event. All are welcome. FREE Event; RSVP required: <https://morrisorchardnaturalburial.com/events>.

— 10 —

Integrated EnergyTherapy-Beginner Level, 11am-4pm. Step into angelic healing and transform from within. In this IET Basic Level class, you'll connect with high-vibration angelic energy to release stored emotions, clear blockages, and awaken peace and purpose. Receive an IET attunement, activate your 12-strand DNA, and learn hands-on techniques to heal yourself and others. No experience needed. Taught by Uma of The Lotus and The Light, 9256 Mosby Street, Manassas, VA. More info: <https://bit.ly/IET0126>.

1/10-11 Connect with Your Spirit Guides 2-Day Workshop via Zoom, 9:30am-12:30pm both days. Learn to connect with your spiritual guides and angels and how to access their wisdom, insight and guidance for various life situations. Learn a number of different ways to help you make the connection and to enhance your life. Contact Konstanza Morning Star at 240-543-9414 with any questions; see also www.mediumshamandc.com/connect-with-spirit-guides.

— 11 —

Opening the Akashic Records: Learn the OASIS Method, 10:30am-1:30pm, online. In this 2-part virtual workshop series, you'll be guided through the OASIS framework - a flexible, intuitive method I designed for accessing the Records that honors your unique way of receiving spiritual information. You'll practice formulating powerful questions, customize your own pathway into the Records, and build confidence in the wisdom that comes through. Dates: Jan. 11 & Jan. 18. Hosted & led by The Healer Within Collective; Taniesha Garrison; www.thehealerwithincollective.com/events.

— 17 —

New Beginners T'ai Chi Winter Series Begins, Sundays, 11am-12pm. An introduction to the basic principles and movements of the Cheng Man Ching Short Form. Using the four primary postures of the form, “peng” (wardoff), “lu,” (roll-back) “chi” (press) and “an” (press) we will work with the Mini Form for developing body consciousness, correct alignment, and relaxation. Minimum age: 18 | Registration required. Instructor: Ellen Kennedy in the Dance Hall/Hall of Mirrors, Glen Echo Park. www.glenechoTaiChi.com/index.html#1

— 18 —

Beginning Mediumship Workshop 4-Sunday Mornings via Zoom, 9:30am-12:30pm. Discover your ability to communicate with the spirit world. Learn the fundamentals of mediumship, experience spirit contact, learn how to nurture your gift with Konstanza Morning Star, Certified Medium, Spiritualist Teacher and Author. For info & to register: www.mediumshamandc.com/beginning-mediumship.

— 21 —

Mediumship Development Circle, 6 Weeks via Zoom, 7:30-9:15pm. This mediumship circle provides participants with the ongoing opportunity to practice their ability to connect with the spirit world and receive evidential information from that realm. Meeting includes psychic exercises, meditation, connection with the spirit world, sharing with others and receiving validation and feedback. Six Wednesday evenings starting Jan. 21st. For more information call Konstanza Morning Star

at 240-543-9414; see also www.mediumshamandc.com/circle-in-silver-spring-md.

— 25 —

Level 1 Reiki Training Online, 1-3:30pm. Join award-winning author and Reiki teacher Nicholas Pearson for a five-week journey into first-degree Reiki training. Reiki is a simple & profound healing art and spiritual practice that brings body, mind, & spirit into balance with ease. Shoden, meaning “entrance teachings,” is the original name for the 1st-degree Reiki training. It focuses on Reiki history 7 theory, healing oneself and others, & sensing energy. This live, online Reiki course is offered in five 2.5-hour sessions. Replays are available to registered participants. To register: www.eventbrite.com/e/1964575022778?aff=oddttdt-creator.

— 31 —

Washington Gardener Magazine Seed Exchange, 12:30-4pm. The publication for DC-area gardening enthusiasts, is hosting its 20th annual Seed Exchange at Brookside Gardens and Green Spring Gardens.

Seed swaps are in-person and face-to-face. Bring your extra seeds and swap them with other gardeners. Everyone leaves with a bag full of seeds, new garden friends, and expert planting advice. <https://washingtongardener.blogspot.com/>

FEBRUARY

— 4 —

The Evolutionary Group in Practice, Zoom course, 12 Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm starting Feb. 4. An intimate class for eight people who want to bring a new quality of awareness to every gathering in their lives. Study *Evolutionary Groups: A New Frontier in Human Connection* and apply its essentials to family, friendship, work, spiritual or healing groups. Learn simple practices to foster harmony, meaning, creativity, and felt connection. Sense the “being of the group” itself. Over the series, our small circle becomes a living example of an evolutionary group, giving you direct experience you can carry anywhere. More info & to register: <http://newwaveofgroups.com>.

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— 7 —

Integrated Energy Therapy-Intermediate Level, 11am-4pm. Go deeper with the angels and expand your healing power. The Intermediate Level of Integrated Energy Therapy® builds on the Basic attunement, activating the 3rd & 4th DNA pairs and strengthening your intuitive connection. Learn to identify and clear emotional imprints, trauma, and energetic blocks from the field. Includes Intermediate attunement, hands-on practice, manual, and certification. Ideal for healers ready to elevate their work. Taught by Uma of The Lotus and The Light, 9256 Mosby Street, Manassas, VA. More info: <https://bit.ly/IETO226>.

UPCOMING

3/7 **Integrated Energy Therapy-Advanced Level**, 11am-4pm. Step into the highest level of IET and activate your soul's purpose. The Advanced Level attunes you to the 5th DNA pair, deepening your angelic connection and expanding your mastery. Learn Soul Star clearing, Energy Wave release work, and

Heartbeams to anchor light into the Earth. Perfect for practitioners ready to work at the soul level and serve as lightworkers. Includes Advanced attunement, manual, and official certification. Taught by Uma of The Lotus and The Light, 9256 Mosby Street, Manassas, VA. More info: <https://bit.ly/IETO326>.

3/22 **Pathways Spring Natural Living Expo**, 10am-6pm, Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, McLean, VA. 100+ exhibitors and 40+ workshops at the longest-running mind-body-spirit-eco event of the DMV. \$10 advance purchase online and day of event with mailing list sign-up; kids 16 and under are FREE. Free parking, food trucks. All are welcome! www.pathwaysproductions.com

ONGOING

A Course in Miracles Zoom Based Study Group, meeting each Wednesday evening from 7pm - 8:30pm EST. All are welcomed. Contact Tammy Batcha for more information: tammybatcha@gmail.com; 540-550-1971.

Rediscover Your Divinity! Join us every 2nd Sunday of the month 11am-12pm for a lively spiritual discussion on a different topic, such as “Shaping Your Own Destiny” or “Living Soul’s Joy Now.” We invite you to meet with a group of like-hearted individuals for a vibrant celebration of Eternal Soul. Sponsored by ECKANKAR, The Path of Spiritual Freedom. At the Northern Virginia ECK Center, Fairfax, VA. spiritualdiscussions12@gmail.com; www.eck-va.org.

Gather, Ground & Grow Monthly Meetup, 7-9pm. Looking for a space to connect, reflect, and recharge? Join us the first Saturday of every month for an evening of spiritual exploration and healing in a welcoming, judgment-free environment. What to Expect: Group discussions; Astrology insights; Intuitive Guidance; Grounding Exercises; Sound Bath with singing bowls to end the evening in pure bliss. Come as you are, leave feeling rejuvenated, empowered, and deeply connected. Earth Addictions, Occoquan, VA. www.facebook.com/EarthAddictions

Online Lotus Coffee Chat. Pour a cup and join Uma of The Lotus and the Light Metaphysical Center online for a soulful conversation on living with greater alignment, clarity, and purpose. These monthly chats are a chance to explore spiritual wisdom, share insights, and connect with like-minded souls in a relaxed, heart-centered space. For upcoming dates and chat topics, visit <https://thelotusandthelight.com/events>.

Sacred Circle Dance Classes, Wednesdays, 3:05-4:35pm, start 12/03/2025. Mind-Body-Spirit-Community-Joy. No partner or experience needed — everyone is welcome. Bring: Comfortable soft shoes (or dance barefoot), a bottle of water, and a spirit of openness and curiosity. Classes offered through Montgomery County Recreation Senior Program and are free for residents ages 55+. Led by volunteer facilitators Olga and Sue. *Please check with the center for cancellations before coming.* Registration required: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/howto/registrationinformation.html.

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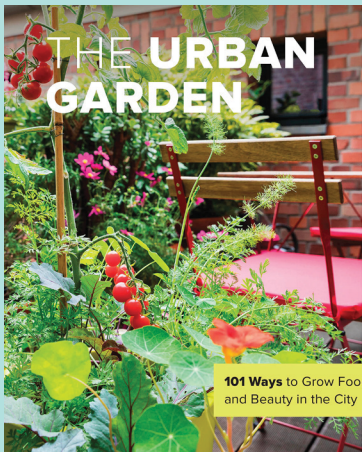
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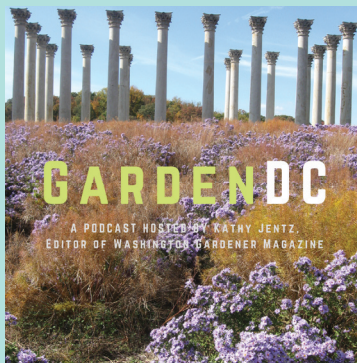
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WINTER CALENDAR

SPOTLIGHT: Spiritual Video Night Online. Every 2nd Wednesday from 7-8pm, join us for an uplifting 30-minute video & group discussion that offers insights about some of the perplexing mysteries of life. Sponsored by ECKANKAR, the Path of Spiritual Freedom. More info: spiritualdiscussions12@gmail.com; www.eck-va.org.

Spiritualist Services. The Church of Two Worlds offers services every 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month that are a mix of inspiration, meditation, music, and mediumship. 11am-12:15pm at Church of Two Worlds, 3038 Q St., NW, WDC 20007. www.churchoftwoworlds.org

Weekly Sunday Service, 11am. Share in the prayers, music, as well as spiritual healings & readings at the Palisades Hub, Institute for Spiritual Development, 5200 Cathedral Ave NW, WDC. www.isd-dc.org

Voice of the Gatekeeper Molly Rowland 33 New releases on YouTube. After a long wait I am able to add to my YouTube Channel. Watch for Moon Rituals, Teachings from St. Germain and much more. More info: www.voiceofthegatekeepers.com



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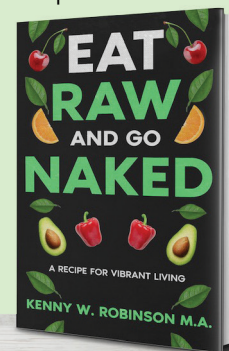
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The Circle Remembers: Dancing Our Genes Awake

BY OLGA BRAZHNİK, PHD

The circle begins to move. Feet caress the earth in unison, hands find one another, breath steadies into rhythm. A pulse travels through joined bodies — soft, deliberate, ancient. Each step seems to whisper something the mind has forgotten. But the body remembers, and you feel at home.

Science is now rediscovering what ancient movement traditions have always known: Experience shapes biology. Epigenetics reveals that our genes respond to how we live, think, and feel. In the circle, this truth becomes visible. Movement, breath, and presence weave a new story in the body, reminding us that healing begins in the dance of life itself.

The Language of Epigenetics

Inside each of us, millions of cells hum in quiet cooperation. Every heartbeat, every thought sends a signal — a conversation between body and environment. Epigenetics is the science of this conversation. It shows that our genes are not fixed scripts but living scores, responding to the symphony of experience.

Stress, isolation, and fear leave molecular fingerprints that alter how genes are expressed. Yet nurturing touch, laughter, music, and movement can guide the body toward renewal. Ancient cultures may not have spoken of methylation, but they knew that rhythm and ritual could restore harmony.

Epigenetics gives modern language to timeless wisdom. It bridges science and spirituality, showing that the molecules of life respond to meaning as much as to matter. We are both the story and the storyteller,



ALEJANDRA GONZÁLEZ CHÁVEZ

er, able to influence our inner symphony through compassion, awareness, and connection. In this way, biology becomes biography — our lives literally shape our genes.

The Science of Connection

In Sacred Circle Dance there is no audience, no performance, no competition. We move together, following simple steps. The circle holds us — steady, forgiving, alive. Each dancer becomes part of a living mandala, breathing and turning as one.

When people move, sing, or breathe together, hearts and brains synchronize. Scientists call this coherence — a measurable state of physiological harmony linked to reduced stress and greater emotional resilience.

In the circle, coherence becomes visible and felt. We sense ourselves as part of something larger: energy flowing freely, distinctions softening. The body releases its defenses and remembers belonging. Ancient cultures celebrated this state through ritual and dance; today, research confirms what they intuited—that connection itself is healing.

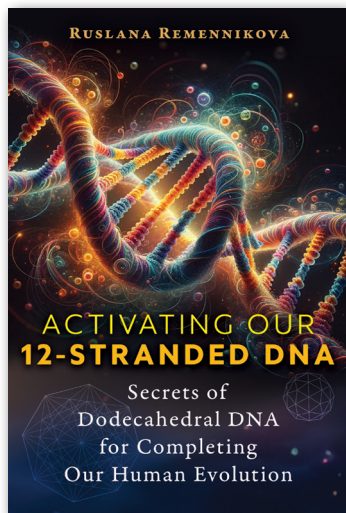
As Ruslana Remennikova described in “We Are the Field: Shaping Collective Coherence” (Pathways, Fall 2025), collective practices such as meditation and heart-centered awareness can literally shift the energetic field we share. Sacred Circle Dance brings this principle into motion — transforming stillness into rhythm, and restoring trust, em-



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pathy, and balance in both body and community.

Biologically, such movement reshapes our chemistry — stress hormones fall as endorphins, serotonin, and oxytocin rise. The autonomic nervous system shifts from vigilance to calm, interoception deepens, and the body remembers safety. Moving and breathing together create coherence in heart and brain rhythms. Science calls it entrainment; tradition calls it harmony. The body simply knows: It is healing.

Dance becomes medicine not because it cures disease, but because it restores relationships — between breath and body, self and community, earth and spirit.

Ancestral Memory

Some dances are centuries old, others newly born, yet all carry the essence of human experience. A melody from Greece, a rhythm from South America, a gesture from modern life — each becomes a thread in our shared tapestry.

Epigenetics reminds us that memory lives in biology; the love and resilience of our ancestors shape how we move through life today. In the circle, we awaken this inheritance — old and new steps meeting in dialogue, allowing ancestral knowledge to breathe in the present moment.

The circle thus becomes both archive and laboratory, where inherited stories are honored, transformed, and danced into balance. Each dance carries whispers of lives lived before us — ancestral or perhaps past-life echoes — reminding us that memory is both genetic and spiritual. In this sense, circle dances express ancestral epigenetics — cultural forms through which inherited wisdom and emotional resilience continue to evolve.

A Global Weave

Sometimes we like to believe our modern world is more connected than ever — linked by fiber optics, satellites, and constant communication — while our ancestors lived in small, isolated communities, knowing little beyond their villages. We also tend to think birds and animals communicate primitively. Yet we are, and always have been, part of the same conversation of life.

Throughout time, all beings have known pride and despair, pain and love, moved to the shared rhythms of the rising sun, the pull of the moon, the turning seasons, and the eternal cycles of birth and renewal. Dance arose from these patterns, a universal language connecting people across generations and linking us with the living world.

The renewed Sacred Circle Dance tradition took root in the Findhorn community of Scotland, inspired by Bernhard Wosien's vision of dance as a form of meditation and connection. Today, it is practiced in communities across the world — throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia, and here in the DMV region. Numerous websites reflect this global network, including: <https://worldcircledance.com>; www.circledancing.com; www.inthedance.com; and <https://neskaya.com/about-circle-dance/>. Local circles often exist quietly, discovered through word of mouth that preserves the intimacy and trust within this community.

Local gatherings link into a greater web. Festivals bring teachers from many cultures, each offering their own rhythm and vision: a Greek step meets a Celtic melody; a Bulgarian rhythm joins a Brazilian drumbeat. Together we create an embodied network of awareness, an evolving choreography of care that integrates culture and ecology, complements modern science, and nourishes our global well-being.

Dancing with Our Genes

Epigenetics shows we are shaped by how we live, feel, and connect. Mind-body practices like Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, and conscious dances

embody this truth, awakening the body's intelligence and transforming awareness into a healing movement. Research shows these practices lower cortisol and inflammation, enhance neuroplasticity, and even alter gene expression — just as maternal care reshapes DNA methylation in rodents or meditation modulates immune and stress-related genes in humans. Through rhythm, breath, and shared presence, the body learns safety, joy, and belonging — signals that switch on the genes of vitality and renewal, creating health and meaning through experience.

Each dance becomes a healing microenvironment — rhythm, attunement, and gentle synchrony regulating stress, lowering cortisol, and fostering neural coherence. Movement thus fulfills epigenetics' promise that inner and outer worlds are one: through rhythm, breath, and touch, dance creates epigenetic spaces where cellular renewal mirrors communal harmony.

When people move as one, oxytocin rises, heart rhythms align, and the body receives cues of trust and connection — signals that favor growth over defense. In Sacred Circle Dance, this biological harmony becomes a lived experience. The dance invites us to surrender a little individuality in order to discover a deeper power in unity. Its simple forms — linked hands, repeating steps — gently shape self-expression into coherence. Breathing and turning in a shared rhythm, the circle becomes a living organism, embodying the pulse of connection and the quiet intelligence of life moving as one.

In a world where disconnection has become a global pandemic, the circle offers restoration—hands joined, coherence renewed, a living reminder that our well-being is interwoven with one another and with the living Earth. Within its quiet turning, we remember what it means to be whole together.

The Science of Health Meets the Art of Healing

Every time we join hands and step into the circle, we enter a dialogue between matter and meaning. Epigenetics affirms what the spirit has always known: our choices and emotions can reshape the story written in our cells.

In the quiet turning, we become both scientist and mystic, integrating knowledge and experience, intellect and intuition, science and spirituality. The circle invites integration across time and culture, age and tradition, reminding us that healing arises when all parts — body and mind, individual and collective, past and future — move in harmony.

In the circle's quiet turning, the science of health meets the art of healing — and life itself becomes the dance.

Olga Brazhnik, PhD, is a scientist and life coach who dances at the meeting point of knowledge and wonder. Drawing on her background in physics and NIH research, she now explores how movement, mindfulness, and connection can inspire creativity, happiness, and the flourishing of human potential.



How Vertical Farming is Revolutionizing Urban Food Security

BY RONIT SHARMA AND ANMOL BALI

As the world's population reaches an all-time high, the need for sustainable food production is surely going off the charts as well. With the world becoming a concrete jungle in the high tide of urbanization, the traditional farmlands are becoming extinct. This has raised some serious concerns about urban food security.

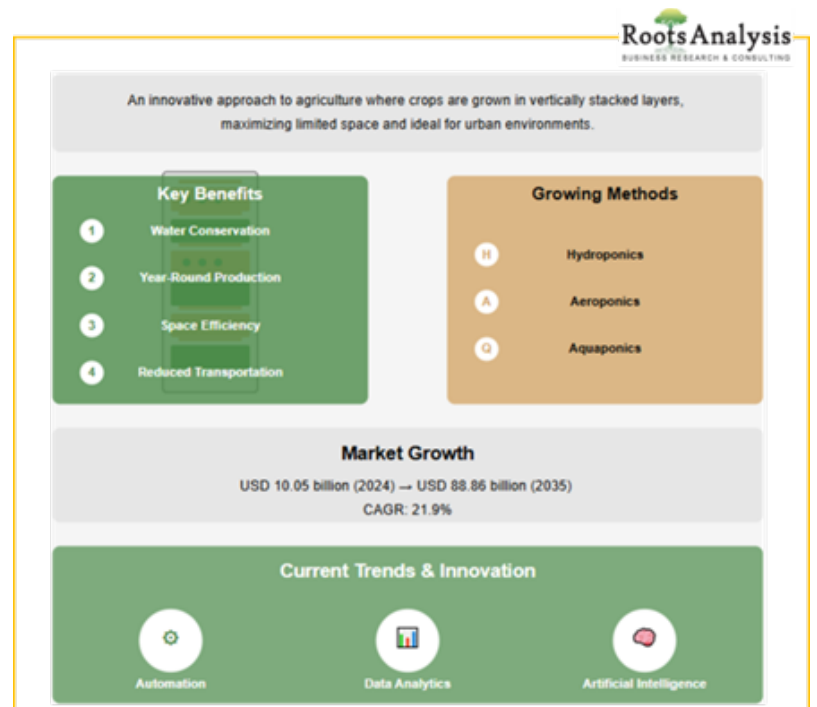
But modern problems give birth to modern solutions. As a result, innovations are emerging to solve the demand for fresh, local food. One of the most exciting in the agricultural field (*literal and otherwise*) has been that of **vertical farming**, the method that uses stacked layers to grow crops indoors. This solution is taking root in the heart of bustling cities, quite literally.

The Urban Food Security Challenge

Urban food security is the availability, accessibility, affordability and utilization of sufficient, safe and nutritious food for the population residing in a city. It's a highly complex issue being challenged by rapid urbanization, population growth, infrastructure limitations, and socioeconomic disparities, mostly due to climate change and other global shocks.

Contributing factors of the challenge include:

- **Rapid Urbanization and Population Growth:** Cities are experiencing an insane amount of population • growth, leading to increased demand for food and resources, putting a strain on local food systems and infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure Limitations:** Poor infrastructure, including transportation networks, storage facilities, and distribution channels, hinders the efficient movement of food from farms to consumers, leading to wastage and shortages.
- **Socioeconomic Disparities:** Urban poverty and income inequality exacerbate food insecurity. The urban poor often face higher food prices and limited access to nutritious food, contributing to malnutrition and food insecurity.
- **Inefficient Food Supply Chains:** Long and complex supply chains can lead to food losses and inefficiencies, increasing food prices and reducing access for urban residents.
- **Inadequate Storage Facilities:** Lack of proper storage facilities can result in significant food waste and spoilage, reducing the availability and quality of food.



What is Vertical Farming?

Vertical Farming is an innovative approach to agriculture where crops are grown in vertically stacked layers, often in controlled indoor environments. These farms use scientific ways to grow crops, including hydroponics, aeroponics, or aquaponics. Vertical farming is an easy and effective way to maximize limited space, making them ideal for urban areas where the land is scarce and expensive.

Vertical Farming is a high-tech method, and it is mostly powered by artificial lighting (often LED lights), climate control systems, and precision farming techniques, which help in optimizing plant growth. This approach allows for efficient, large-scale food production in spaces like warehouses, rooftops, or even underground tunnels.

Key Ways To Enhancing Urban Food Security

Vertical Farming is revolutionizing the urban landscape by providing an innovative and practical way to curb food insecurity. Here's how it is enhancing the landscape:

- **Water Conservation:** Vertical farming uses 95% less water than traditional soil-based farming methods. This is highly helpful in cities where freshwater resources are rapidly depleting. The closed-loop system used in this method helps recycle and reuse water within the farm, thus using water preciously and efficiently.
- **Year-Round Production:** Traditional farming is highly dependent on weather conditions and seasons, but tech-savvy vertical farming is not. Vertically farmed crops can grow year-round, regardless of the season; this ability ensures a steady, and reliable food supply, especially in urban areas where fresh produce access is highly limited.
- **Space Efficiency:** Vertical farming efficiently utilizes limited spacing in urban cities as its entire structure is stacked crops in layers. These farms can be set on rooftops, in vacant buildings, or even repurposed warehouses, making food production accessible

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to more people. As the population rises and the resulting concrete jungles keep on creating a shortage of farming space, vertical farming can be a highly helpful approach.

- **Reduced Transportation Footprint:** Growing food within cities with the help of vertical farming also reduces the need for long-distance transportation, further helping to lower carbon emissions associated with food distribution. Locally grown produce is bound to be delivered more efficiently, which further ensures fresh food without the environmental impact of shipping from faraway lands.

Current Trends and Innovation

As the technological landscape advances, it keeps providing an advanced edge to every involved sector, including vertical farming. There are several current technology trends and innovations taking place that are also positively affecting the vertical farming market growth. It is projected to grow from the USD 10.05 billion figure in 2024 to USD 88.86 billion by 2035, representing a compound annual growth rate of 21.9%, during the forecast period 2024-2035.

Some of the most prominent trends and innovations include:

- **Automation:** Traditionally, vertical farms require crops to be grown on static multi-level racks that require human labor. But with automation, the only human labor required is for maintenance. For instance, in automated farms, growing trays with plants are automatically moved from zone to zone according to the crops' current growing cycle, which reduces labor significantly.
- **Data Analytics:** With the help of data analytics, farmers are enhancing the efficiency of their resources and can adjust factors like water usage, lighting schedule, nutrient mixing and temperature control in response to real-time data.
- **AI: Artificial Intelligence** is taking over almost every sector of the world, including vertical farming. Farmers can now, with the help of AI, predict how well the crops will grow and spot potential diseases. Not only this, but it can also inform the farmers about the nutrient levels of the plants, if they need tweaking, along with providing super-targeted treatments, further resulting in higher yields and healthier crops.

Challenges in Adopting Vertical Farming

While vertical farming has tremendous potential, there are some challenges as well. They are as follows:

- **High Initial Costs:** Setting up vertical farms, particularly large-scale operations, require significant effort and upfront investment in infrastructure and technology.
- **Energy Consumption:** The use of artificial lighting, AI, and climate control systems in vertical farming can use a lot of energy, potentially offsetting some of their environmental benefits.
- **Limited Crop Variety:** In the current scenario, vertical farms are proficient in growing leafy greens and herbs; but expanding the range of crops that can be efficiently grown in these farms is still a challenge.

Real-World Example: A Leading Urban Vertical Farm in Action

In Phillipsburg, New Jersey, the company Oishii has brought a high-tech vertical farm to life. Called the Amatelas Farm, this 237,000+ sq ft facility uses stacked growing racks, renewable energy (adjacent solar field) and robotic harvesting systems to cultivate strawberries year-round.



Key highlights:

- The farm is equipped for 20-times the production of its prior facility, due to automation and optimized design.
- It runs largely on solar energy and features a water-purification/recycling system, reducing resource use.
- The product, such as the Koyo Berry is grown pesticide-free, non-GMO and delivered locally: tapping into the urban-proximate advantage.

This case underlines how vertical farming can operate at commercial scale in or near urban areas, leveraging space efficiency, resource reuse and local distribution.

Vertical farming is a transformative approach that addresses the pressing issue of food security. By harnessing innovative technologies, optimizing resource utilization, and promoting local food production, vertical farming offers a sustainable solution to feeding the world's population. From environmental benefits to increased crop yield and urban food production, this article has explored the various facets of vertical farming. It is clear that vertical farming has the potential to reshape our food systems and pave the way for a more secure and sustainable future.

Ronit Sharma is an accomplished business research and competitive intelligence professional with eight years of experience in the market research industry. As a team leader at Roots Analysis, he has authored numerous multidisciplinary market research reports, and led the efforts on several bespoke consulting assignments, providing valuable insights into the latest innovations across different industries. Ronit specializes in identifying emerging opportunities for various stakeholders, leveraging his deep understanding of market trends and technological developments.

Anmol Bali is a content writer at Roots Analysis, specializing in creating comprehensive market report descriptions and articles across sectors. With extensive experience in content writing, she transforms complex data into clear and easy-to-interpret information. Passionate about research writing and communication, she contributes significantly to the firm's content and marketing departments. www.rootsanalysis.com

A New Year in the Garden: Shopping for Your Plants by Mail or Online

BY KATHY JENTZ

It will soon be a new gardening year, and according to your mailbox (if you're like most gardeners), you can tell it's the deep winter dormant season not by the chilly weather, but by the number of the mail-order garden catalogs flooding in right now and the amount of email offers in your inbox. I personally receive an average of two or three print catalogs per day starting around January 1!

If you didn't get a wide selection of gardening catalogs this year, you can go online to request some be sent to you. A good jumping off point is to go online and request to be added to the mailing list of any of several hundred mailorder garden companies listed on a simple Google search.

What are the advantages of mail-order or online ordering? According to the now-defunct Mailorder Gardening Association, they are:

- Greater selection of products
- The convenience of armchair shopping
- Best guarantees in the business
- Plants and products directly to your door

I especially like that last bullet point. Getting that box of new plants or seeds delivered to your door is like opening a gift to yourself. What a great present to come home to after a long day at the office! And no need to haul heavy plants home on the metro or bus.

One of the best things about getting mail-order garden catalogs or surfing their web sites is you can do it from the warm comfort of your own home at any time. You are able to sit down and plot out your garden plan on paper before buying. You can dream big at this point and transport yourself to springtime with these luscious photos and detailed plant descriptions.

"Garden catalogs let you take a mental vacation from the frigid days of winter, and they serve as helpful planning tools because they show you the newest plants and products for your garden," said Roberta Simpson-Dolbeare, former president of the Mailorder Gardening Association (MGA). "Gardening catalogs and websites are a great way to get a jumpstart on the gardening season. Many of them also provide helpful information for both new and long-time gardeners."

Just how popular are mail-order garden products? Americans spend \$3.1 billion annually on mail-order plants, bulbs, seeds, garden tools, and garden supplies. If you're planning to order from a mail-order gardening catalog or gardening website, you're in good company. More than 24.2 million American households are expected to place orders with mail-order garden catalogs and websites this year, spending an average of \$128 per household.

When I settle in to peruse this year's catalog offerings, I like to have a large scratchpad, Post-its, and pens nearby to sketch out garden bed ideas and keep track of what I want from each catalog. Here are some additional mail-order gardening suggestions:

- Choose plants appropriate to the DC area; this generally means USDA Zone 7. Luckily for us, that is a very broad range of plants. Most of what we cannot have in this area are tropicals. If you must have a certain specimen that is Zone 8 or higher, you can grow it as a summer annual and then try to keep it overwintered in a heated greenhouse.
- Check out the helpful glossary of terms often included and read the descriptions carefully. If you don't know what an "indeterminate"



tomato vine is, go online and ask Google; or pick up the phone and call the company. Most garden catalogs have a very helpful, knowledgeable staff in their customer service departments.

- Order early to avoid "sold out" notices. I'm still depressed over that corkscrew vine I wanted so badly last year. This time, I've learned my lesson! Although procrastination does have a few benefits. If you buy online and sign-up for a company's mail list, in late spring you'll often be sent sale and clearance price offers on overstocked items. These are great for filling in where a perennial has not come back or a new plant has just not flourished as you'd hoped.
- Keep careful records of what you've ordered and where you intend to place them in your garden. This will help you immensely in unpacking your plants several months from now. This also avoids the "Now where do I put this?" syndrome, as you stand mid-garden with a new plant in hand.

When I do my actual ordering, it is online. That way I get a receipt in my email box, print it out, and can make notes on that as well. Two extremely helpful online sites to visit *before* you place your orders are:

- **Dave's Garden: The Garden Watchdog** (<http://davesgarden.com/gwd/>) — This site has contact information for hundreds of mail-order gardening companies and reviews from fellow gardeners who have used these companies.
- **Houzz Garden Sources Forum** (www.houzz.com/discussions/garden-sources/) — This site took over the garden sources forum from the old GardenWeb site. It allows you to search on posts from other gardeners or to post your own query. Many use it to look for a specific plant source or to ask about a catalog they've never ordered from before for other's opinions and experiences.

Finally, plants make excellent gifts for the gardener in your life, so consider that this holiday season. Happy shopping!

*Kathy Jentz is editor/publisher of Washington Gardener magazine. She is also the host of the popular **GardenDC Podcast**.*

Washington Gardener magazine is the gardening publication published specifically for the local metro area — zones 6-7 — Washington DC and its suburbs. The magazine is written entirely by local area...

Let's Talk About Groups

BY PATRICIA PFOST AND ANNE ALTVATER

We would like to start a conversation with you about all the groups in your life. Then, it would be great if you would go out to your groups and start conversations with them... about groups.

For centuries, we have been working to better ourselves as individuals. Many of us who are Pathways' subscribers have spent years of passionate, diligent — even driven — study and practice making ourselves more aware, learning to understand our inner worlds and how “human beingness” works, so “I” can enjoy greater fulfillment and be a better contributor.

We authors, Anne and Patricia, believe that a next frontier of consciousness is to give the same focus, intention for betterment, and attention to the awakening of our groups themselves. As Thich Nhat Hanh said, “The next Buddha may be a sangha,” meaning, the next enlightened being may be a group. We are on that threshold, and the intention of this conversation with you is to help propel us all through the door. It is the opportunity to turn from working on our “I” to working on our “We,” our groups themselves — a next opening on our way to “One.”

What we mean by group is *a gathering of two or more beings for any purpose*. That's it. Nothing more complicated. All sizes; all purposes; all life forms; even the voices in your head and your ancestral lineage. We are always in a group.

Entire fields — social psychology, anthropology, organizational behavior, social neuroscience, network science — study how groups function: coordination, trust and rupture, repair and flow. And there are practical methods in many specific settings — business teams, marriages, restorative circles, group therapies, Nonviolent Communication, 12-step, sociocracy/holacracy, council, Quaker clearness, Training-groups, etc. But these often live in silos, fragmented and tied to specific communities.

In everyday life, like on a parent text thread, a volunteer board, a book club, we rarely have a shared pathway for asking, *How is our group actually working? What do we want it to be? How can I function best in this group?* Most of us still lack a common, practical way to talk about the “we” when we are together. In fact, from the point of view with which we are beginning this conversation, no one is really talking about “the Group” itself. Or rather, they are talking *about* groups but not *from within the being of the group itself*. There is a big difference.

...gardeners. They have real-world knowledge and practical advice. They share their thoughts on what to plant in deep shade, how to cover bare spots, which annuals work best throughout the humid DC summers, and much more.

The magazine is published monthly online and includes timely information such as a local garden events calendar and gardening to-do list for that month. A year-long digital subscription is \$20.00. To subscribe to the magazine: Send a check/money order for \$20.00 payable to “Washington Gardener” magazine to: Washington Gardener, 826 Philadelphia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910 OR to pay via Paypal/credit card click on the “subscribe” link at www.WashingtonGardener.com.

Washington Gardener magazine subscriptions make great gifts for gardeners and new homeowners.

From Two to We: Our Story

Let us briefly introduce ourselves and share with you the group experience we regularly have.

Patricia is a writer, healing/therapy teacher, and translator of ideas into practical use. Anne is a healer, life long horse/donkey herd member, and business owner. We met years ago at a prominent 4-year energy healing school. Through a series of serendipitous meetings, we reunited after many years and began a working partnership that evolved as a new way to envision, interact with, and be... a group. We were guided by a higher order of intelligence that identified itself as a “group being with the ability to present as individual beings or aspects.” They wanted to teach us to have the same experience, and then for us to teach it to others. (If this is too “out there,” please set it aside. There's good stuff ahead; we hope you'll come along for the rest.)

As we worked together daily, now for over 7 years, we encountered ourselves as a new presence... we became a “self-aware” group together, each of us totally ourselves yet almost constantly aware of the “group we are together.”

We have taught many people how to form this type of group, one that is deeply satisfying, highly creative — visionary even — calling forth the very best of each of us, and having total space for our very worst to show up along the way (and even be of value.) And we have written a book, *Evolutionary Groups: A New Frontier in Human Connection—As your groups awaken, so do you* which presents how to cultivate and tend to a self-aware group.

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Meet Therisia “Trish” Hall Empowering All To Live Their “Best Yet To Be”



Trish is a Creative Retreat and Workshop Designer and Producer, who shifts perspectives by drawing people together with heightened cultural awareness and effective collaboration. A luminous voice for oneness and peace as a motivational speaker and brilliant life coach, she awakens individuals to their spiritual magnificence, supporting them living into their authentic potential.

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Talking Groups...

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The Bottom Line

We want to be clear here — and here's the threshold we are poised to cross — we do this most often *as a group consciousness*. We recognize ourselves as individuals, but we also recognize it is the *Us that we make together* that is creating our work, teaching our courses, leading our practice groups, and writing our books.

This may sound to you like a loss of individuality; it is the exact opposite. As our awareness expands, each person's distinct gifts come into sharper focus and potency, strengthening the whole. That shared wholeness, in turn, invites more self-agency and authenticity from each of us. This reciprocity — individuals awakening the field, and the field awakening the individuals — is the hallmark of what we call "Evolutionary Groups."

So first, we have come to identify ourselves as a group being. Second, and equally important, we enter into *conversation*. One of us does not know best. There is no one leader. We each present what is arising in us and then we *co-create our way forward*. Or, if it's a "tangle," we navigate through. Back and forth. No absolutes, few "shoulds" (though they try to creep in). Just presence with who each of us is in the moment: "I think..." "Here's what's happening for me..." "Here's where I go when you say that..." "I'm feeling angry right now." "How about this?"

In the kind of being we are experiencing ourselves to be, every voice is welcomed, valued, and needed. Whatever arises — discord or harmony — gives us exactly the information we need to keep open-

ing awareness. We treat everything that happens between us — as us — as useful. It grows each of us, deepens the group's awareness, and supports the well-being of the Whole. And wow! The out-of-the-box creativity that has the space to arise because we are not stuck on a position is amazing, not to mention the relief.

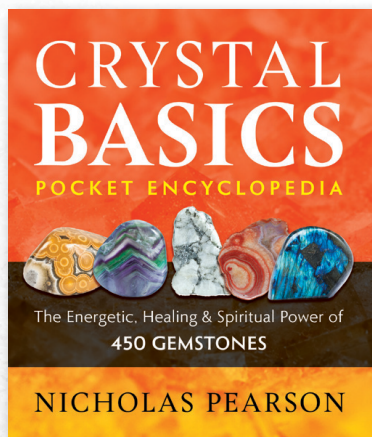
The "Being of the Group"

The first step we encountered as we were being taught to actualize this group awareness was to turn our attention to what we now call, "The Being of the Group." This is the deeper intelligence or consciousness that emerges as the group. A coherent, self-aware presence — a living intelligence arising from and through all the individuals of a group yet not reducible to any one of us. It is more than the sum of the individuals. The Being of the Group is the essence or soul of the group field. It can be understood as the specific localized emergence of a higher intelligence within or as a particular gathering. It's the here-and-now arising intelligence that reflects both the individuals present and something beyond us that can arise because we have come together. When we recognize and attune to it, this "being" seems to "want" things — it pulses with timing, with direction, with unspoken knowing. It reveals preferences, truths, even impulses for action or silence. It holds the potential for coherence and insight through the unique constellation of people gathered. So, in that sense, the being of the group is what wants something to emerge. Its "wants" are not personal; they are resonances or invitations from a deeper movement.

We move along a continuum of awareness. On one end, we identify primarily as separate individuals and regard the group from the outside. On the other, the felt experience is "I am the group" — I am arising as the whole and as the individual. And so, believe it or not, the group actually becomes aware of itself. Please know that no position along the continuum is better than another. What we think is useful at this stage in human evolution is noticing where we are in relation to our groups, moment to moment, and considering new possibilities of where we would like to be, and how we can open our groups, therefore ourselves, to more aliveness and actualization for the good.

When we are more aware of the being of the group we enjoy an expanded self-awareness that becomes co-awareness. We begin to sense the group thinking *through* us rather than as something outside us. The familiar sense of "me in a group" is joined by a new felt reality: "I am the group, expressing through each of us." People experience this in their own ways — often as a heart-opening or a physical sense of

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spherical energetic expansion — and are frequently surprised by the emergence of highly unique and creative ideas benefitting the larger whole.

We will be happy to share with you a very long list of what being a self-aware Evolutionary Group feels like and how it acts. It is an ideal, we know. By listing the qualities we experience already as its attributes, and also the qualities we imagine, we hope to open a door for all of us to hold the vision and call forth such groups into reality.

How We Begin to Sense the Being of the Group

We would like to share the ways we have found to move toward being such a group. If you are interested, we invite you to check out our book and its many practical applications. We look forward to further opportunities to share some initial pointers to the way of “group being” perception, perhaps with a future Pathways article. For now, consider this for a beginning.

Be quiet.

In most groups, silence is treated as an awkward pause — something to fill. But in an Evolutionary Group, silence is recognized as the living edge of the field. It’s where the deeper intelligence begins to breathe and make itself known. Learning to stay with silence is one of the most radical practices of our time. It invites the field itself to speak.

From a space of quiet, whether you are in a group or by yourself at the moment, turn your awareness inward...acknowledge yourself, your uniqueness. Maintaining your sense of self, expand your awareness to a group of which you are a part. Sense the relationships between the participants, the horizontal connections among all of you. Then, very slowly and gently, expand your awareness spherically outward to the being of the group. No demand to notice anything. Just consider that there is such a thing as a being of the group and notice. Use all your senses. Consider that you are connecting to a larger intelligence that is present because of the group, as the group, and as a higher order of the group. Simply that.

From our experience, there is a lot to be discovered here and countless conversations to be had. As humanity learns to collaborate in this as one of many unified ways, something remarkable is emerging: a quieter, wiser intelligence moving through us all, showing us that wholeness was never lost—only waiting to be remembered together. (Freudian slip here, instead of “together,” I typed “to gather.”)

For decades, Anne Altvater has guided riders and horses into deeper partnership, where connection becomes a pathway to new possibilities. She is a graduate of the Barbara Brennan School of Healing and the founder of Campbell’s Lane Farm, Insight Equine Therapy, and Great Bear Retreat. Her truest credentials come from walking beside the herd each day—learning how coherence, soft listening, and group awareness unfold in natural time. Anne’s work in Evolutionary Groups is rooted in a longing to orient us all to a higher frequency: one where collaboration, awe, and healing are not just possible, but natural. She invites groups into this space gently, with heart, and always with the animals close by.

Patricia Pfof served as program dean and senior faculty of the Barbara Brennan School of Healing and as senior faculty of the Radical Aliveness Institute. She holds an MBA from the University of Chicago and previously directed planning for New York City’s 18-hospital public system. After a transformational program profoundly shifted her course, she focused on energy healing, group facilitation, and educational leadership. Her world task is practical spirituality; her personal task is learning to be kind, always.

Patricia and Anne are co-founders of the New Wave of Groups. They can be reached at support@newwaveofgroups.com.





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THINK HEALTH ... THINK PREVENTION – YOUR BODY WILL THANK YOU!

Learning From the Bones: Lessons From the Ancestors

BY CAROL BURBANK

Have you ever *known* something so deeply that nothing could shake your conviction? Have you ever felt something so deeply that it feels like the foundation of reality? These are messages from our ancestors, supplementing our personal experience, and rising up from deep in our bones.

Some of these messages come through spiritual connections, webs of history linked through our parents and grandparents and beyond. I believe our ancestors vibrate in a field of influence. Whether it is the echo of their stories that informs us or something more mysterious, the past has a lot to teach us.

Some come through our DNA, that elemental spiral of information that shapes every cell and organ. Geneticists have proven that our DNA adapts in every generation, epigenetically responding to famine, abundance, trauma, and other transformative experiences. Our DNA is constantly healing and revealing itself, unlocking and relocking itself in response to multiple stimuli from the present as well as our genetic past.

I love the resources offered by cellular and bone-deep knowledge. Our cells hold collective knowledge, so small, but vital to our survival. Bones function on both macro and micro levels. They form the architecture of motion and stillness, and hold within them the factory that builds our blood, formed by the spiraling instructions at the heart of cells of creation.

There's no question we need to pay attention when we hear these prompts. They may alert us to danger, or show us patterns we might otherwise have missed. They may push us towards our purpose or rec-

ognize our gifts. They are part of the matrix of our lives.

Our Response Makes All the Difference

Even as we acknowledge these callings, we need to listen with a discerning ear. The knowledge that rises from the depths is compelling, often urgent and primal. There can be truth in the messages, but the call to action might need to be modulated to fit our current situation. Some warnings may be memories; some feelings may be triggered trauma vibrating the web of our consciousness.

When primal messages reflect ancestral or familial suffering, they rise up to name a wound begging to be healed. It may be our gift to apply the balm needed from the resources and choices available here and now. It is always a puzzle that deserves attention. But we are the authors of our lives. Ultimately, we get to choose how to react and integrate those ancestral impulses and awarenesses.

It can be hard to act consciously when these old stories activate. They are often wordless and always deeply felt, but they are nonetheless stories. Stories, like DNA, are almost infinitely adaptable. Humans develop by mastering their living generative force, simultaneously ancient and renewing. I like to think of our ideal response as a great experiment, requiring observation, exploration, and conscious steps.

Awakening to the Ancestors: Be Fully Present

The world of our psyche is so much larger than we see in our day-to-day lives. When we know something or feel something so strongly, we enter the realm psychologist Carl Jung called "active imagination." This is a real place, where many dimensions of myth and memory weave stories in cahoots with our own minds, hearts and spirits. In this "imaginal" space, we move into Soul.

Jung wrote: "I feel very strongly that I am under the influence of things or questions which were left incomplete and unanswered by my parents and grandparents and more distant ancestors. It has always seemed to me that I had to answer questions which fate had posed to my forefathers, and which had not yet been answered, or as if I had to complete, or perhaps continue, things which previous ages had left unfinished."

We know from geneticists, energy healers, and spiritual teachers that Jung was right, on many levels. The key for successful integration

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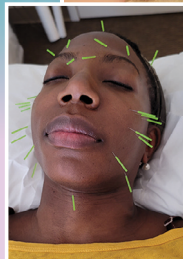
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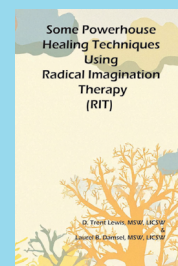
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of these questions and influences is to awaken to our own power to heal, transform, and learn. If we can breathe with these archetypal communications, time and space expand to offer a fuller picture. Our thoughts, actions and words have greater power.

Think of it as the difference between singing from a tight throat and singing from the core. There is quite a difference in tone and vibration, the emotional impact of the song, and the presence of the performer. An embodied, connected voice suspends performer and audience in a timeless moment. The performer shapes the story through the song. The best performers know themselves so well they can access creative alchemy beyond the power of their craft. Consciousness itself rises in the music, opening up an integrative awareness for both singer and audience.

We can live from that same resonating creativity if we listen fully to the messages from the ancestors in our DNA and our bones, and respond consciously. It does take practice, because the input is often surprising, emotional, and profound.

Listening and Learning

When you feel that expansive call, ask yourself a series of grounding questions to move more easily into a space of knowledge and action.

1. *What or who is speaking?*
2. *What knowledge is being shared? What story is being activated?*
3. *Why did it rise up now, in this place and moment?*

Once you hear clearly, you can see your part in the story being shared. You can explore as a partner, not as someone possessed by unexamined urgency.

4. *Is it as urgent as it feels? Is it true, in my particular present time?*
5. *Is there a conversation with this ancestor or idea that I need to have? (Consider journaling a dialogue to support your active imagination.)*

When you feel you understand the story, and have a sense of what is yours to do, then you can answer the last question, the one that brings your new awareness into the world.

6. *What action, if any, do I want to take in response?*

We always walk with our ancestors. Their experiences live on in our DNA and our souls. The next time that unmistakable conviction rises up in you, take a deep breath and remember your response is going to shape the story you are evolving in your daily life.

They are part of the human story — yours and mine — because we are connected in that expanded space. And you are the one with the most power, because you are alive and growing, the evolving link between the past and the future. It is up to you to decide how you want to live their story, here and now.

Carol Burbank is a writer, educator, and coach, founder of Storyweaving, LLC, offering creative coaching, writing mentoring, and workshops in Maryland. She writes a regular column on leadership and spirituality for Science of Mind Magazine and teaches at Pacifica Graduate Institute. She can be reached at cburbank@storyweaving.com or her website at www.storyweaving.com.




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The Magic of Crystals

BY NICHOLAS PEARSON

Rocks and minerals have fascinated hominids since before *Homo sapiens* walked the earth. Humans have found near-infinite uses for geological treasures, mundane and mystical alike. Stones are an integral part of the fabric of life, from stone tools, fishing weights, spindle whorls, and building materials to jewelry, gemstones, pigments, and ritual objects. Of all mineral resources prized by humankind, crystals and gemstones are the pinnacle of magical treasures found in the earth.

There is compelling evidence that crystals have been imbued with symbolic meaning for hundreds of thousands of years. *Homo erectus* is known to have collected quartz crystals at least 400,000 years ago. More than twenty rhombohedral calcite crystals were placed in a cave in the Kalahari desert over 100,000 years ago; the site has long been associated with ritual use, which suggests the crystals were objects ascribed some kind of sacred power. Other sacred stones — like flint and amber and various fossils — were collected, traded, and buried with the dead since at least the Stone Age.

The notion that crystals, gems, and other stones carry some kind of power is found in virtually every culture around the world. Medieval texts on the curative and spiritual powers of stones use this power to separate the precious from the nonprecious. The magical or spiritual qualities, known as *virtutes* (“virtues” in Latin), imbued stones with agency and power, which made them precious and desirable no matter what they might have looked like. This indwelling power could be harnessed to influence the world around their bearer, sparking all manner of ways that crystals, gemstones, fossils, and even common stones

might be used in magic.

The magic of crystals is not merely a cultural designation. Their makeup is extraordinarily neat and orderly. In fact, a crystal is defined as having a regular composition and a repeating, symmetrical structure. This means that crystals are composed of the same ingredients throughout and that those components are arranged in a perfectly ordered fashion. This internal structure is called a *crystal lattice*. Though tiny deviations always exist, crystals are defined by their coherent structures, and these coherent structures are responsible for coherent energies. In modern crystal healing, the energy of crystals is often described as harmonizing or entraining the human energy field to induce a beneficial outcome. Said another way, crystals act as tuning forks that our energy and consciousness can use to become more aligned, balanced, and harmonious.

Healing Catalyst: A Crystal Contemplation

Crystals are catalysts for healing, which kickstart our own evolution inside and out. From wearing gemstone jewelry to crafting crystal grids, the methods for tapping into the potential of crystals is virtually limitless. Bearing this in mind, let's start with one simple practice: **a crystal contemplation.**

Select a crystal or stone you'd like to explore energetically. Find a place with good lighting, free of distractions. Turn the stone every which way you can, exploring every surface, every angle and face. If it is transparent, look into or through the stone; hold it up to the light to observe what happens when illuminated from behind. Close your eyes and gently feel every bit of its exterior with your fingertips, as if

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reading braille. Now visualize the stone in your mind's eye, and try to recreate it from every angle. Can you see it turn this way and that in your imagination? Do your best to see it in clear detail. If you are not very visually inclined, try to describe in words or with other senses.

Once you've got a clear image or impression of the stone, take inventory of how you feel. Notice where in your body you feel the most connected and in sync with the stone. Ask yourself if there are any places that feel resistant to its virtues. Invite yourself to reflect on the energy of the crystal and intentionally bring it into your being; I like to visualize it being carried with the breath. Observe where this energy flows. Take note of its color, texture, appearance, or any other traits you can associate with it. How does this crystal's energy feel? What emotions, images, or memories arise as you contemplate the magic of the crystal? What else does the crystal want to share with you? Inviting yourself to reflect on these questions will help you gain a clear and personal experience of its energy. When you are finished, hold the stone to your heart and express your gratitude.

Working with crystals can be a revolutionary process; it opens new doors to personal growth and self-realization. They are tools and allies, teachers and guides that help us weave more magic into our lives. They also remind us to be present and fully embodied — stones are dense and earthy, after all. As we internalize their wisdom and energy, we might also learn to see their influence everywhere we look. From the mightiest mountain to the humblest pebble, there is magic in the Earth.

Nicholas Pearson is one of the leading voices in crystal healing and gemstone magic today with more than thirty years' experience in the field. His work blends science and spirituality to create a grounded, practical approach to working with crystals. Nicholas is an in-demand teacher, offering classes and conference presentations online and around the world. He also works in the earth science field, curating and cataloging one of the most historically significant rock and mineral collections at Stetson University's Gillespie Museum. The prolific author of ten books, including Crystal Basics and The Witching Stones, Nicholas lives in Orlando, Florida. Learn more about him at www.theluminouspearl.com.



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Innovations in Dentistry: Dental Materials and Your Health

BY SAMMY NOUMBISSI, DDS, MS

Going to the dentist to repair or replace broken teeth is something we all have to do at some point in our lives. Dentists and the dental industry go to great lengths to make sure the products and materials used in the treatment of oral problems are safe and biocompatible. In dentistry, implanted devices range from fillings to dental implants and various types of fixed dental prostheses and devices.

By far, the most commonly implanted devices in dentistry are dental implants. They were introduced in dentistry almost sixty years ago and were made of titanium and titanium alloys. Titanium is a metal widely used in healthcare and aeronautics, as well as in many other industrial applications. However, metals used for dental implants are less and less pure and contain low percentages of other metals such as aluminum, cobalt, chromium, nickel, vanadium and titanium. Virtually all dental implants are made from alloys, meaning they are a combination of several different metals including the above-listed ones.

Multiple allergy and immunology studies have converged to report that approximately ten to fifteen percent of the population experience some form of allergic reaction to metal. Therefore, it is important to consider alternatives to metal implants especially when they are expected to perform for a lifetime, such as orthopedic and dental implants. A person who is sensitive or allergic to nickel, for example, is very likely to be sensitive to an implant made from an alloy that contains other metals even in low concentration. It has also been determined that women have higher incidences of metal sensitivity than men. Anyone that has had a history of being sensitive to costume jewelry, stainless steel, sunscreens, experienced irritation from belt buckles, bra clips, etc., is highly likely to be sensitive to a metal implant.



In the dental field it is not uncommon to observe patients receiving metal dental implants either breakout in rashes, or experience hair loss or fatigue, or reject the implant outright without any sign of infection. These are called “aseptic implant failures”, when there is a type of immune response to the implant. At best, the body will successfully reject the implant; in the worst case, the implant survives rejection, but over time causes gradual jawbone loss or other health problems.

Metal dental implants were originally made out of commercially pure titanium or titanium alloy, providing the only option for anyone replacing teeth with dental implants. Titanium and titanium alloys have been generally considered to be biocompatible. However, with growing evidence to the contrary provided by researchers and patients alike, we now know that placing metallic dental implants and other re-

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storative devices can potentially provoke allergic reactions. One study involving 1,500 patients demonstrated that titanium sensitivity could be clearly detected in dental implant patients. A notably higher risk of positive allergic reaction was found in patients whose implants failed for no known reason other than that they had a higher incidence of allergic reaction.

Muscle pain and chronic fatigue are the more serious symptoms associated with an allergy to metals or metal toxicity. Unfortunately, people don't link overall fatigue with an immune disorder stemming from a metal implant. They can suffer from this type of reaction for months or years before seeking help.

Ceramic Dental Implants

Researchers and implant manufacturers have never stopped trying to improve and make implant materials as highly biological and biocompatible as possible. There has been a breakthrough — metal free dental implants are available here in the United States, and are in high demand among health-conscious individuals. Ceramic implants are made of a medical-grade highly biological and biocompatible material called *zirconia*. Ceramic zirconia implants are considered to be the best and safest alternative to titanium metal implants. Because of their inert properties, ceramic zirconia implants are immune to corrosion and degradation in the oral cavity and the body in general. Therefore, both in the medical and dental materials establishment, they are considered to be the best and safest alternative to titanium metal implants. Their advantage is they are ceramic, and thus there are no concerns of metal release in bone and bloodstream, allergic reaction, or electromagnetic interference.

Ceramic dental implants have several overall qualities, including:

- **Biocompatibility** - The materials used in the manufacture of ceramic dental implants have little to no allergenic potential.
- **Esthetics** - Beyond biocompatibility, zirconia implants are remarkably natural-looking.
- **Low plaque attachment** - Thanks to its smooth, dense surface that is less prone to bacterial colonization compared to titanium. A material with low plaque affinity contributes to better oral hygiene and health around the implant, reducing the risk of plaque accumulation and subsequent gum inflammation.
- **Strength** - Modern zirconia implants are fabricated from high-performance, medical-grade zirconia, which possesses impressive mechanical properties, capable of withstanding the significant bite forces that occur in the mouth when chewing.
- **Corrosion free** - No metallic taste, no reaction to electromagnetic waves from cell phones and Wifi sources and no release of metal components in your blood stream and lymph nodes.

One of the foundations of good health and wellness starts by what goes in your mouth, literally. Therefore, it's important to be aware of innovations in dentistry and the latest best practices and materials available for your dental and overall health.

Dr. Sammy Noubissi, DDS MS is a dentist whose practice focuses on metal free implant dentistry. His practice is located in downtown Silver Spring in Maryland. For more information, please call 301-588-0768 or visit www.milesofsmilesdental.net.

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THE LIGHTNING WE SHARE

BY SETH PITT

“I’ve come to believe that all this work you see here, and all the work I will ever make, is a big collaborative effort. We learn what we value by those who touch our lives by wandering around in their own simple gorgeous ways and we create what we do by looking into what we value. This stands to reason that everything I do is an echo of things I’ve learned from people, namely those who have shown me love, kindness or care. This is still happening. It’s happening right now. Thank you.”

- Seth.

Originally from Michigan, Seth currently works out of Thomas, WV, which is his favorite town he’s ever been to. It’s a tiny town, which is located within the United States, which was created by some confused humans drawing imaginary lines across a landmass called North America on a planet called Earth, which is a rock in a universe that no-one really understands.

There, aside from making art, he deeply enjoys writing, looking at clouds, gazing into the woods, marveling at the innate brilliance of common things, and having small parades with the fine people he’s been lucky enough to come to know and love.

A lot of the work he makes is, at the heart of it, about being entirely boggled by the great universe that no-one really understands. He’s not boggled in a paralyzing way, but rather in a let’s-just-keep-pushing-buttons-and-see-what-happens sort of way. He keeps pushing a lot of buttons and it keeps getting more and more interesting.

He is self taught, didn’t go to art school, and couldn’t draw a shoe very well when he was young. In fact, he spent the majority of his youth believing that he was not an artist at all. While he still cannot draw a shoe very well, he is happy to have eventually learned that the ability to do so has no consequence on whether or not one should be making art.

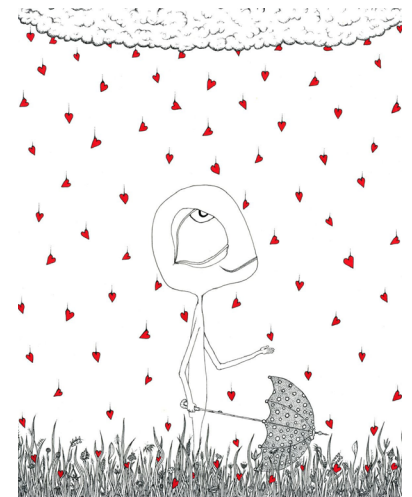
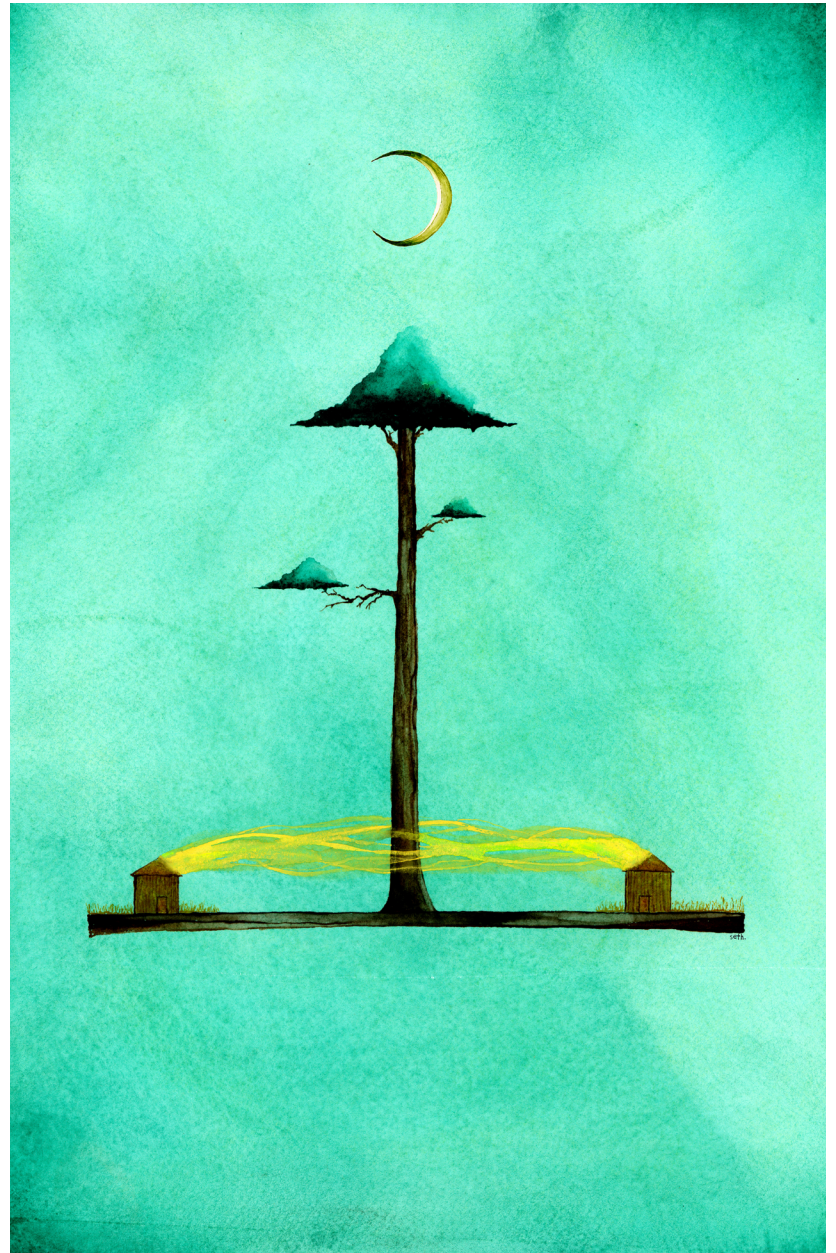
His work itself focuses on hope, resilience, and the positive creative forces of the human condition. It is concerned with uncovering the divinity within the mundane and helping us to unearth our own small stories of grandeur and magic, regardless of how ordinary, at times, we may seem. This causes mostly all he makes to huddle around that which humanity finds camaraderie in.

He considers daydreaming essential, wonder imperative, and an unyielding reverence for life boundlessly indispensable.

Seth has a solo gallery called ***Creature***, in Thomas, WV, as well as co-curating and co-owning ***Invisible*** (a collaborative art space) and ***Santangelo*** (a contemporary ceramics gallery). He shows work around the country with a myriad of independent shops and galleries.

His website is an extensive virtual gallery representing most of the work he has been fortunate enough to make. You can find him at **www.theartofseth.com**.

His instagram is **@theartofseth** where you can see a regular smattering of new work.



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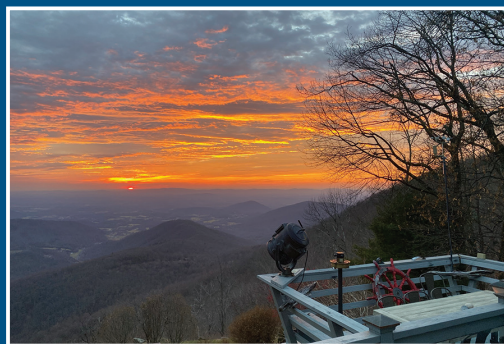
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