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COMPLIMENTARY

# W2W

Optimism/Confidence

WOMEN 2 WOMEN  
MICHIGAN MAGAZINE

## Stacey Kimbrell

THE NATURAL  
WAY TO HEAL

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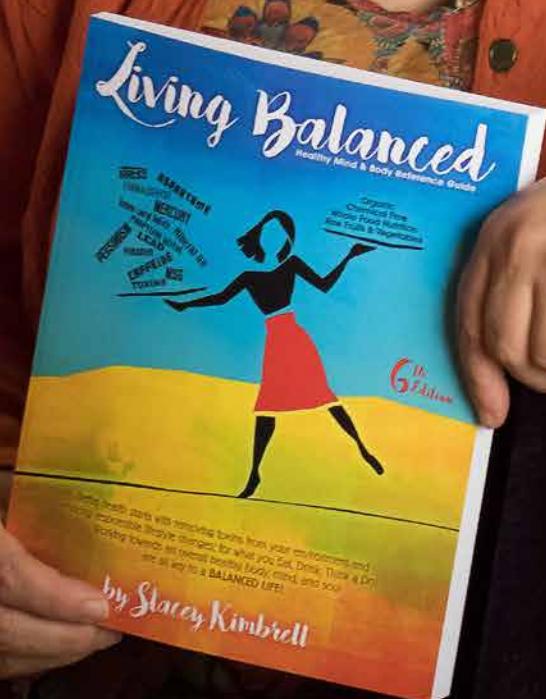
Are You Ready?  
HELEN HICKS

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What Makes A Hero?  
CHARLENE KOWALSKI

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Thick or Thin  
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## From Our Publisher & Editor >>>

Debra K. Collins  
Publisher/Managing Editor



Susan Lamphier  
Editor

Dear Friends,

We have some great things in store for you in this issue! As we step closer to new seasons, W2W is exploring all the ways we can bring pertinent information to our readers. One aspect that we are learning more about is natural remedies and oils.

Stacey Kimbrell teaches us how to seek out remedies with less toxins in The Natural Way To Heal.

In 5 Tips for Living a Happier Life, Shuntai Walker expresses the need for self love to seek your life's passion. Deborah St. Hilaire gets us ready for our new attitudes with Where's That Spark, as she opens our eyes to self depletion and how we can lift ourselves and our fellow ladies up and into our full potential.

We are so excited to share new ways to enrich our lives with our readers. As we search for the keys to new found self esteem and empowerment, we march forth into life confident and strong. Be everything you can be. Nurture your favorite strengths and characteristics and watch what starts coming your way.

And remember, a good brow shape never hurts.

*Cheers!*

*Debra & Susan*

### We made a mistake! We Apologize!

In our last publication, Vol. 8 Issue 3, our cover feature, there was a typo in Lori Taylor's website address.  
Please visit [loritaylorart.com](http://loritaylorart.com)  
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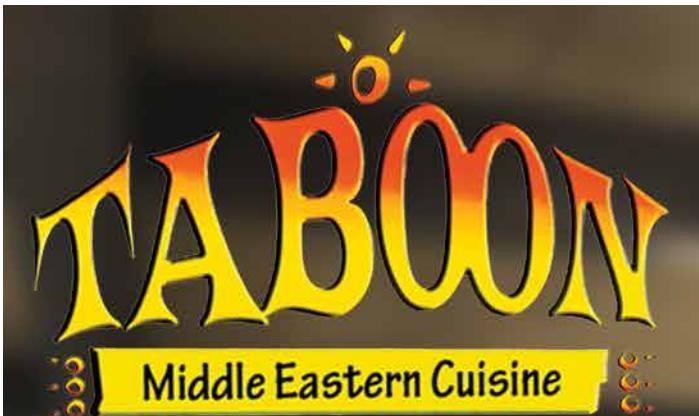
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# The Natural Way

## To Heal



**S**tacey Kimbrell is a Certified Natural Health Professional, Chemical Awareness Advocate, nationally known Speaker, Author of *Living Balanced*, and Founder of *Living Anointed*. Her journey started when she picked up a tube of toothpaste and read this on the label, "If you accidentally swallow, seek professional help or contact a poison control center immediately." She was horrified by the number of chemicals and unidentifiable ingredients found in the very products her family used on a daily basis. Turning her anger into something positive, she purposefully researched the chemicals found in common cleaning supplies, cosmetics, personal care products, baby products, and foods. The more knowledge she obtained, the more convinced she was that her family's health issues stemmed from toxic poisoning.

Born in Oceanside California and raised in East Lansing, Michigan, Kimbrell moved back to California from the time she was 18-32 years old. She moved back to Michigan and currently lives in Flint.

Kimbrell calls the year of 2007 the year hope was restored and the time her family took their first step towards improving their health habits. If you would have told her that her children would eat a carrot on their own, turn away from Hawaiian punch, her incurable bladder disease (interstitial cystitis) would be cured, or that she would be able to read well, she states she would not have believed you. The amazingly short amount of time it took for her family's health and emotional turnaround was one of the multiple miracles she has witnessed.

Kimbrell goes on to explain, "My family's bodies are now disease and illness free. We are finally able to think and lovingly communicate clearly. We had no idea, or ever considered the dangerous chemicals in our foods, drinks or skin care, or how they affected our temper, behavior, and health. Without neurotoxins clogging our brains, we are now able to think clearly. We are able to stop and rationalize before reacting. Previously, there was yelling and anger. Now there are words spoken in love and kindness towards one another. I'm excited! I hope that my family's story can encourage you to take the first steps towards healing and restoration of your body, mind, and spirit." They noticed a difference in just a few weeks. Hope literally turned into reality for the Kimbrell family.

*"I have officially dedicated my life to the ministry of educating people who want to heal and/or restore their body to a healthy, pain free, synthetic drug free way of life."*

By reading Living Balanced, you will explore many different ways to heal your body and restore your health. It doesn't matter where you live or your income level, there are things you can do to improve your health. Kimbrell took back or threw away all of her family's toxic chemicals, changed their diet to whole food nutrition, started drinking healthy juices, and consumed healthy sources of vitamins, herbs, and oils. They came off all prescription and over the counter medication. Since, they have been healed of dermatitis, eyesight issues (Kimbrell used to wear glasses), long healing recovery, chronic sinusitis, allergies, depression, constipation, lung infections, dyslexia, ADHD (Kimbrell's son's learning disabilities), staphylococcus infections, cellulitis, hemorrhoids, interstitial cystitis, bad attitudes and tempers.

Having worked in the medical field for 14 years, Kimbrell has knowledge of the body and how it functions. "I was taught to give the patient temporary relief by dealing with the symptoms. I now look at the root cause of a problem. Your body will automatically start to correct itself when you deal with the cause of your health issue and not the symptoms. Thanks to that seminar on healthy living, I have officially dedicated my life to the ministry of educating people who want to heal and/or restore their body to a healthy, pain free, synthetic drug free way of life. My new goal is to continue in this field and be in a place to help others to do the same," states Kimbrell.

She says that, "the hardest part of my job now is trying to help those who don't love or respect themselves." Everyone should take responsibility and respect themselves. This is the best thing you can do if you have children. It will teach them to do the same. Children will model your actions. Create a positive, health conscious environment so they will grow up with a healthy amount of self-esteem, confidence, and knowledge of who they are and what they represent.

Kimbrell believes that our health success requires us to rethink what we have been taught and to question what we are told. She emphasizes that our society is not getting any healthier, so you will have to retrain your brain. America

spends the most on health care among the largest nations, yet we are the most health-troubled nation in the world. America also produces and consumes the most diet products in the world, yet we continue to widen the gap on the rest of the world with our widening waistlines. It's not rocket science! Something is wrong with this picture! It does not matter what your spiritual belief is. Once you hear the truth, you are then accountable for it. She says she doesn't want you to take her word for this. She is enthusiastic about researching for yourself to find the answers.

Living Balanced is going to point out some of the bad things you have been doing unknowingly. The foods you use, the way you prepare certain foods, some of the products you use, maybe even some of the staples your family currently depends on could be bad for you and your health. However, you will find what you need in the pages to show you how to change things to help improve your health and life. Some people fear change. Kimbrell encourages change. She believes if you can find a way to improve your family, your community, and yourself then why not strive to do so?

The advice Kimbrell gives to start on your new health journey is to not get overwhelmed. She goes on to say, "Take baby steps. First think about your life right now. Can it be improved? If so, then read this book. What do you have to lose? You likely have more to gain than you have to lose. Education is the key! Once you read it, just start making some of the necessary changes to move forward, then make some more. In a month or two, you can be on your way to a whole new body, mind, and spirit! I have seen it happen so many times. It happened to me!"

She warns that you will likely be upset when you find out the actions of big business, manufacturers and sometimes even the government. Some things they have either allowed to happen or made happen to the public, simply out of greed. Don't waste your time in anger; it will only slow down your healing process.

For more information about Stacey Kimbrell and her book, visit [LivingAnointed.com](http://LivingAnointed.com).



Susan Lamphier is an Editor for Women2Women Michigan Magazine

# 5 Keys to Understanding the Latest Health Trends



**A**re you wanting to start on the road to being healthy? Sure, but where do you even begin? The lists of health trends are endless and constantly changing. There are so many different ways to be healthy now days; it can be overwhelming choosing the right fit for you. We've come up with five beneficial health trends, and we'll share keys to understanding them, so that your head doesn't explode. These five health trends can be implemented in your life, to make you healthier inside and out.

## **The Good, the Bad, and the...Kombucha**

We know what you're thinking, "what is Kombucha?!" Kombucha is a fermented tea that is filled with good bacteria. ...Don't be turned off by the term bacteria. Actually in our bodies we host "good" bacteria in our gut, and they're essential for a healthy internal environment. However this "good" bacteria is often destroyed by anti-biotics and poor diet. Enjoying Kombucha will help restore the good bacteria in our body, and actually destroy the "bad" bacteria. Restoring the bacteria in the gut, helps maintain optimal immune health, a good thing because 80% of your immune system is located in your gut. On top of balancing the bacteria for digestive health, Kombucha is loaded with anti-oxidants which are vital for fighting off disease, and even preventing cancers. Kombucha has countless other benefits, but when it comes to being healthy, having good bacteria in our guts and an optimally functioning immune system are vital. So enjoy a tall glass of Kombucha, and start the journey to being healthy!

## **"Bone"-a-fide**

Bone Broth is another dietary trend that maybe leaving you in confusion. It's not what's in the witch's caldron on Halloween...well at least not the kind we're recommending. Bone Broth is the stock produced after boiling and simmering bone, marrow, skin, tendons, and feet of chicken, beef, fish or lamb. While this sounds a bit mid-evil, the process allows key nutrients to be released into the broth that can be consumed. Nutrients we'd typically miss out on, or have to supplement. Nutrients such

as collagen, glucosamine, chondroitin, anti-oxidants, potassium and glycine. Collage is excellent for our skin and anti-aging, as well as for our bones and joints. Glucosamine and chondroitin also are excellent for joint health and prevention of arthritis. Anti-oxidants, potassium, and glycine all involved with immune boosting and liver detoxification. If you're wanting to look good, and stay healthy, adding bone broth to your diet will have you feeling "bone"-a-fide in no time!

## **Get "Cross"FIT!**

You've probably heard about this exercise craze sweeping the country. CrossFit is an excellent form of high intensity interval training (HIIT), incorporating multiple forms of training such as cardio, power, coordination, speed, and agility. There has been a negative stigma associated with CrossFit and injuries; however there have been no studies showing a greater correlation of injuries in CrossFit when compared to other HIIT training. With any exercise it is important to use good form (neutral spine when lifting, for example) to avoid injury. Also if you have instabilities or compensations in your body's mechanics injuries may occur, again this can occur with any exercise, not just CrossFit. Not sure if you're using good form, or if you have instabilities come see us at McKee Chiropractic Unlimited-Dr. Nate is well trained in sports injury and prevention. CrossFit has been show to boost circulatory and respiratory function, you burn more fat than steady-state cardio-and in less time, and it trains the body for functional movements (ex. Squatting). Don't let myths stop you from being healthy, get "Cross"fit!

## **On Your Mark,...Get Set,...Cup!**

Ok, we all know Michael Phelps got "cupped" during the Olympics, but seriously what are those marks all over peoples' backs?! Let's fill you in on this form of healing that is becoming ever so prevalent. Cupping is a form of Ancient Chinese healing, using cups (glass or plastic), and creating a suction, either with heat or a suction pump. The suction lifts the skin, breaking up adhesions (or knots) within fascia and muscle layers. Dr. Shannon uses a flame to heat her glass cups, which promotes circulation to the area-for quicker healing and recovery, all the while stimulating acupuncture points. Back to the marks on peoples' backs, we know you were wondering, the marks are similar to the painless bruises created with a hicky-from suction. Cupping can be used for quicker recovery-as seen in the Olympics, treating respiratory infections, or for relaxation-like a deep tissue massage. Now that we've covered that, GO...get Cupped!

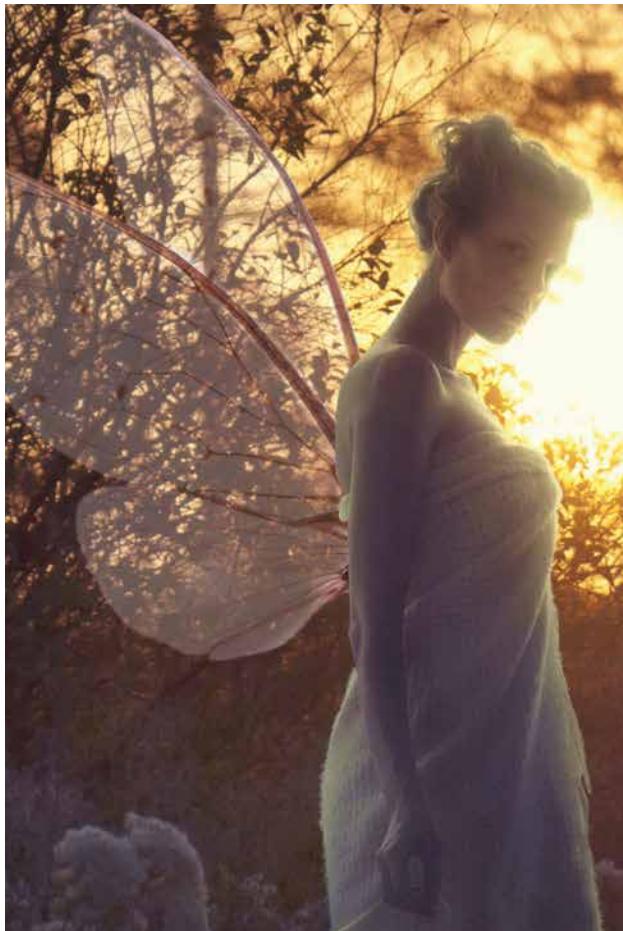
elbow, low back pain, and more. The tape lifts the skin (similar to cupping, but not as drastic) to promote circulation for healing, and removal of toxins and inflammation. It also decreases pain perception, increases recovery time, and assists with physical stress distribution during an injury. If an injury occurs while training, consider seeing a medical professional...at McKee Chiropractic Unlimited...who can tape you up! Therapeutic tape is beneficial for anyone suffering from aches or injuries. You don't need to be "ripped" literally or figuratively to benefit from therapeutic tape!

Now that you have an understanding of the latest health trends, let's get you healthy! For more key information on understanding the latest health trends or any aches, pains, and/or health concerns you may have please contact: Drs. Shannon and Nate McKee at McKee Chiropractic Unlimited (810)223-2439, and make your appointment today! Because "we are the key to your health and wellness!"

## **So Ripped, You Need Some Tape!**

Ok, so the title isn't quite why therapeutic tape is becoming popular, but you do see it frequently on "ripped" athletes. Therapeutic tape has a variety of purposes often used in sports because of its elastic properties allowing for movement, all the while healing an injury. Yes, there's now human duct tape...almost! Therapeutic tape can be used for numerous things such as bruising, swelling, common injuries: sprains/strains, plantar fasciitis, golfer's/tennis

► Dr. Nathaniel McKee graduated from National University of Health Sciences with his Doctorate in Chiropractic. He has an additional certification in Cox Decompression Technic.  
Dr. Shannon McKee also graduated from National University of Health Sciences with her doctorate in Chiropractic and a Masters of science in Acupuncture. They both practice together at McKee Chiropractic Unlimited in Davison.  
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# Are You Ready?

There's a verse in the Bible that reads, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Matthew 25:13

I was thinking about that line recently as I thought about the people I know who do that really well, and three names came to mind.

The first is a woman who has spent most of her life serving others. In her "spare time," Deb has built homes, repaired porches, raised handicapped ramps and basically helped those who are in need. Her recent endeavor is creating wooden and stone crafts to be sold in a local store, - dedicating the profits to helping those who cannot afford housing, find opportunities for low-income homeownership.

The Lord has watched this woman and blessed her with talents she never thought she would possess so that she could bring light and joy into the lives of single mothers, seniors living on a fixed income, and veterans.

The second person is a humble electrician. Andy, President of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 58, knows that he and his brothers (and sisters) do so much more than wire homes and bring electrical current to places and things. They spend hours and hours every month serving others – wiring a home at no charge for a vet; collecting food; gathering gifts for children who might have none otherwise and so much more.

He knows his time is limited on this earth, but he uses every minute to show God's love through his actions and example.

The third is a single mother named April who raised her children to be righteous. Because of her example, her

oldest child, Montay, recently stepped up in a courageous way to defend a foster teen who was being beaten simply because of the color of his skin. Though April is so poor that her home was missing some windows and her meals often consist of noodles and broth – this young man found the courage within himself to say no to those who were all about strife and violence. Montay, African American and age 16, is now best friends with Trevor, Caucasian and age 16 (the child he defended). Trevor calls Montay, "my brother" and would protect him as well. As a result, April recently received a call that this summer, thanks to a special gift from Trevor's new adoptive parents, Trevor and Montay will spend one week in Orlando, Florida sharing laughter during the summer of their lives.

God works in mysterious ways when good works are being accomplished.

These three individuals come from various areas of Michigan, grew up in completely separate neighborhoods, and had radically different socioeconomic backgrounds and degrees.

But they all had one thing in common.

They were ready for the Lord. It shines in their actions, reflects through the light in the eyes of those they love, and is apparent through the good deeds they do and how they encourage others to do the same.

Truly, they are ready for the Kingdom of the Lord whenever He decides to visit.



◀ Helen Hicks is an award-winning administrator and motivational speaker living in the Detroit area. You can reach her at helenk7306@hotmail.com.

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# 5 Tips for Living a Happier Life



**T**he pursuit of happiness is more than just an American dream. It is the motivation that fuels the human spirit. If this is the case than why aren't more people happy with their lives? In my profession, I have found that people are generally unhappy when they lack positive human connection, love, faith and experience unresolved issues or conflict from their past. Being socially connected to others is important to improving our mood. A recent study found that people who regularly spend about a quarter of their hours each day with family and friends are 12 times as likely to report feeling joyful rather than feeling stressed or anxious. Being anxious and stressed for over a long period of time can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, headaches, heart disease, obesity, etc. The same Gallup poll found that people are happiest on weekends. This is likely due in part to the amount of time spent with loved ones on these days.



Many experts agree that happy people tend to do better in social relationships, are more optimistic, have better physical health, and are more creative. How can you find your happiness? Here are five tips for living a happier life:

1. Love yourself, if you don't love yourself it can be difficult to find happiness in your life if you are not happy with yourself.
2. Find your life's passion. Happiness is best found when you're able to live life being a positive contributor. Your passion may inspire or help others to improve their lives.
3. Have faith in something. Being able to have complete trust or confidence in someone or something provides assurance life is worth living.
4. Eliminate unnecessary baggage, don't continue to hold on to negativity from the past.
5. Surround yourself with positive people and energy. Being around positive people improves your mood. Also, exposing yourself to a little sunlight decreases depression.

► Shuntai Walker, MA, LLPC

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# Yes You Can!

**T**he longer I work with people who are trying to better their health and fitness, the more I am convinced our success hinges on our beliefs about ourselves. You know, that whole "If you think you can or think you can't, you're right" stuff.

So, how does one make sure they are their own best cheerleader? We need to emphasize the good in ourselves, right? I remember being told to choose some positive affirmations and repeat them daily. If you've ever tried to recite enthusiastic statements in an attempt to change a negative mindset, you are probably well acquainted with the equally loud voice in your head pointing out how ridiculous they sound.

"I am capable of accomplishing anything I set my mind to."

"Suuure. Even though you've never stuck to regular exercise for more than a couple weeks."

"I believe my body is healthy and my mind is strong."

"Yeah, but pizza."

And so it goes. Exercises, like positive affirmations, are great but they are missing a key component to actually succeeding in changing our beliefs about ourselves. FEELING them. We can recite, write, wish, and hope all

day long, but if we are removed from any emotion surrounding what we want to achieve, it can be a frustrating and defeating proposition.

I help my clients in this process of self discovery by working through some simple steps. First, they pinpoint what they want to achieve. It's important to get as specific as possible, because general goals will not take us where we want to go.

Second, my clients picture themselves as if they have already achieved what they stated in step one. This one requires some imagination and fun. I encourage them to stop, close their eyes and really visualize how they look, how they feel, what they can do differently, and particular ways life has changed.

We work through a couple of other steps to work through possible ways they could self-sabotage and how to prevent it, but the crucial part has been done. The reason steps one and

two are so important is because every action is driven by emotion, whether its conscious or subconscious. In going through the process of envisioning life the way they want it to be (and themselves the way they want to be) they begin to kindle the emotions needed to believe they can actually experience life, and be, exactly that.

Darren Hardy tells a story in his book, the Compound Effect, about a large steel beam. If it was laying on the floor and he offered you \$20 to walk across it, you would. Zero risk and easy money. Why not, right? But what if he raised that beam up thousands of feet between two skyscrapers and then asked you cross it for \$20? Most of us would now say no.

Now, take that same beam, same thousands of feet in the air and same buildings. Except now your child is on one building and you are on the other, and the building your child is on is on fire. Yes, we would cross that beam to save our child! No \$20 needed!

The reason, of course, is that our emotions would be so strong they would drown out any limiting belief about our ability. We would simply ACT. Obviously, we cannot constantly recreate that level of emotion, nor would we want to, and yet the story serves to illustrate how strongly our feelings drive our beliefs about what we're capable of.

If you're struggling with any area, take some time today to come up with some clear, distinct goals. Then, start to explore developing some good, strong emotions surrounding what it would feel like to have those goals be a reality right now. Have some fun with it. Get excited. Engage all the senses. Then enjoy the process of changing your beliefs. Your thoughts will change right along with them.



Tamra Klaty is a health and fitness coach and certified instructor for CIZE Live classes. You can learn more about what she does at her facebook page at [www.facebook.com/DesignedHealth](http://www.facebook.com/DesignedHealth)

# Do I REALLY NEED DENTAL X-RAYS?

Dental radiographs (x-rays) have long been a subject of controversy, balancing old fears of radiation with the diagnostic need to evaluate what we cannot see with the naked eye. There are no more "routine x-rays". Instead your dentist orders what he or she requires for proper evaluation based on your individual need.

Old-school dental film x-rays were about the size of postage stamps. Technicians had to be careful to use heavy lead aprons to cover their patients, and often stood behind a screen to limit their own exposure. Modern digital x-rays give tremendously better detailed information at a greatly reduced radiation exposure. The aprons are much lighter, too!

Nowadays we measure exposure to the natural background radiation all around us. The average single digital dental x-ray equals one day or less, while a



Sometimes-- 14 individual small films (showing only a couple teeth at a time) or one large panoramic is done to show nose to chin and ear to ear. This gives your dentist a good view of the health of your teeth and bone in a flat 2-dimentional view.

A more modern dental office will use CBCT (Cone Beam Computed Tomography) showing a 3-dimensional image of your teeth, mouth and skull. In just 14 seconds, it scans with minimal radiation exposure.

CBCT is especially valuable in planning for orthodontics, analyzing your airway for apnea and breathing disorders, evaluating temporomandibular joints, and planning for a dental implant. Scans show all around 3rd molars, find developmental conditions, fractures, failed root canals, injuries, foreign bodies, sinuses, cysts, deviated nasal septum, cavitations (bone cavity) and tumors. Abnormalities can be sent on to a radiologist for further evaluation.

Most dental offices using CBCT will adhere to ALARA, the "As Low as Reasonably Achievable" principle and "Image Gently" when working with children.

Yes, x-rays are an important part of diagnosis and treatment planning. And they can be done safely.

\*Resources: <http://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=safety-xray>



medical Chest CT equals about 2 years of background radiation.\*

For someone with complications or who has not seen a dentist in more than a few years, your dentist will order a full mouth series. Separate bitewing x-rays, usually two on each side, are done to check for decay on the in between sides of your teeth, as well as show the level of the bone just under the gumline. These do not show the root ends or the front teeth.

To complete the picture, your dentist will need to see surrounding structures.



◀ Sherry Regiani has been in the dental field since 1970; first as an assistant then as a hygienist. Over the past 30 years, Sherry transitioned into dental management and serves as practice administrator for her husband, David W Regiani DDS.



# Rowena, Texas

**R**ecently, I took a trip with my husband out to west Texas. My husband is from San Angelo, which is a "big city" in that part of the state, but we found ourselves farther west than even that. Seven hours west of Houston, three hours west of Austin, is the tiny one-horse town of Rowena, Texas. A town with two halls, one VFW and the other Lord knows what. All the same, two gathering places for any kind of celebration or meeting the little town might have, which was confusing to me. Surely, there was no reason for two halls? Not in a town this size?

The town itself was only dotted with a few houses, a couple stores here and there, and with a good arm you could probably throw a baseball down the entire main street of the place. But, it was a gathering point for all of the ranchers, farmers and country-living folk in that area. A place to come together for a wedding, a birthday party, a graduation, a dance. A place to hold town council meetings. Rowena is small and seemingly remote, but a gathering spot nonetheless.

For me, a Flint, Michigan native and proud daughter of blue collar manufacturing, this might as well have been a different planet. I've traveled to countries all over the world, rural communities, big cities, suburbs and Medieval walled villages, but I can truly say I have never felt more alien than in that quiet part of western Texas.

It wasn't that the people weren't friendly, they were. It wasn't that I couldn't speak their language, obviously, I could. And yet, for so many things I felt like I needed a translator. I found that I had never properly imagined what life would be like growing up in the country. In my mind, I swapped in sheep herds and cotton fields and let go of shopping malls, expressways and the whir and grind of my grandfather's machine shop. I helped prepare potato salad and smoked sausage in the VFW kitchen, and my mind wandered to Sons of Italy dinners with salad and tomato and cheese covered ziti. I traded in my experiences for the heritage of this place, covered in cotton instead of concrete.

This is where my husband comes from. And when I looked at it through a lens of my own experience, it seemed as though it couldn't be more

different than my own. Not worse, or better, just so completely out of the scope of my own experience that I felt disconnected from it. In short, no matter the negativity that surrounds Flint at the present moment, I realized I would never trade in my roots or my continued hometown pride for the sunshine and endless fields of my husband's childhood.

I love the diversity of Flint. The restaurants, the museums, the hardworking people. I love the possibility of the city, the expressways, my high school, and the University of Michigan-Flint. I love that it prepared me to be the world explorer I have become.

After the party at the VFW, we drove home. The night sky in the country is unbelievably dark, and the stars are brilliantly bright. The darkness is quiet and the wind is cool, and it's easy to pretend out there, away from street lamps and city lights, that you're the only people on earth. There's a romance to that, certainly, but also a loneliness.

As much as I've traveled, and as far as I've roamed, it took that starry-skied night in west Texas to break my heart with missing my Michigan home.

► *Alexandria Nolan is a misplaced Michigander currently living in the wilds of the Houston urban jungle with her husband and two spoiled pets. She is a published novelist and contributor to various online and print publications, including a lifestyle blog, Greetings from Nolandia. When not writing, she can be found reading or traveling, or reading about traveling.*





# Nice Cream

Have you heard about nice cream yet? Many fitness minded people are into this simple treat that tastes like a dessert. Dairy free, delicious and simple. What could be better?

## Ingredients:

- 2 banana, sliced and frozen
- ½ C of Almond or coconut milk
- 2 tbsp. of Peanut Butter
- 1 tbsp.. of cocoa

In a blender or food processor put banana, peanut butter, cocoa and almond milk. You may need to add a little more milk for consistency. Pour into bowl and devour.

\*You can add anything to this base. You can take out peanut butter and cocoa and add other frozen fruits as well as chips. Enjoy Life chocolate chips are a great dairy free alternative.

## It's Better For You

Vegan foods are healthier than their normal counterparts, due to the dietary restrictions of veganism. Vegan ice cream has less sugar and fat since it uses a nondairy base when compared to normal dairy ice cream. Plus, it's chock full of soy protein. All of that, and it still has that amazing ice cream flavor and texture.

## Sensitive Stomach? No Problem

As a lactose intolerant person with a myriad of stomach issues (I'm talking myriad — I had to eat bread for a week because my stomach went on strike), I'm used to being unable to eat things. A lot of these things being all the good stuff in the world. Curse you, lactose intolerance.



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## HomeServices

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Their stories, ambitions, and goals.***

### ***The great balancing act!***

That's how I would describe my career as a Professional Realtor. I've heard many people say they want to dive into real estate because they believe they will have so much flexibility in their schedule or because they will have an instant 5-star financial portfolio. Or even better yet, because they just love people. I would say there may be some truth to those reasons, but I have certainly

learned the art of stretching a dollar when months have passed without a paycheck. And I have learned that there are many holidays that I will work tirelessly while in the midst of a deal and time is of the essence. I've also learned that there are many personalities and people that are challenging to love. Shifting markets, problem solving, self-discipline, sour deals and surprises are just some of my day to day happenings. And I strive to do it all with a smile.

I didn't grow up thinking, "Yes, I want to be a Realtor" and I haven't been in this career for decades, but I know that I've had the joy (and sometimes heartache) in some of life's experiences that have aided me in bolstering my skills and abilities to perform my job with passion and professionalism. From my early days working in the corporate world of procurement and purchasing I learned some fierce negotiating tactics. My years as a homemaker, mother of four children, in the wedding industry and as primary care-giver for an aging grandparent helped develop much of my character. With a chuckle I can confidently say that I have the stamina, tenacity and the stomach to see even the most challenging of deals through to its completion. Much of my business experience stems from 20 years of running a business. And not just any business, but the automotive repair industry where I learned that there is no such thing as a comfort zone. Balance became the name of the game!

As I write this I am preparing to close on two deals this afternoon. One is for a newlywed couple making the purchase of their lifetime. The excitement is contagious and I can barely contain myself as I'm sharing in this joyful moment with them. The other is for a sweet couple in their golden years and very apprehensive to be selling the home they've shared for 46 years. The home where they raised their children. The home where they held their first great-grandchild. They aren't as excited as those newlyweds, as a matter of fact, they have a heaviness and sadness in saying goodbye. I'm there to hold

their hands, to make this as smooth as possible for them and I'll be there when they call me next week from their new condominium stating that they feel so liberated that they should have done this 10 years ago. This great balancing act is quite a Joy-Ride!

**Christina Cain, Professional Realtor**

## **Success!**

For most of my life I have been listing and selling homes. I'm still as excited and passionate as the day I started. A Happy customer is always my goal.

**Dawn Parr, Realtor,  
Associate Broker**

## **One Dream Turned Into Another**

In 2007 I started buying, selling, renovating and leasing quality homes and condominiums all on my own. In 2013 I decided it was time to pursue my real estate license. The four years I've had my real estate license have been amazing ~ with plenty of valuable lessons learned, many new friends and lots of happy endings!!

**Dana Whipple- Realtor**

## **Changing Lives**

I was in marketing and graphic design, a freelancer for years, and 15 years ago I decided to make a career change, to do something that would be comparable to what I was already doing - where I could be self-employed and be creative - but that would make an impact and help people in a greater way. I decided to become a Realtor, and love what I do - every day is different, and I love being part of people's lives, getting to know their story, and helping them move from one adventure to the next.

**Jane Murphy, Realtor**

## **A Lifetime Of Service**

I started my Real Estate Career in 1978 as a member of the Flint Area Association of Realtors. I also joined the Oakland Board of Realtors to give my clients a wide variety of service. I am an associate broker and have the ABR,AHD,CRS,GRI and PMN designations. The best part of my career are the friends I have made, helping them, some of their children and now their grandchildren to

find a home. Be it a first time home, a move up buyer, the ultimate dream home or to a condo.  
Thank you All!

**Lee Jackson, Associate broker, Realtor**

## **Do It With Passion or Not At All!**

That I realized after changing my career from a research chemist for 7 years to a realtor. So today I love my job! Helping people make exciting decisions of their life. Actually started this profession so that I could be part

time but I got so involved that I was working more than full time without even noticing it. Now my motto is sales go up and down , service is forever.

**Renu Mirchandani, Realtor**

## **A life style in Real Estate**

The decision to become a Realtor was a natural transition for me. I hold a bachelor's degree in graphic design and advertising. I worked in that field for 7 years before becoming a first-time mom and making the decision to stay home to raise my son. 19 years and 5 sons later, my husband and I decided it was time for me to return to the workforce as the looming cost of college for 5 stood before us. My passion for real estate and my desire

to own my own business had me looking at becoming a Realtor. For the past 4 years, my career has afforded me the ability to still raise my teenagers and be there when they need me, while making a living and doing something I love. My advertising background helps me be the best at marketing my clients' homes, and those clients become part of my family in the process. I wouldn't have it any other way!

**Amy Rechsteiner,Realtor**

## **A Love of Homes**

I got into real estate as it fit into my life style and tied into my background and degree in interior design. I love houses and buildings and see the potential in every one. I also love people and real estate is a great way to combine both my passions.

**Heather Nevicato, Realtor**



## ***Aspire for Excellence***

We believe with integrity, expertise and hard work we can accomplish our goals. The Merrie Johnson team delivers world class personal service, helping our clients get great value for their homes and real estate investments while supporting our families and community. With more than 20 years as a full time agent I have had the pleasure to assist thousands of clients realize their dreams. I believe you can have everything you want , if you help enough people get what they want and look forward to creating that dream for others.

**Merrie Johnson, Merrie Johnson Team, Realtor**

## ***Hospitality at Its Finest!***

Growing up in Waterford I lived in a tiny two-bedroom apartment with my mom and my sister. The idea of home-ownership was far beyond my understanding – I never would have imaged that one day I would be helping countless people create that dream for themselves. In college at CMU (FIRE UP CHIPS!!!), I studied Commercial Recreation and Hospitality Administration. Post-college I've moved to Florida and spent many years working in hotels and resorts. During this time I found my love for serving people.

It was not until after my husband and I welcomed our first son and relocated back to Michigan did I consider becoming a Realtor. Shortly after moving we decided to purchase our first home. Like many people, I found the home buying experience to be a bit overwhelming; but the more I learned, the more I wanted to learn. It didn't take long for me to realize that being a Realtor would be a challenging and exciting career.

That was over 5 years ago now. Since that time my family has welcomed our second son and I've had the pleasure of helping countless buyers and sellers realize their real estate dreams. This year I had the extreme honor to being asked to join the award-winning Merrie Johnson Team of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices. Each day I wake-up thankful for the opportunities and blessings this career has brought to me and my family and excited to help others find their dream home.

**Ericka Murdock, Realtor**



## ***A Career That Supports My Lifestyle***

Real Estate is a career for anyone at any age! After getting a Masters in Pharmacology from U of M, Ann Arbor and then teaching Junior High sex education, becoming a realtor in 1982 was a great fit. I could haul my son around with me and that was priceless. In my spare time, I write grants to help create and support community gardens in and around Flint. I bring my compassion to the table as a realtor and listen to my clients. I want to help them solve problems and find their best fit.

**Ginny Braun, Realtor**



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# So Just Ask, Already!!

**T**he baby finches that morning were raising a ruckus! They may be tiny (about 2 inches long) but they are mighty! Their parents were kept very busy because those babies wanted food and they wanted it NOW, thank you very much! Even my walking under the tree to determine their species didn't deter them in their purpose. I could just hear them chirping, "This is where they said to wait for food, and I'm staying here until I get it." They were seriously noisy youngun's!

My lesson from those birds (and the question raised by watching them) was this: Do WE know how to ask for what we need and are we willing and determined to do so?

As a curious soul, I've always asked questions. Yet I was hesitant to ask anything that would make me seem dumb, i.e. clarification. But now, after finally realizing I'm not a dummy, I ask for what I need to fully understand something. I say things like, "I don't really understand. Will you please explain again." Or I'll repeat back what I think they said and ask for more words. I really like to use the phrase, "I need more words, please." People are sometimes taken aback because they think they've done a good job explaining already. But reality is that many of us struggle to communicate clearly.

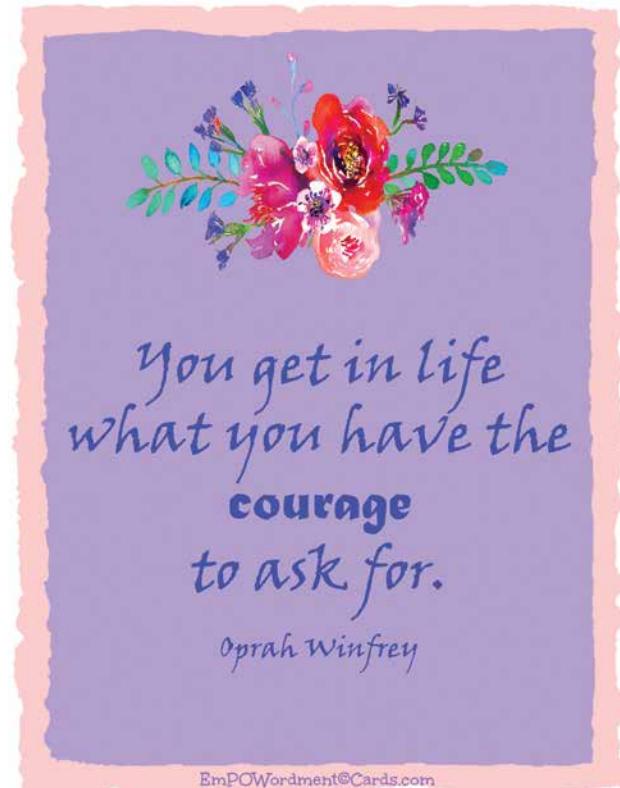
Some things take more courage to ask for, like time alone (without feeling guilty) or intimacy without sex. That last one is tough, as it seems that for many couples it's either full-blown, "Ooooh, I'm getting some tonight!" or just living as roommates, with nothing much in between. But women need affection without expectation—touch and intimate sharing of conversation (with looking into each others' eyes, not a screen of some sort)—in order to find fulfillment in a relationship. Asking for what you need is a good way to improve any of your relationships.

Asking for time alone feels wrong for women who put everyone's needs before their own. Yet, if we don't recharge it's pretty hard to effectively do all we must. The idea of women taking "me time" has become more popular, yet many still struggle with taking it. If your schedule is busy and demanding and you have a partner, you may feel you need permission from your partner, or at least help in arranging a time that works for both of you. However, it could also mean asking yourself to take the time, and believing that you deserve it.

During the week, check in with how you're feeling (stressed, harried, resentful?) and then ask for and give yourself permission to take a couple of hours away from it all. Put it on the calendar if you need to.

Asking for help is a tough one for many women. I believe this is something acquired through practice, and when learned helps us become more powerful.

I grew up not wanting to bother or inconvenience anyone, which helped to build independence. But it also led to resentment and



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feeling as if my needs were not important. Asking for help would have lightened the load, given me support, and made some things more fun.

Asking for what you need is liberating! It's a way to take charge of your life, bring relief, and dissolve resentment. Be like the finches and try it. I bet you'll like it.

► Mimi Matthews believes in the power of words to change lives. She calls herself "Passionista At Large" because she is always on the prowl to encourage and empower, inspire and ignite anyone she comes in contact with. Mimi's life experiences have given her rich material and wisdom to help others learn truth. You can read her life stories and uplifting posts on her blog <http://particularpassions.me/> and buy her encouraging and empowering words on unique cards and gifts on her Etsy shop here: [https://www.etsy.com/shop/EmPOWordmentCards?ref=hdr\\_shop\\_menu](https://www.etsy.com/shop/EmPOWordmentCards?ref=hdr_shop_menu)



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# Where's that Spark?

**O**ne day, she lost her spark. She knew it. She missed it. She wasn't certain of when it happened or why, she just knew that she had changed... and not for the better. She wondered if anyone else had noticed, they had to. It was so painfully obvious to her. And yet, not one person had mentioned it.

Had she just awoken this way one morning? Now, she listlessly dragged around, from one chore to the next. She didn't feel like going to the gym, to work, to dinner, on date night, or even out to lunch with her pack of boisterous vivacious women. None of the things she normally loved and lived to do seemed worth doing, not even working in her garden. "What is wrong with me?" she silently screamed. Surely, no one would believe me, let alone, understand. "I'm always the strong one, the funny one, the one with the loudest laugh and biggest smile. I'm the nurturer, the care giver, the party planner, the shoulder to cry on."

Now that she needed a shoulder, she doubted that there was one broad enough to bear this sense of hopeless emptiness. How could her zest for life, her enthusiasm for her work, her passion toward her partner and her strong emotional ties to her children evaporate into thin air?

She had lost herself.

She is suffering from, what I call "self-depletion". She has given herself away, piece by piece, to a multitude of strangers by smiling, to her children by bringing countless books to life and kissing endless boo boos. By working late into the night then staying up to complete an assignment from the online course she was taking in order to get a pay raise so that her partner didn't have to work so many hours. By cheering up her friends who had marital problems and by giving a back rub when she would have rather been reading.

She gave and gave...but never to herself. She thought that was selfish. She was taught to be selfless.

Could this story be about you? It was me, at one time, a long time ago. It seems like another

lifetime now. I solved the problem by turning to drugs. Which only created more. Don't turn to outside resources to solve your problems, like I did. The answers are all there. I don't want to see women suffer. I want you to know there is hope...right there inside of you...waiting for you to find it. You are not alone. All of us go through a "self-depletion" stage of our lives. We all can relate. We can all help you reclaim your enthusiasm for life...if you let us...

First, let's talk about how to recognize that our sister (or yourself) is in "beyond frump mode". Here are ten signals:

- 1 They start turning down invitations, to do things, with you and/or your group then
- 2 They stop answering your calls.
- 3 Their weight may change.
- 4 They step out of their usual routine.
- 5 Their shoulders may slump.
- 6 They may begin to show signs of sleep deprivation.
- 7 They may begin to speed up the aging process.
- 8 They stop taking care of themselves.
- 9 Sleep more or much less and
- 10 They may try to hide the fact they are suffering by overcompensating, doing the exact opposite of all of the above.

So, now what can you do? Help her rediscover who she truly is...not her identity...not a wife, mom, sister, daughter or aunt...but HER core, her enthusiastic essence...

- 1** Play, run, skip and jump...get her moving.
- 2** Make her laugh. Watch a funny movie, draw or paint, take a class, go to a comedy club or volunteer, tickle her if you have to...get her to lighten up, to get outside of her head!
- 3** Plan a get-away, to somewhere she loves or has always wanted to go.
- 4** Do something she has never done before.
- 5** Buy her a friendship appreciation gift.
- 6** Schedule a manicure, pedicure, massage, make over or any self-care procedure.
- 7** Get her professional help if necessary.
- 8** Show empathy without judgment.
- 9** Be there for her.
- 10** Schedule a recurring "play date" so that you can make certain she is gradually coming out of "it".

I truly believe, as women, that we owe it to each other to lift each other up. The pain we experience is shared among womankind. Give purpose to your pain by helping a sister through hers.

If you have lost your lust for life, please reach out. Let a sister help you. You, in turn, can help another.

*"We're connected, as women. It's like a spider web. If one part of that web vibrates, if there's trouble, we all know it, but most of the time we're just too scared, or selfish, or insecure to help. But if we don't help each other, who will?"*

-Sarah Addison Allen

Help each other keep our spark.

► Deborah St.Hilaire has been a women's empowerment/life coach since 2010. She can be reached for personal and group coaching, speaking engagements and retreats. [thedivalution@gmail.com](mailto:thedivalution@gmail.com) or 419.366.8091



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# THE MOUNTAIN

**O**n vacation some years ago, my husband and I decided to hike to the summit of the 3rd highest peak in the Great Smoky Mountain range, Mt. LeConte. It was a 14 mile round trip, with an elevation gain of about 3,900 feet from the trailhead.

Weather reports indicated a nice day with mild temperatures, so at 9:00 a.m. we started up the trail wearing shorts, camp shirts, and carrying a day pack containing sweatshirts, water, and snacks.

The first few hours were perfect. Breathtaking views, a concaved bluff 80 feet high, a narrow ledge we crossed holding on to a cable. The problem with mountainous regions, though, is that they sometimes "make their own weather", as people say. Technically, it's called a "localized disturbance". Such disturbance roared in like a train, dropping the temperature and pelting us with sleet.

Huddled beneath a conifer in our useless sweatshirts, we faced a decision. This looked like the perfect reason to turn back, but knowing we were so close made that seem almost sacrilegious. The pivotal moment arrived when the sleet became a light drizzle. That which might have stopped us proved to be temporary.

An hour later, we reached the summit. All things considered, I half expected an orchestra playing the Hallelujah chorus to greet us. Instead, the anticipated panoramic view was fogged-in, dark clouds loomed, and the drizzle continued. The lodge we hoped would provide lunch had none to speak of for day hikers.

Nothing like a real mountain to remind us of the allegorical type, is there? The obvious comparison is to resist allowing adversity to become a permanent obstacle between you and the summit. Things can change. Not so obvious is that some mountains may fail to yield what we want. In fact, sometimes no one but ourselves even knows we just climbed one. That is, until our lives start to show it.

And mountain tops aren't the only teachers. On the hike down, that drizzle turned into relentless, freezing rain – hour after hour. The trail became dangerously slick and the real possibility of hypothermia was in play. A crowd was sheltered inside the conclave when we reached it, unprepared like ourselves, hoping for a break in the weather.

My husband and I decided against potentially getting stranded on the mountain after dark and pushed on. In our car hours later, shivering and struggling to remove soaked clothes with numb fingers, we laughed crazily over having just beaten the devil. And beat it we did, because that rain fell all day.

While that hike appears disastrous, it really wasn't. I learned that I was stronger than I knew, could endure more than I thought. It made me less apprehensive about trying other things. If I can conquer this, than I can surely conquer that, and that. I also learned to value the preparation. A rain poncho from a dollar store, for example.

Next year, we plan to hike Mt. LeConte again. But it will not surprise us this time because we know it better. That's another valuable gift mountains give us. Experience.

► Karen DeVault is a published author who earned her BA degree in English, with honors, from Oakland University in 2007. She lives with her husband in White Lake, with two daughters and grandchildren nearby. Karen enjoys motorcycling, fishing, target shooting, bicycling, and running. She is currently writing her first novel.



# Thick or Thin Eyebrows Are In

From thick to thin, to everything in between, eyebrows are making a BIG fashion statement this year. While celebrities like Sophia Vergara and Kim Kardashian are grooming their eyebrows on the heavy side, actresses like Charlize Theron and



Scarlett Johansson are slimming their eyebrows down while giving them the slightly arched look. Like a great haircut, picking and creating the right shaped eyebrow can give you a more youthful look or accidentally make you look like your surprised all the time.

In order to get the right shape eyebrow, you first need to consider your overall face shape. For instance, if you have a very round face shape, rounded eyebrows like Scarlett Johansson will only accentuate the roundness of your face. An arched shaped brow would look better. However, if you have a heart shaped face (broad forehead with a narrow jaw line) than the Scar-Jo rounded eyebrow would look great on you.

Grooming and tweezing your eyebrows should be done in a well-lit room and start slow. When in doubt, remove less hair at first as eyebrow hair doesn't grow as fast and you could be trying to hide a boo-boo for a long while. The eyebrow diagram illustrates the correct way to measure and mark before any tweezing is done. You can use a light colored make up pencil to mark where you want to tweeze.

If, however, your wish is thicker brows than you may choose to add more to your eyebrows rather than take away. Eyebrow stencils work great for this situation

and can be purchased at almost any make-up counter or department store. Some supplies you will need along with the stencils;

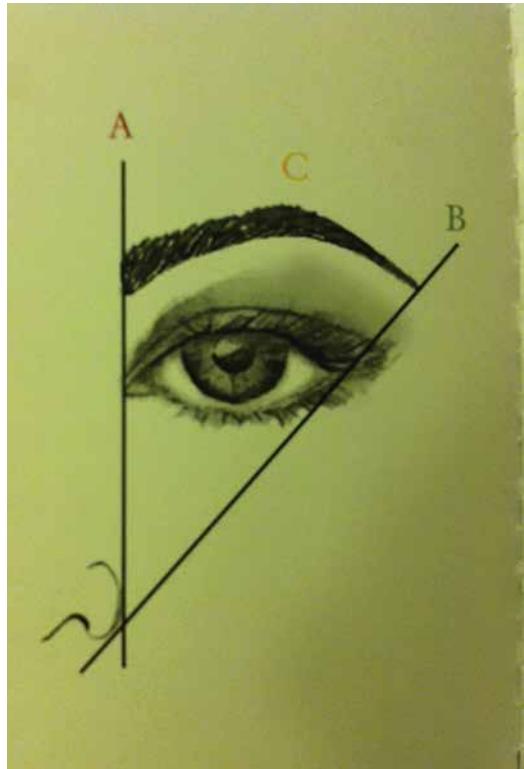
White cream stick  
Eyebrow powder(Brown, Black or

Blonde)

Eyebrow brush  
Eyebrow gel

Note: When coloring in your eyebrows just remember; Dark haired people should go 1-2 shades lighter than their hair color, while lighter hair colors should go 2 shades darker than their hair color.

Last, but not least, remember your eyebrows are the frames to your beautiful eyes, so whatever you choose to do with them, work slowly and carefully. Aside from over tweezing, anything else can be removed and reapplied, so go for it!!!



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► Tami L. Sackett is a freelance writer and a hair and skincare expert with over 30 years in the beauty industry. She is always on the lookout for better products at a value price that keeps you looking young and feeling good. You may reach Tami at her email: [tlsackett@yahoo.com](mailto:tlsackett@yahoo.com)



# TRAVEL CAPSULE

**S**o this summer has had me super busy with two bridal showers, a destination bachelorette party and then the destination wedding both requiring weekend stays. Needless to say this can get pretty costly in travel and gifts and let's not forget the clothes that will be needed for these special occasions. I often help my clients plan what to pack for their vacation or weekend getaways so the challenge was to put the same advice into motion for myself. Let me tell you it's much easier to organize and plan for someone else. I didn't want or need to go out and buy all new outfits, I really needed to work the staple pieces I already had in my wardrobe and maybe just add a new top or skirt to accomplish my fashion needs.

I often include the basics of a capsule wardrobe when presenting collection details and style ideas to clients. A capsule wardrobe is the true workhorse pieces in your closet that are well made and not necessarily defined by a season. These pieces are the staples that you can build around to create numerous looks. It is a minimal wardrobe usually consisting of 20-30 classic, timeless pieces that can easily be worn in several ways. Instead of always having more the mission is more about having the right pieces for you and your lifestyle. You can save an incredible amount of time and energy in selecting, buying and caring for your wardrobe with more intentional purchases. Not to mention the amount of space saved in your closet – you can really see what options you have!

A travel capsule is the same idea. Packing smart and light, mixing and matching to change looks as you move through the day. As I pack for my upcoming 3 day weekend I am including the following:

- 2 Basic Bottoms – A white jean and a black Jean crop pant
  - 2 Basic Tops – sleeveless (one print and one solid)
  - 1 jacket/sweater
  - 1 dress
  - Shoes – One pair open toe heels, one pair basic flats, one pair sandals
  - Accessories – Jewelry, scarf, small handbag and large tote
- Mission accomplished! I am traveling in Nashville as I finish writing this and the above elements are serving me perfectly. I actually didn't purchase



any new pieces of clothing for this trip. I did buy a fabulous new tote that screams summer and a fresh pair of sandals to jazz up the crop jeans and dress. Deciding to create a capsule wardrobe requires planning and consideration of lifestyle now as well as the future. It takes time and commitment, but can eliminate a closet full of un-intentional purchases that may never get worn.



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# Barbara A. Walker

Vice President  
Hartland Insurance Agency, Inc  
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**W**hen Hartland Insurance was originally opened by her father in 1978, little did Barbara Walker know exactly what her father was building for her future. In 1981 Walker, along with her husband and sister became equal partners in the business. Walker says, "Working with family has been great! We identified our own areas of responsibility and we are a great team." The company now has 38 employees that all work well together. "Great teams do great things" says Walker. They believe in serving and giving back to the communities in which they work and live.

It is so important to believe in what you do. If you have that drive to learn what you can about your business and how to make it the most for your clients, you feel great about the services you are providing.

*"I have a passion for the industry. At some point in life, all experience a need for insurance. I love working with women as they are often times deciding for their families what the insurance needs are for the family."*

"I have a passion for the industry. At some point in life, all experience a need for insurance. I love working with women as they are often times deciding for their families what the insurance needs are for the family." Walker understands that listening to her women clients is crucial for customer service. They understand what all members of the family's needs are and can help define coverage necessities.

The Insurance industry, like many others, is constantly changing. It is imperative that they stay current with technology. Clients are looking for immediacy with response for quotes. Hartland Insurance Agency, Inc prides themselves

on seamless customer service. "At the end of the day, we are in the business of people!" responds Walker.

Dreaming big and making it happen are what Walker believes are the recipe for life. She understands that life requires us to push ourselves past our comfort zones to achieve our greatest goals. Seeing what people find themselves up against with just every day insurance needs helps prepare us for the pitfalls anyone may encounter. If you are proactive in your policy needs, you can free yourself up from some worry as you embark on your life endeavors. You can't always prepare for everything but you can make the journey a bit easier on yourself. There may be holes in your insurance policy as you go through different stages of your life. It's never too late to ask your provider questions on how to make your policy grow with you.

Walker states that bringing younger people into the industry is the biggest challenge. Millennials are not joiners of groups and they fail to see it as worthwhile. It isn't sexy enough. It's not glamorous. It is, however, a very lucrative career option. And that moment when you give someone hope in the middle of their disaster, that feels like you have super powers.

For more information on Hartland Insurance, contact [barbarawalker@hartlandinsurance.com](mailto:barbarawalker@hartlandinsurance.com)



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# What Makes a Hero?

**S**he was just 16 years old when she left her family and her native Poland to start a new life in America. In the middle of the ocean, the ship caught on fire and the passengers had to transport to another ship. In November 1913, in the early morning hours, the young girl arrived in New York to a new life, one away from Russian czarist rule.

That was our grandmother, Constance Bandurski Bednarczyk. And, she is my hero. To think of the courage it took, at sixteen years of age, to leave family and friends because she wanted to be free, wanted a better life, still amazes and humbles me.

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes, in all colors. Some are ordinary people who inspire a few, others, such as Captain Sully Sullenberger, inspire a nation.

Well known TV host and entrepreneur, Oprah Winfrey, says that her heroes growing up were authors Maya Angelou and Alice Walker because their writing helped her develop esteem and showed her the strength of women.

Heroes inspire us, move us emotionally and connect us on some level to what we want to be. Jackie Kennedy, in those dark days of the Kennedy assassination, showed a strength of character and courage that to this day has a marked effect on a whole generation.

Heroes can take many forms, but they all share the same characteristics- they are selfless, willing to help others no matter what the cost to themselves. They are courageous, facing their fears and meeting them head on. They are willing to make decisions that are hard, and persevere in the most trying of times. They plunge whole heartedly in to adverse situations, take the reins and changing horrifying situations in to positive outcomes.

A hero isn't always about doing great things. He or she is all about doing what's right.

WWCK105.5 morning anchor Stephanie Confer writes that her hero is her mother.

"She practically raised us four kids by herself as my father was gone a lot as a salesman and actor. She taught us to be kind to others, never talk badly about anyone and never say anything you didn't want to see on the front of a newspaper. I never heard her swear, saw her take a drink or smoke a cigarette. She



is 88 years old, still drives and continues to do for others every day. She taught us how to be a good person. I love her and admire her strength as she was always the one to make things happen. My dad had awesome ideas for starting new businesses, but she was the one that made them a success. She has such class, kindness and a strong faith.

I hope to be half the woman with that energy and strength when and if I get to be her age. She is a great role model for all that meet her. I find myself asking WWJD? 'What would Joan do?' then, I do the right thing. She is so thoughtful and generous. She was my rock while raising my two daughters on my own. I couldn't have done it without her and am proud that she is my best friend."

Heroes are the stuff dreams are made of- the story of a young boy who finds out he is a wizard and throughout the years, faces trials and tribulations to finally triumph against the evil villain who killed his parents.

But, in reality, it's the everyday, ordinary people who selflessly give of themselves, while remaining courageous in sometimes worse-case scenarios that are truly the ones we look up to, who become our heroes. Whether it's a war veteran, a grandmother or a next door neighbor, if you have a person in your life that you believe is a hero, thank them. In the face of adversity, they give us hope, make us believe in a brighter world and help us through their strength and fortitude, to become better people.

► "Charlene A. Kowalski is the Director of Marketing/Customer Service for the Mass Transportation Authority. She can be reached at: [www.ckowalski@mtaflint.org](http://www.ckowalski@mtaflint.org)



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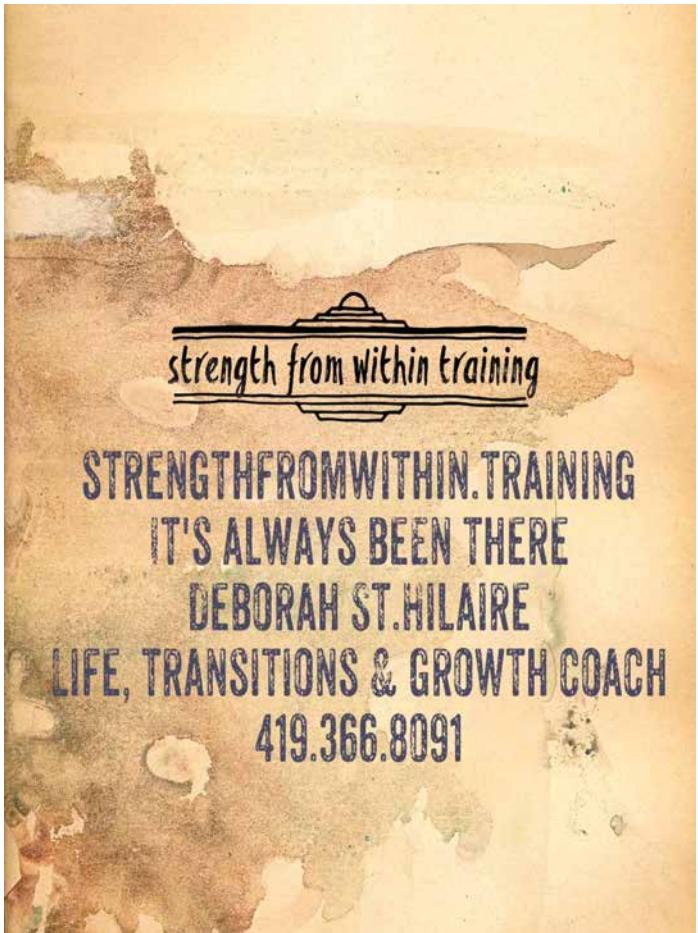
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# Camping 101

**T**he regular readers of this here back page know that, among other pursuits, I enjoy camping with my dear wife. Camping, which here means a 30 foot box with a queen-sized bed and air-conditioning, is a favorite pastime of many a Michigander/ganian.

Unfortunately, this group includes a subgroup of those who should not be allowed out of their driveways, let alone immersed into close quarters with those of us who believe that pouring a bucket of gasoline onto an already roaring fire is a poor life decision.

Friends, you know that I'm not a snob. I love and respect all. I've even been known to shop at Wal-mart without my dark sunglasses and ball cap. But one must draw the line somewhere. In this case, the line is between my campsite and the seventeen tents crammed onto the next one.

But I want all of you to enjoy the beauty of my Michigan and her top-rate state park system. So allow me to offer a few tips to make your camping experience, and mine, more enjoyable:

1. The hours between midnight and 4 am are not appropriate for setting up your tent or trailer. Really, stay at home one more day and arrive in the morning, say after nine-ish, when you have plenty of daylight and your neighbors aren't mysteriously grouchy and red-eyed.
2. All family disagreements should be settled before your arrival. If you have not worked out your differences, there is little I, the park rangers, or the shell-shocked children in neighboring campsites can do to bring harmony back into your happy home. Perhaps a family counseling retreat would be a better plan than the camping trip.
3. Men have built fires for thousands of years before the discovery of gasoline. Trust me, it is not necessary. I've even heard that gasoline and fire are a fairly worrisome combination. Why tempt fate? If in doubt, Google "how to start a fire without propellants." It really works.
4. I love family reunions, but the average state park campsite is designed to hold ten people at the most comfortably. It's \$24 a night. Grab that extra space for the third cousins, 'kay?
5. A beer or three by the fire is appropriate. An entire bottle of Jack and your rousing rendition of "The Bitch is Back" is not.
6. Speaking of music, if we all blasted our favorite tunes as loud as we'd like, the park would sound like the screaming hordes of hell seeking mercy from a holy God who has turned them out into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I know it's not fair, but keep it below the level of the average Pine Knob (it will always be Pine Knob) concert.
7. Pee indoors.
8. Shower indoors.
9. Have sex indoors.
10. If 1-9 are causing you to curse my name, stay indoors.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask whoever is camped next to you. If they're packing up their trailer two hours after your arrival, it may be too late.

Until next time...don't tell my wife I wrote this.

► Ron Estrada resides with his wife, Kelly, two children, two cats, and a terrier-mix in Oxford. When not pursuing the spiritual gift of napping, he's at work on his latest novel or some freelance project (he accepts cash, checks, PayPal, or smoked pork shoulder). You can email him at [restrada@ameritech.net](mailto:restrada@ameritech.net) or visit his website at [ronestradabooks.com](http://ronestradabooks.com).



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A close-up photograph of two caramel apple smoothies in brown paper cups. Both cups are topped with a generous swirl of white whipped cream and drizzled with caramel sauce. The cup in the foreground is garnished with small pieces of caramel apple. The background shows a wire basket filled with various apples, including red and green ones, suggesting a fall theme.

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