

WOMEN 2 WOMEN MICHIGAN MAGAZINE

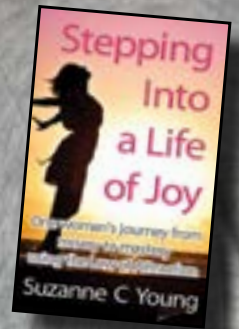
W2W

**Those Internal
Challenges We Face**
Deborah St. Hilaire

**Transmuting
Pain Into Gold**
Joy Dettling

**Plan for
Greatness**
Stacey Kimbrell

Suzanne Young
Stepping Into a Life of Joy



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note from our publisher & editor



Debra K. Collins
Publisher



Mimi Matthews
Editor



Lesley Howe
Executive Assistance/
Marketing



Jennifer Gardner
Creative Director

august theme

Passionate Perspectives

Have you ever considered hiring a life or health coach?

Our theme this month is “Passionate Perspectives” and we asked our writers to tell us their point of view and what they are passionate about.

Did you know that Women2Women Michigan magazine has coaches, advisors, health experts, and speakers who contribute to each issue?

These writers offer their expertise and knowledge in articles that help you reach personal life goals, learn ways to de-stress and rise above life’s difficult times, and build a better mindset. Their articles inspire you. They educate you. And all of this wonderful content is offered to you every issue! It’s like having your own personal trainers and coaches.

Let me tell you about our **subscription program**. You can have our printed magazine mailed to you every time it’s published. Go to our website, www.w2wmichigan.com and click on the tab at the top that says “subscribe to magazine”. Easy, huh?

Our writing team is growing! We have welcomed two new writers to our team. Lynn Turner wrote about De-stigmatizing Mental health on page 17. And Arlene Curns has a new column called *Heartstrings* on page 22. We are sure you will enjoy getting to know these new writers.

As the summer winds down, we hope you will have pleasant times with family and friends and even by yourself. If you can, take some time to enjoy our beautiful state.

Until next time,

Mimi & Deb

*“The things you are passionate about
are not random, they are your calling”*

~Fabienne Fredrickson

contributors

Contributing Writers

Lynn Turner • Deborah St. Hilaire • Suzanne Young • Debra Loader • Mimi Matthews
Aria • Colleen Kilpatrick • Joy Dettling • Stacy Kimbrell • Arlene Crane-Curns

W2W

Women *Inspiring* Women *for Good!*

Our Mission:

Women2Women Michigan was created to connect women with women for their homes, gardens, businesses, entertainment, health and nutrition, the list is endless. They want to be informed and connected in their communities. Event-driven marketing makes education fun and rewarding. You can reach these women in a heartwarming environment at Women2Women Michigan events and through our magazine.

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Submit your stories online at w2wmichigan.com. Article guidelines are under the magazine tab.

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Women2Women Michigan magazine is distributed to subscribers via US mail. It is also available at every Women2Women Michigan event, chamber events, and women's organizations. It is professionally delivered to various locations throughout the area including restaurants, hospitals, retail locations and medical offices in southeastern Michigan. Interested in hosting a distribution location? Email us at office@w2wmichigan.com.

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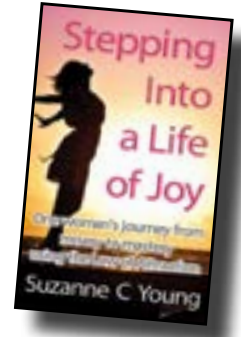
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W2W

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October 12th

November 9th

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Plan For Greatness!



It has been observed in various studies that a significant percentage of individuals fail to achieve their life goals. Since each of us has the potential for greatness, it becomes crucial to establish an attainable plan that aligns with our aspirations and directs the course of our lives. This plan serves as a compass, keeping us focused and providing clarity on what truly matters to us in terms of our desires, purpose, and objectives. As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!"

The following questions will assist you in intentionally discovering your "why," which will help shape your goals and set you on the path to success. Find a serene environment and allocate some time to reflect, evaluate, and appreciate your accomplishments thus far, regardless of their magnitude.

While some may dismiss this activity as inconsequential, it is important to acknowledge that self-doubt and self-sabotage affect us all at various points in our lives. Therefore, it is essential to accept our present circumstances while striving for continuous

improvement. Writing down your responses to these questions encourages deep introspection, enabling you to gain a better understanding of yourself and your aspirations. Consider jotting them on a notecard or printing them out, reading them daily. This practice will undoubtedly provide the motivation you need to move forward and live your life with intention.

Let's evaluate these seven areas of your life. Assign yourself a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 for each category:

- FAITH
- FAMILY
- FRIENDS
- FITNESS
- FINANCE
- FUN
- FIELD (CAREER)

After assessing my current situation, I realized that my life was significantly out of balance. For instance, my Field (career) was a 9 (overworking), fun was at 0, friends at 1, and family at 3. This realization served as an eye-opener, prompting me to make essential changes in my time management to restore balance to my life. Now, let's examine the following list and develop an action plan to Live Balanced.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS:

- 1 Love yourself, be confident, and embrace fearlessness.
- 2 Evaluate and shift your perspective.
- 3 Cultivate mindfulness in your thoughts and words.
- 4 Minimize time-wasting activities and avoid distractions.
- 5 Give yourself permission to say no.
- 6 Rise early to dedicate time towards daily goals.
- 7 Overcome procrastination by taking action—imperfections are acceptable!
- 8 Document your plan for each area.
- 9 Share your goals proudly with your family and friends.
- 10 Review your goals daily and assess your progress weekly.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said, "A goal without a plan is just a wish." Personally, I've found that

when I neglect to read this plan aloud each morning, I tend to lose focus on my personal goals. Let's remember these truths, acknowledging that life is imperfect. Although it would be ideal to receive unwavering support from friends, spouses, children, and extended family, this isn't always the case. However, we shouldn't allow that to deter us from pursuing the desires that reside within our hearts.

Let us strive to live intentionally with zeal in all aspects of life!



Stacey Kimbrell is a Speaker, and Author of *Living Balanced*. Stacey's passion for over 15 years is transforming families to a natural way of living through natural remedies, premium essential oils, and living a toxic chemical-free lifestyle. She mixes humor as she exposes the hidden chemicals in products we unknowingly ingest and use in our daily lives. **Live with Hope & Zeal in all things!** 810-423-5721 StaceyKimbrell.com.

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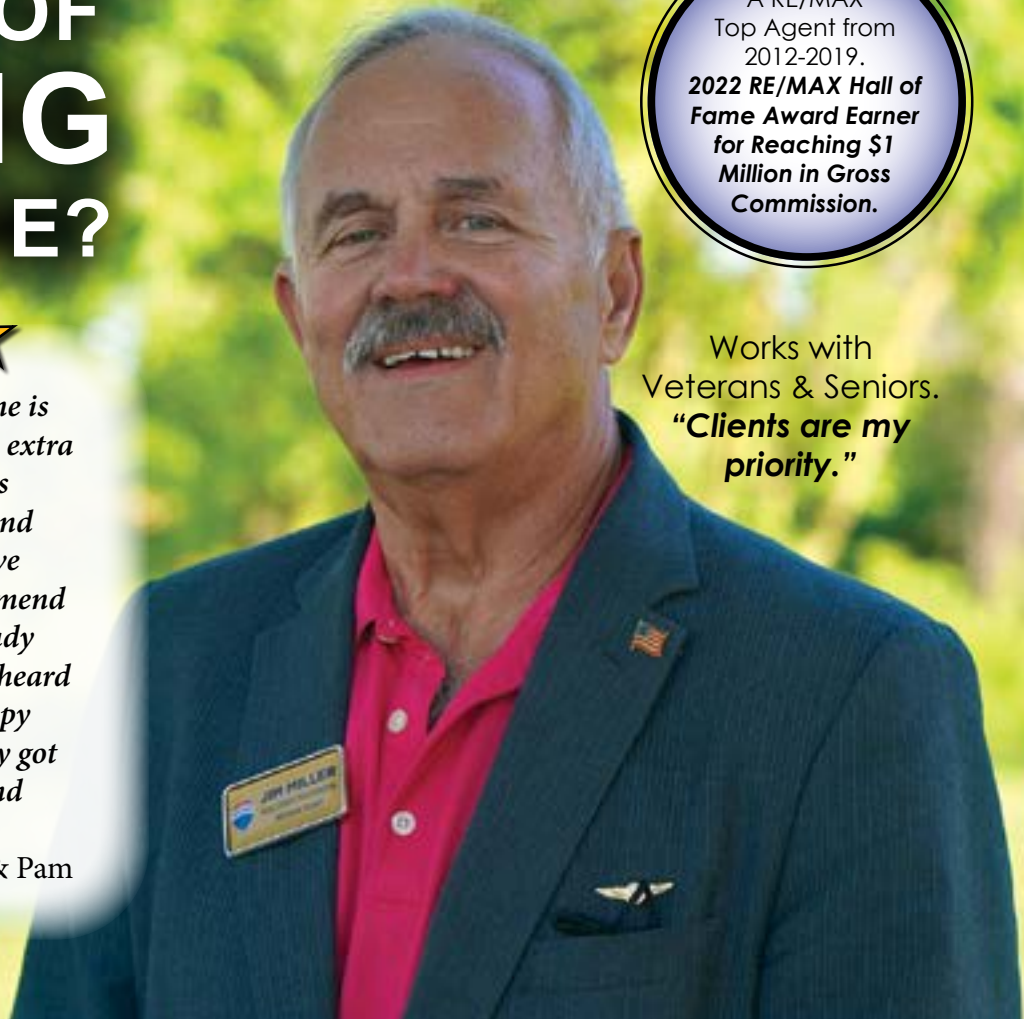
Jim is a great guy to work with, he is very knowledgeable and goes the extra mile for his client. He was always available when we needed him and helped us in many areas where we needed advice. We would recommend him very highly and in fact already have to a few of our friends. We heard so many stories of friends unhappy with their agent, we feel we really got a gem! He went above and beyond anything we asked.

~ Rob & Pam



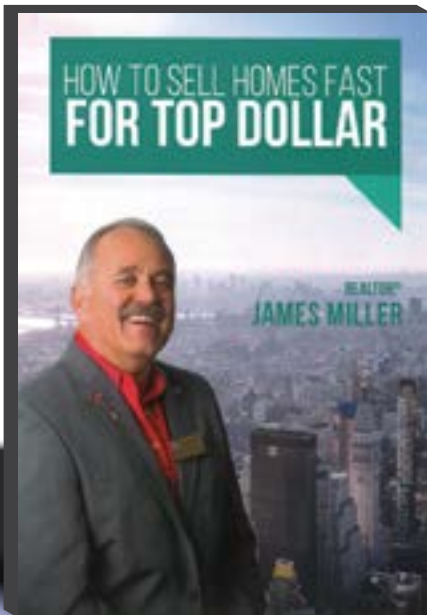
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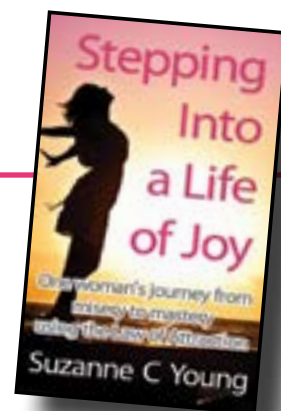
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Suzanne Young



As an intuitive life coach, specializing in the Law of Attraction/LoA my greatest joy comes from sharing the self-empowering ideas I've learned throughout my life that have helped me find peace and happiness after 57 years of pain, suffering, and sacrificing. I smile inside when my unique coaching style and/or writing inspires people to make a change. My heart goes out to all who are willing to take a good look at their life and decide they're ready to take a leap of faith and practice using the energy of their thoughts (LoA) and their intuition/inner guidance to improve their life. I wrote my teaching memoir *Stepping Into a Life of Joy* (SteppingIntoALifeOfJoy.com) as a source for immediate self-help and self-growth. This is also why self-awareness and self-improvement is what I focus on every time I sit down to post something on Facebook, or write a poem, another new chapter for my next book or my next article for W2W Michigan Magazine.



I know how painful it is to feel alone when a marriage comes to an end, and you have children to consider. It took all the courage I could find to leave my first marriage of 20 years and raise my four children as a single parent for the following 10 years. Unfortunately, we **don't know what we don't know**. After my first divorce, I **didn't know** that both conscious and subconscious thoughts create our reality. As a single mom, I was so busy raising children and working, I thought my happiness would eventually appear through lots of hard work and effort. I **didn't know** that by living with verbal abuse for so long, I had subconsciously developed a habit of living in an uncomfortable comfort zone of sacrificing and suffering. I **didn't** think (or **know**)

to explore what I might need to change about me so that I could attract a rewarding, compassionate and loving relationship with a man. Thus, I ended up attracting a second verbally abusive, alcoholic man into my life.

I **didn't** do this on purpose, because I **didn't know** that the habit of living with the energy of abuse is buried deep in our subconscious mind and body. And so, unbeknownst to us, we continue to attract painful experiences (similar to what we've been through) until we become aware of our self-defeating patterns, acknowledge them and release them. (I'm happy to provide coaching in this area if this is something you'd like to explore.)

We can't change what we do not acknowledge so in hindsight, I fully admit that I ignored the signs that the second husband was an alcoholic. (Like many women who suffer repeated abuse, I thought this man would be different than the first husband.) After 12 months of marriage, I knew I'd made a mistake, but I was too ashamed to admit it. I went on and endured 9 more years of verbal abuse and alcoholism until a very painful experience finally woke me up. In the last year of our marriage, I discovered that my husband was leading a double life and had spent part of our retirement money to buy a house (in a neighboring city) for his girlfriend to live in. This is when I finally asked myself, why did I have to go through another painful relationship and what did I need to know or learn so I'd never repeat this again? As I began searching for this

answer, I finally became aware that all things happen for a reason. In the fall of 2004, my attorney who handled my second divorce, sent me to a meditation class, something I never would have done before. This became one of the many beneficial reasons this life changing event happened FOR me. I learned to quiet my mind and started to listen to my



intuition/inner guidance (FYI-God speaks to us in this way). I started going to the library and getting free books to read on self-growth and development and I began listening to a wide range of inspirational and motivational speakers and teachers. I took a 12-week program through Dale Carnegie that helped me understand the power of allowing myself to express my emotions freely, instead of stuffing them down and comforting myself with food. Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay, and Esther and Jerry Hicks were some of my favorite authors, speakers, and

spiritual teachers when I first began my journey of self-discovery.

Within 3 years of reading and practicing what I had been studying, I was able to confidently begin creating my new life. One of the many reasons I became a LoA coach is so you wouldn't have to do it on your own (like I did) and it wouldn't take you 3 long years. Of course, everyone is different but most of my clients start reaping their rewards as soon as it takes them to build new habits of thought.

The biggest lesson I've learned around the LoA is *we cannot continue to do what we've been doing and think we will attract something new and different. Like attracts like, therefore we will never attract a happy ending to an **unhappy** journey.* Knowing that the LoA is working whether you believe it or not, and then choosing to find ways to feel good, despite what's going on around you, is the first step in attracting what you want. There's no need to know how, where or when it will happen. Leave that up to the Universe. Having faith in the unknown is another key ingredient to successfully manifesting the things you want. Let go of any neediness or urgency and become as happy as you would **be if you already had** what you wanted, and divine timing will handle the rest.

All women deserve to have a life full of peace, joy, harmony, love, success, freedom, and abundance in all areas. The good news is, it's here for our taking when we step into our own power by using our thoughts to support us and our intuition/inner being/God to guide us.



Suzanne Young is an intuitive life coach who specializes in the Law of Attraction. She is also an inspirational speaker, author, and co-owner of Personal Success Programs, since 2007, with her husband

Kevin Young. You can email her at suzanne@psprograms.com and their website is www.psprograms.com. Her office number is 248.349.6225.

A Pivotal Moment

If I'd known that fifteen years later I'd still be talking about what I now consider one of the most pivotal moments in my life, I probably would have paid more attention. Even so, the moment is deeply imbedded in my memory.

I knew that I'd gotten to the end of my rope. That I was sick and tired of disliking myself. That I needed to do something about my self-esteem. I had an eight-year-old daughter I was teaching and encouraging to be her real, powerful self, and yet I was a mess in the self-esteem department.

Alone with my journal in my living room, sitting in prayer and asking God what still needed to be healed from my past, I was deeply impressed that I had been listening to lies all my life. Now, I had not written about this before. Neither had I read anything about it. I do know the biblical truth that we are wondrously made and that God loves us and delights in us. But goodness, it just hadn't reached my soul for some reason. Well, there were many reasons—abuse, criticism from those I loved, married to an emotionally abusive narcissist, expected by parents to be good and struggling with how to maintain that, etc.—but I didn't really see the truth until this day.

Funny how we can know all about something. We can even teach about something. But until we come to grips with the truth of that something and it becomes personal in our lives, it's still just knowledge. It's that *experience* that turns it into wisdom.

Since then I've come to understand that the words that go through our brain are not always truth. In fact, many, many times those thoughts have been programmed by other people, our own judgment against ourselves, comparisons, demeaning words or behaviors from others—many things shape how we feel about ourselves. Clarity came that day and I realized that in my brain I'd been listening to *lies*. My behaviors in life had been based on lies I believed about myself. Lies that held me back because I was sure I was not good enough or deserving enough. And our beliefs determine our behavior.

Looking back, of course, it all makes sense. But back then I was still trying to muddle through life. There were no positive affirmations flooding our social media feed. (Instagram didn't even hit the scene until two

years later). In fact, if anything I had been taught not to think “too highly” of myself.

As I sat there, thinking about all the things I'd wrongly believed about myself I finally got mad. The people involved had been forgiven, but I was mad at the lies that still had control over my life. Sometimes it just takes anger to help us break through. I yelled, “Enough! Shut up!” to those lies of “not good enough, too loud, guilty, not smart, too emotional” and more. And I took one of the deepest breaths I had in a long while.

And then I began writing down things that were true about me because I needed to fill my brain with those. This part was a bit difficult and felt risky because remember, we did not brag about ourselves. I had never been taught to look for my strengths. Or to acknowledge who I am deep inside myself, the way I was created to be before all the re-programming began. Things like I am smart, a great problem-solver, a good mom, creative, kind and generous, and (yikes!), I am beautiful. I knew that the Bible says God sees me as lovely. However, I'd felt terribly flawed, and it was hard to say I was beautiful because I'd never believed it. And honestly I was a bit afraid of being struck by lightning because of my audacity and all that.

But I did say it. Along with all those other things and more that came to mind. I yelled them in my living room, all alone, filling up my mind with truth and freedom. It was the most wonderful, terrifying, and beautiful moment. A moment that totally changed my life. In fact, this experience is what prompted my Empowerment Cards, which are full of affirmations and encouragement to believe the good stuff about ourselves. I knew I had to keep repeating the truth to keep the lies at bay, a practice I continue to this day. I call it “speaking life”.

Just think. That morning as I sat down with my journal I was completely unaware that my life was about to be turned upside down and I was going to be set free! Like I said, a pivotal moment.



Mimi Matthews is in the “encouragement business” as the owner of Empowerment Cards by Mimi, which features greeting cards that inspire and encourage. She is also a speaker, workshop leader, writer, and our editor. Visit her shop at www.etsy.com/shop/EmPOWordmentCards, her blog at www.particularpassions.me.



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Facing Fear at the Top of a Lighthouse

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. ”

- Nelson Mandela.

WHEN I BECAME A VOLUNTEER LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER, I believed that only people who loved heights and the distant views they afford would make the long climb to the top of the lighthouse. I was wrong. A significant number of people I've met at the top of the lighthouse have a deep fear of heights. Most of them announce it when they arrive at the top. Some reveal it only after a successful walk around the catwalk. Some hide it. Others couldn't hide it if they had to. I recognize all of them. I've been all of them. And each of them inspires me to continue doing what author Melody Beatty wrote about in her book by the same name, "Feel the fear and do it anyway."

But, of all the people with a fear of heights I've encountered at the top of the lighthouse, one woman stands out, her memory forever etched in my mind. Although I have known fear, I have never known the kind of terror this courageous woman experienced at the top of the lighthouse that day. Her story will inspire you...

It was a misty Sunday morning at the Little Sable Lighthouse in Mears, Michigan. My fellow volunteer and I were enjoying the view from the top in a quiet moment without visitors. Due to the open nature of the circular staircase inside the lighthouse, we always knew when visitors were approaching our perch. Their breathless voices and occasional laughter would reach us



up in the lantern room long before they did. On this day, what we heard from the approaching visitors was different. No laughter, for sure. Crying, perhaps, coupled with a male voice saying, "You can do it. Hold on. Just a few more steps." Not sure what we would see when these visitors emerged through the last trap door, we waited expectantly.

She came through first, a middle-aged woman, tears streaming down her face. Her male companion was behind her supporting and encouraging her one step at a time. Realizing she had reached the top of the lighthouse, her tears turned into a full-out sob.

My fellow volunteer and I were on high alert and asked if she was okay. Her husband answered for her: She was terrified of heights. Not just afraid, terrified.

We offered her a seat. She declined. Her body was rigid. She couldn't move. She couldn't look out the open door. She didn't dare look at the view. She was completely immobilized by terror.

The other volunteer and I each took one of her hands - her cold, wet, trembling, clutching hands. Her husband explained that she had recently announced her desire to face her fear of heights and the place she wanted to do so was this lighthouse. So they planned a week-long vacation in the area with a two-part mission: to provide her the right environment to overcome her fear and to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. A gift to herself and her adventuresome husband overcoming her fear would be.

Through tears streaming down her face she said quietly but resolutely, "It's time. I want to do this. I want to go out on the catwalk. I want to overcome this fear."

Her fear was intense, but her courage was greater.

While her husband videotaped this impromptu intervention, we supported her arms, spoke words

of encouragement, reminded her to breathe. She still wouldn't face out. She didn't want to be reminded that she was 100 feet above the ground. But determined she was to go out on that catwalk. So, slowly, arduously the three of us walked backwards over the threshold and onto the open, circular walkway 10 stories above the beach. And there we stood. Still facing into the lantern room. Her, with knees buckling and eyes squeezed shut. Us, holding her up, not sure what to do next.

Through quivering voice she asked if we would guide her one step to the left of the doorway, then release her hands. She desperately wanted to stand on her own up there. We did as she requested, but had to pry her cold, clammy fingers from our hands to do so. Clinging to the brick exterior wall of the lighthouse she stood on shaky legs for a minute, maybe two. Then, to my surprise, she smiled. Through her tears she smiled. She was pleased with her accomplishment. And then, very quietly, she said, "This is enough for today. Tomorrow I will come back and do it again."

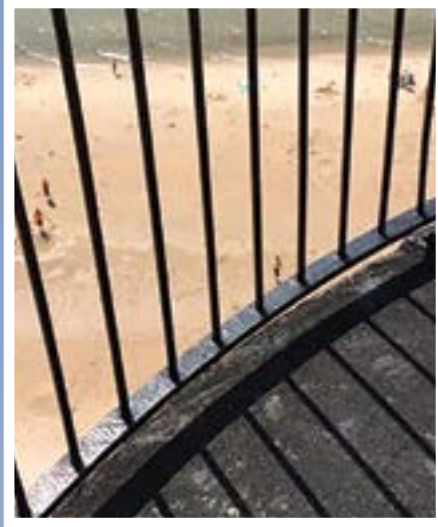


Colleen Kilpatrick is a Speaker, Creative Collaborator and the Author of "Eliminate What You Tolerate: A simple, proven way to

regain focus, increase productivity and liberate your energy for the more important things in life." She inspires people to bring their best gifts to the world.

"Remember that the minute you take your first step into the life of your dreams, the first to greet you there will be fear. Nod. Keep walking."

- Brianna Wiest



FACING FEAR AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

A young boy of about 10 years arrived at the top of the lighthouse by himself. I greeted him, but was occupied with another family so didn't engage with him at first. After about 10 minutes on the catwalk he approached me and proudly announced, "I faced my fear of heights today!"

"Good for you!", I responded. "And what happened to your fear when you faced it?", I asked.

He thought for a minute then looked up at me and said with a smile, "It disappeared!"

A powerful lesson for all us.



A surreal, dark landscape with jagged mountains, a glowing blue sky, and a small figure sitting on a rock in the foreground. The scene is illuminated by a bright blue light source, possibly a moon or a star, creating a dramatic and atmospheric effect. The mountains are dark and jagged, with a glowing blue light emanating from the sky. The sky is filled with dark, swirling clouds and a bright blue light source, possibly a moon or a star, creating a dramatic and atmospheric effect. The overall mood is one of mystery and wonder.

Transmuting Pain Into Gold

**3 Things I Have Learned on
My Journey with Chronic Pain**

Most people will do just about anything to avoid pain.

While the desire to avoid pain seems like a natural instinct, I have come to believe that most of this aversion comes from cultural conditioning. We live in a society where we have been conditioned to judge pain as bad and intolerable. We are constantly offered ways to escape pain as quickly as possible. Have a headache? Take an aspirin. Does your back hurt? Sit down and ice it. Have a heartbreak? Have an ice cream and watch a movie...While there is nothing wrong with any of these options, my question is: do they distract us away from a deeper solution? Will an aspirin help us get to the roots of why we have a headache? Will sitting down heal our back? Will ice cream help us process our grief? What I have spent several years exploring is this: why is pain here and are we missing something when we avoid it?

I have spent a lot of time with chronic pain including all-over body aches, headaches, and pain concentrated in various regions and have had this tendency since my youth. I can recount days being crippled by my pain and in utter hopeless despair because of it. I was confused because my pain made no sense. I saw no end to it and felt held back because of it.

While I still experience pain regularly, I can tell you that pain no longer cripples and confuses me. I no longer *suffer* from pain and in turn most days I am completely unbothered by it. Surprising to some, I have come to be grateful for pain because it has given me the greatest gifts of my life. I can attribute this transformation to my own physical, emotional, mental and spiritual healing. In hopes to share my experience most practically, I can boil down what I have learned to a few huge shifts in perspective.

For anyone who struggles regularly with pain, I would like to share three key mindset shifts that have changed my life and have allowed me to turn pain into gold.

1 PAIN IS UNPLEASANT, BUT IT IS NOT BAD.

The first step to transmuting pain is to release our judgment of it. Our first reaction to pain is often negative and we label pain as "bad". A powerful reframe is to release the judgment of pain as bad and simply notice it as unpleasant or uncomfortable. While the word unpleasant still describes the pain accurately, it allows us to look at pain from a neutral position. The pain is not bad, it's not negative and it is not wrong... It's just there and it happens to feel unpleasant. What if the pain is just a sensation without anything else attached to it? When we recognize pain as just another type of sensation free of judgment, we open the gates for pain to move through us. What I have experienced is that when I can release my judgment of pain, I also release the emotional charge and any past baggage attached to it. This in itself reduces the suffering of pain and is the first step in shifting it.

2 PAIN IS YOUR BODY TALKING TO YOU

Your body talks! It's actually trying to have a conversation with you all the time! And pain is just one of its languages. Oftentimes pain is how our body says "no". Is there something we need to stop doing? Is there a boundary we need to set? Is there something we need to stop allowing? Other times pain is calling our attention back to ourselves. Have we become preoccupied with other things and ignored our own needs? Once we start listening, there are many ways to clarify the body's particular message. Ancient systems like Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine chart the body with correlations to mental and emotional imbalances, organ dysfunctions and even changes in seasons. Modern authors like Louise Hay have also made many interpretations of how various areas of the body communicate to us when certain aspects of our life are out of balance. Curious what your right hip is saying to you? What if it is telling you that you are too busy and need to slow down? Our bodies are transmitting potent messages all the time and pain is the most obvious way to call

attention. Listening to the body and acting on what it has to say is one of the deepest ways to make peace with pain.

3 OUR MOST VALUABLE LEARNING COMES THROUGH PAIN

I am grateful for pain because it has been my teacher. It is always through life's challenges that we learn our greatest lessons. Often the greatest change we make is when we are stimulated by pain. When pain comes, now I simply listen and am grateful for the message. Pain comes to tell me that something in my life is out of alignment. These messages have allowed me to steer my ship towards greater authenticity within myself and a more aligned and fulfilling life.

I have taken a path of radically listening to pain and this is how I have been able to move past the burdens of chronic illness. I understand how these messages will be challenging for those in the depths of despair that pain can bring us to. I understand because I have been there too. What do we do when we are in the midst of these confusing and debilitating times? Just be still and listen. Even if you don't understand it at first. Even if you have yet to learn the language of your body. Just be still, have patience, have compassion and listen. Curiosity is the first step to learning anything new. For those dealing with chronic pain, I hope that these ideas have planted the seeds for a new perspective and steer you onto the path of turning pain into gold.

All the best,
Joy



Joy facilitates Ignite Body Freedom every Sunday and Tuesday morning in Brighton, MI. You can find more information at ignitelife.net/freedom and send inquiries to joy@ignitelife.net.

If you are unable to attend an event with Joy in Brighton, you can find a directory of similar events worldwide listed on ecstaticdance.org.

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De-stigmatizing Mental Health

Mental health is a crucial aspect of our overall well-being, yet it is often stigmatized and overlooked in our society. Mental health conditions affect millions of people worldwide, and the stigma associated with it can have severe consequences, including isolation, discrimination, and even suicide. It is essential to de-stigmatize mental health to ensure that everyone has access to the resources and support they need to recover and thrive.

One of the main reasons why stigma persists is the misconception that it is a sign of weakness or inferiority. This belief is entirely untrue and ignores the fact that mental health conditions can affect anyone, regardless of their intelligence, education, or social status. These conditions are not a reflection of a person's character or abilities, but rather a medical condition that requires treatment and support.

Understanding mental health means recognizing that mental health conditions can affect anyone and that seeking help is a sign of strength. By opening up the conversation around mental health, we can reduce the shame and guilt associated with it and create an environment where people feel comfortable seeking help when they need it.

Another crucial aspect of de-stigmatizing mental health is recognizing that mental health conditions are not a personal failing but a result of various factors, including genetics, environment, and life experiences. By acknowledging that mental health conditions are not the fault of the individual, we can reduce the shame and guilt associated with it and promote a more compassionate and understanding approach to mental health.

Doing so, can help more people be open to getting the help they need during times of trauma. Trauma can have a severe impact on a person's mental health, and seeking help is crucial for recovery. However, the stigma associated with mental health can make it challenging for people to seek help when they need it. By de-stigmatizing mental health, we can create an environment where people feel comfortable seeking help and support during times of uncertainty.

Furthermore, de-stigmatization can help reduce and improve overall health outcomes. When people feel comfortable seeking help and support for their mental health, they are more likely to receive early intervention and treatment, which can prevent their condition from becoming more severe. Early intervention and treatment can also prevent the onset of other mental health conditions and improve overall health.

I believe this is also crucial for promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. Mental health conditions can affect anyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. However, certain groups, such as people of color, especially African American men who currently have the highest number of suicide rates alongside LGBTQ+ individuals, and those living in poverty, are more likely to experience mental health conditions and face additional barriers to accessing care. By de-stigmatizing mental health, we can promote a positive society where everyone has access to the resources and support they need to thrive.



In conclusion, dissuading the stigma and bias for receiving mental health treatment is essential for promoting overall health and well-being. Mental health conditions can affect anyone, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. By reducing the shame and guilt associated with mental health and creating a more compassionate and understanding approach, we can create an environment where people feel comfortable seeking help and support when they need it. This, in turn, can reduce the prevalence of mental health conditions, improve health outcomes, and promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

If you or anybody that you know is feeling suicidal and need help, please feel free to contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 988 or go to your local emergency room for a psychiatric evaluation and assessment to receive necessary care if needed.



Lynn Turner is a seasoned mental health professional with 20+ years of experience. Specializing in suicide prevention and high acuity patients, she is a trusted counselor, addiction treatment specialist, and certified life coach. Lynn's dedication extends to mentoring young women and advocating for the vulnerable in mental health. www.linkedin.com/in/lynnnturner



You can find Aria's creations at
www.etsy.com/shop/AriRaeCrochet



HELLO! I'M ARIA and I'm a fifteen year old Christian small business owner. My business began as a hobby when I was eleven, when I learned how to crochet at a homeschool co-op. My favorite things to make were always the animals and creatures.

Soon after learning I decided I wanted to start a business. I kept working on making items, and AriRaeCrochet was started soon after. My crochet skill got better and better as I made higher quality products, and to this day I have had more than 500 Etsy sales! I sell my handmade crochet animals made to order and ship them out right from the post office down the road.

Running my business has been an amazing journey, from markets, to social media platforms, and a large Christmas rush in December of 2022 in which I had 100 open orders to fill at one point! Running a business definitely teaches responsibility and learning how to deal with customers no matter what their requests are. I run my business right from my home, and ship orders out as they come in. I love reading my reviews and enjoy seeing the pictures of my products that buyers received in the mail! I will occasionally do custom orders, but only for family and friends.

Along the way I have started both a Pinterest account and a YouTube channel which are both called AriRaeCrochet as well. Because of these, I have definitely increased my knowledge of editing photos and videos and how to take quality product pictures for my Etsy. Running a business can be tiring and stressful at times, but it's definitely worth the excitement of making new things and seeing that others enjoy what I make with yarn and a crochet hook. I hope to continue building my business to be more than just a side job in the future, and the ultimate goal for me is to be self employed if it's in God's plan for me.



Fresh Summer Flavor *Fit for the Patio*

FAMILY FEATURES

Gatherings in the summer sun are all about easy, convenient recipes combined with the joy warm weather brings. Spend those special occasions with those you love most and make this summer one to remember with flavorful flatbreads for all to share.

Keeping cooking simple means more time on the patio or in the backyard engaging with guests, and these Chipotle Chicken Flatbreads let the home chefs skip complicated kitchen duties without skimping on flavor!

Visit Culinary.net to find more simple summer recipes to share with loved ones.

Summery Flatbreads for Family and Friends

When dining outdoors with family, friends and neighbors, there are few things better than a tasty dish the whole family can enjoy like these Chipotle Chicken Flatbreads.

Perfect for al fresco entertaining when served alongside a fresh salad, they're simple to make and allow guests to personalize with preferred toppings before popping in the oven. As a colorful and fresh dish, it's an ideal meal for get-togethers on the patio.

For more summer recipe ideas, visit Culinary.net.

Chipotle Chicken Flatbreads

Recipe adapted from butteryourbiscuit.com

- 2 flatbreads**
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese**
- 1 clove garlic, diced**
- 4 chicken tenders, cooked and cubed**
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered**
- salt, to taste**
- pepper, to taste**
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chipotle seasoning**
- 2 tablespoons cilantro leaves, chopped**

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Place parchment paper on baking sheet and add flatbreads. Sprinkle cheese on flatbreads. Top with garlic, chicken and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Bake 16 minutes until cheese is melted.

In small bowl, mix ranch and chipotle seasoning.

Drizzle ranch dressing on flatbreads and sprinkle with cilantro leaves.

for the love of caregivers



Financial Exploitation of Older Adults

PREVENTION CHECKLIST

This article from Charles Schwab was an eye-opener for me. I decided to post the whole article. Whether or not you are responsible for the care of someone at this moment, this is good information to read, and keep. There are many things on this list I would not have known to look for.

According to the FBI, older adult abuse and exploitation are both defined as any intentional act(s) by a caregiver or another person in a relationship of trust that causes harm or distress to older adults, age 60 and older. Identifying financial exploitation of older adults may be difficult. Older adults may be reluctant to say anything about what is happening to them out of embarrassment and shame, fear of reprisal, dependency on the perpetrator of the offense, or fear of further straining a family

relationship. Family members or close friends may be unaware of the situation, or they may be the individuals committing the financial exploitation.

Financial exploitation can range from stealing someone's Social Security check to forging financial documents or misappropriating cash, jewelry, and other assets. Financial fraud costs older adults at least \$36 billion annually, according to the National Council on Aging.

Checklist:

- The inclusion of additional names on an older adult's bank signature card
- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices, including an unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money by a person accompanying the older adult
- Unauthorized withdrawal of the older adult's funds using their ATM card
- Provision of substandard care or bills left unpaid despite the availability of adequate financial resources
- Someone providing unnecessary services
- Discovery of a forged signature for financial transactions or for the titles of the older adult's possessions
- New 'friends' or helpers attempting to isolate an older, vulnerable adult or limit contact with relatives or old friends. Many schemers are initially incredibly helpful.
- Cognitive decline or loss of financial acumen
- Sudden changes to legal or financial documents, or suddenly missing documents including wills, estate documents, insurance policies, retirement accounts, etc.
- Suddenly changing or turning off cell phone numbers or email addresses, another person answering their phone or oddly worded texts or email responses. This may indicate that someone has access to them and is "managing" communications.
- Giving away money, transferring assets to people, unusual spending behavior, checks being written to cash or the unexplained disappearance of cash or property
- Sudden increase in "bounced" checks and overdraft fees
- Older adult appears confused about the account balance or transactions on his or her account
- Caregiver appears to be getting paid too much or too often
- Significant increases in monthly expenses paid which may indicate expenses for persons other than the older adult.
- Statements are sent to an address other than the older adult's home
- Refinance of the older adult's property, particularly with significant cash out or with the addition of new owners on the deed and, most particularly, without the new owners shown as co-borrowers on the loan
- Older adult acknowledges providing personal and account information to a solicitor via the phone or email
- Excitement about winning a sweepstakes or lottery



Protect & Prevent

If you or someone you know is being financially exploited, tell someone you trust, report it to Adult Protective Services in your state and notify your local police department for help. You can also contact the U.S. Justice Department's National Elder Fraud Hotline at 833-372-8311.

In addition to the above checklist, please ensure your loved ones:

- Don't allow unknown individuals into the home
- Don't have work done on their home without getting written estimates from at least three reputable contractors
- Don't give out their Social Security, credit card, or bank account numbers over phone or email

Daytrip Adventures

With my husband, Jack, being in the automobile business, I never knew what to expect from him. Cars ran through our family like a stream going downhill. He came in the beauty shop one day when I was getting my hair done, tapped on the hair drier, and said, "I just sold your car." He handed me a set of keys and said, "There's a new car in the same place where you were parked." Many times he stopped by my workplace, exchanged keys with me, and there would be a different car in the spot where I had parked that morning. It wasn't uncommon for him to do that.

We had one car, however, that we held onto for quite a few years. Mrs. Sloan (of Sloan Museum) traded her car in for a new model. Jack jumped at the opportunity to buy the trade-in. It was a 1965 baby blue Buick convertible with white leather interior and white top and was in mint condition. We called it our "ice cream car" and only took it out on beautiful sunny days.

We enjoyed very much taking "day trips." We would get in the car on a sunny day with no destination planned --- just head off east, west, north, or south --- just start off in any direction. We would find a village, town, or city and see what they had to

offer. We found that every place had something of interest.

Sometimes, we would discover a historical house to tour, a museum, or antique shop. Once, we discovered an antique doll museum that was in a private home. Some towns might have a lovely Victorian downtown area or maybe a farmer's market. We searched for local eateries, shunning the fast-food places. Sometimes it was as simple as finding a cafe with homemade pies or a new flavor of ice cream. We carried our golf clubs in the trunk and occasionally ended up playing a round of golf. It always proved to be a delightful day.

A friend had told me there was a city in northern Michigan named "Arlene." This was a revelation to Jack and me --- neither one of us had ever heard of it. Yes, my friend insisted. She had seen it on the map when she was trying to locate Lake City.

We decided to take a day trip and see what that was all about. It was a sunny day with gossamer clouds floating lazily in the sun-kissed sky. The brilliant sun shining through ancient trees overhanging the roadway created lacy patterns as we travelled north.



We discovered that "Arlene" is a tiny little village with just a few people living there --- not much more than a crossroads in our state. Talking with the townsfolk and through research, we found out a little bit about the town that shares my name.

Arlene, Michigan sits quietly alone in the Missaukee County countryside. In the 1870's, a gentleman by the name of Combs opened a general store in that little village. The Combs lost a daughter due to illness and the grieving townspeople named the community after her --- Arlene.

In the next few years this little community grew with more businesses that included a blacksmith, church, parsonage, town hall, creamery, gym, ice house, post office, sawmill and school. It was a bustling little village.

It was in the late 1920's that the community of Arlene began declining. Today it's just a shell of its former self --- all the original businesses have vanished. Arlene still has a few residents. The town hall and one or two of the other original buildings remain, showing that this little community once showed promise of growth.

With our curiosity about that little village completed, we headed for home. "Arlene" didn't have an ice cream parlor, so we stopped on the way home to get our ice cream craving satisfied.

It was a beautiful day, a fun trip. A sweet memory. Why don't you see where a day trip takes you? Summer awaits.



Arlene is an author, encourager, and matriarch of a family of 44, spanning five generations. She is enjoying life in northern Michigan surrounded by family and friends. She can be reached at estimada27@aol.com.



Our "ice cream" car.

Those Internal Challenges We Face

In celebration of my eleventh year of coaching women, I thought I'd share some of the most common internal challenges we face. My notes are so similar, throughout the years, that I've concluded that these dilemmas are not limited by time, economic circumstances or age. We are women. We share more than just our chromosomes. Our minds work the same, as do our bodies. It is easy to empathize with each other...because we "get it".

Here is a story of five women taken from various years, ages, status, occupation and race.

There was once a group of five women who were all at different stages in their lives. They were all busy with work, family, and other responsibilities, but they realized that they were neglecting themselves. They were tired, run down and drained of their former enthusiasm. Each of them decided to make a change and focus on self-care. They each entered a coaching program. This is their story, often times their words from my case study records.



Here are five reasons why women should focus on self:

1. MENTAL HEALTH

One of the women, Sarah, realized that she was constantly stressed and anxious. She started practicing mindfulness and meditation, which helped her to calm her mind and reduce her stress levels. She realized that taking care of her mental health was just as important as taking care of her physical health. Now she schedules time to practice as an appointment. The results: She gives of herself more freely because her vessel is full. She manages stress better, is more even tempered, laughs more easily and sleeps better.

2. PHYSICAL HEALTH

Another woman, Emily, had been neglecting her physical health. She was once very fit and had plenty of energy. Over time, she let it slip away because she “didn’t have the time”. After working with a coach, she decided to make her strength and endurance a priority. First, she started walking. Then she changed her diet. Within three months she was going to the gym and eating healthier, which gave her more energy and made her feel better about herself. She realized that taking care of her body was important for her overall well-being. She now looks and feels better than she has in years. She’s happier and encourages other women to spend time on their physicality.

3. SELF-CONFIDENCE

A third woman, Rachel, had always struggled with self-confidence, although, to look at her, you’d wonder why. Her coach got to the bottom of it! Things were said to her as she was growing up, that slowly diminished her self esteem. The answer: Do things that delight you! Have fun! She started doing things that made her feel good, like taking a dance class and wearing clothes that boosted her confidence. She realized that focusing on herself helped her to feel more self-assured. The results were amazing. She was free, liberated. She got a promotion at work and is in a healthy, mutually respectful relationship.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

The fourth woman, Jessica, realized that she had been neglecting her relationships. She was always doing, never being. Her mind was on to the next thing! Once she realized what was missing, she and her coach talked about being in the moment,

focusing on what was happening and who she was with. She started spending more quality time with her friends and family, which made her feel more connected and supported. She realized that taking care of herself also meant taking care of her relationships. This was during the pandemic. She felt isolated and alone. She worked from home, ate at home and missed the contact with others. She used Zoom to connect, wrote letters and read for fun. She made it! Now she makes certain to maintain those relationships, and values them more than ever.

5. PERSONAL GROWTH

The fifth woman, Maria, had been feeling stuck in her career. She was stagnant! She had developed a routine of mental boredom...she was tired and grouchy. We discovered that she loved to learn and try new things but had been neglecting them because she had achieved her professional goals. We came up with an “out of the rut” plan. She started taking courses and attending workshops to learn new skills and expand her knowledge. She realized that focusing on her personal growth was important for her career and her overall happiness. The result: She became better at her job, started looking at life with “fresh eyes” and was much more amicable and fulfilled.

In the end, these five women realized that focusing on self-care was not selfish, instead it was self full. They knew that it was absolutely necessary for their well-being. Now they encourage other women to do the same and to prioritize their own needs and desires.

Your results: A happier, healthier, more secure and fulfilled YOU!

Know that you are uniquely special and loved.
Treat yourself that way!

Much Love,
Coach Deb



Deborah St.Hilaire is a unifier, enlightener and catalyst for change in the way women are treated and treat each other. Author, speaker, transformational coach and teacher, Deb, the founder of MyBodyMindSpirit.com, is dedicated to enriching lives through selfcare, meditation, movement, thought and journaling. She can be reached at 989.450.4200 or deb@mybodymindspirit.com.



Manifesting Miracles

In 2004 when I was first introduced to the Law of Attraction (LoA) I remember thinking “Can I really become happy and stop repeating alcoholic, verbally abusive, relationships simply by changing the way I was thinking”?

After 8 months of practice, I realized that my happiness no longer depended on some unforeseeable miracle happening. I freed myself from abuse. Within three years I attracted my ideal partner (whom I've been married to for 15 years) and for the first time in decades, became truly happy. I'm not going to tell you it's easy, especially because I was used to suffering and sacrificing and focusing on everyone else's happiness instead of my own. However, the good news is, it's possible to master and we don't have to do it alone. We can learn by practicing a process where we use the energy of our thoughts, that are high in frequency, and align them with the high frequency energy in the Universe, Source or God. Once you've mastered the alignment process, you will have learned how to co-create with Source and manifest your own miracles.

How do we begin manifesting miracles?

Step #1

Ask Questions

Before Henry Ford invented anything, he began **asking questions**. Each question led to more ideas and eventually, by ignoring all doubts and only listening to his intuition (God's way of speaking to us), he invented the first internal combustion engine. He knew that *if you keep on doing what you've been doing, you'll keep on getting what you've been getting*. With this understanding, exploring new ideas became his passion. His inventions could be viewed as miracles, but he knew how to co-create with the universe because he chose to **ask questions**, live in a positive *high frequency* energy field (his passion) and stay in the flow of the creative energy of the Universe. As a result, his quote: "*Whether you believe you can or can't, it's true*" is an idea all inventors embrace and it's also a belief that one must adopt to use the LoA effectively.

Author Louise Hay, also learned how to manifest miracles. While in her 20s, Louise was diagnosed with terminal cancer and was told she needed to have a hysterectomy to survive. The idea of not being able to have children broke her heart, so she began to **ask herself questions** and search for other solutions besides surgery. After many weeks of research, she learned that all negative thoughts including stress, worry and fear were proven harmful to our health. She decided to stop defining herself as a victim of sexual abuse and purposely chose to let go of any self-defeating, low frequency habits of thought. After several months of self-care and self-nourishment she learned how to love herself compassionately and unconditionally (see *You Can Heal Your Life*). Within a few short months her cancer disappeared. The doctors thought it was a miracle, but she knew she had co-created with Source and manifested her miracle healing by shifting her overall energy field from fear (of dying) to loving herself as deeply as Source does. By doing this she came into complete alignment with source energy, and a miracle followed.

Step #2

Set Your Intention

The book *A Course in Miracles*, states that "miracles occur naturally as an expression of love." Keeping this in mind, **set an intention** to shift your focus from stress, worry, and fearful thoughts, to love. I recommend that you write down a list of things

that make you smile, laugh, feel excited and warm your heart (like beautiful sunsets or Facebook videos showing baby animals of different species totally loving each other). Make sure that your daily list of things to do includes some of these things. Next, **intentionally** choose to let go of all the old stories you've been telling yourself, all the limiting, false beliefs (i.e.: I can't do that, only college educated people make good money, etc.) that were given to you by your parents, and finally eliminate all negative self-talk (i.e. I'm not good enough). Simply by doing these two things, you will immediately begin to feel better.

Step #3

Pay Attention to Results

If you don't begin to **see changes** in your life, you are subconsciously stuck in your old stories and negative habits of thought. Go back to your "feel good" list and *reset* your intention to make yourself do several things from your list every morning. It takes time to build a new habit where good feeling synchronicities show up. Start **recording** them in a notebook and watch your progress. When synchronicities that surprise and delight you **consistently appear**, you have effectively established a new habit of feeling good. You're now on your way to creating a new and happier life.

The remaining steps on how to co-create miracles with Source can be found here: SteppingIntoALifeOfJoy.com. Without the knowledge of the LoA I would never have understood the power we all have when we are in alignment with God/Source Energy. This is why I love being an Intuitive life coach specializing in LoA, inspirational speaker and writer and author. It warms my heart and makes me smile both inside and out, when I see a person learn how to manifest a life that includes peace, joy, harmony, love, success, freedom, and abundance in all areas.



Suzanne Young is an intuitive life coach who specializes in the Law of Attraction. She is also an inspirational speaker, author, and co-owner of Personal Success Programs, since 2007, with her husband Kevin Young. You can email

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Vacation Vibes

7 Tips

to Savor Your
Getaway Without
Sacrificing Your
Health Goals



My trip to Israel brought up a lot of incredible experiences, and some challenges!

I thought this would be a perfect time to talk about tips to have “both/and”.

Enjoy your vacation AND feel like you’re not throwing your healthy goals out the window.

VACATION TIP #1

If you’re not comfortable with a guaranteed bathroom opportunity, make up your water intake in the evening when you are back at your hotel.

Part of your healthy goals is to stay hydrated, right? That’s something that each of us needs to pay attention to – to get enough water. Let’s say you’ve been working on being consistent with drinking 84 to 100 ounces, as I have.

When we went on a tour of Israel we were never sure when the next

restroom might be available. It could be a very long time between restrooms! I found myself really limiting my water intake. Even though I know all the benefits of drinking water I was nervous about having to go and not being able to.

You may or may not have this challenge with your scheduled vacation, but if you do, what can you do? Make up your water intake in the evening when you are back at your hotel. It’s not ideal, but you can at least get closer to your optimal water intake without the risk of being extremely uncomfortable!

VACATION TIP #2

Enjoy all the local food AND listen to your body wisdom.

It's all about the food!

When you're home you may have developed a really good rhythm of healthy food choices, including snacks. Now you're on vacation, now what?

Eat and Enjoy! This is definitely a both/and – eat and enjoy. Wherever you are, try out the local food, the local produce, enjoy the entire local experience.

Don't let judgment or "I shouldn't" ruin your experience. Diets can create a sense of deprivation that is not sustainable. Deprivation doesn't work – actually this is something I work with my clients on. You can, and I invite you to, take full advantage of all the food – yes, even including dessert. But also listen to your body – what makes you feel good and full of energy and what doesn't. Also, how much? Enjoy all the local food AND listen to your body wisdom.

VACATION TIP #3

Use whatever movement options are available – keep moving without judgment. It may not be the same workout, but your body will love the change of pace.

How do you keep up your exercise routine while you're on vacation?

It can feel hard enough to get your workout in when you have a pretty good routine going, right? How are you going to get it done when your routine is disrupted?

What tells you that you have to do the same workout? Can you take advantage of different opportunities for movement and still feel good?

Maybe an early morning walk since you don't have to rush off to the office. Beach volleyball, swimming, waterskiing, running through the waterpark with the kids. Maybe even a yoga or tai chi session on the beach – morning or evening would be amazing.

Even if you're on a cruise, you can take advantage of movement "classes" with a personal trainer. Many times they have several yoga sessions throughout the day. Just check the schedule.

You can still use your watch to track your movement – you may need to be a bit creative in choosing the "exercise" but it's all good! Keep moving!

VACATION TIP #4

When scheduling your time off – honor what is most important for you. If it's rest, no judgment, - honor that!

Both sleep and rest are self care and both are essential for our good health. When I think about a vacation, I think of time to relax and rest.

When we went on the Pilgrimage there was not time to rest. Most days I was up around 4:30 am but I was usually in bed around 8 pm.

When you plan your "vacation", keep in mind what's important. Do you want adventure like with a Pilgrimage? Or do you want

time to kick back, relax, read a book, just to be?

Both are wonderful! You will get sleep with either one AND if you need or want some down time, schedule your time off with breaks where you don't need to do anything.

Or do both! I overheard a couple on our Pilgrimage that was going to take a short cruise around the Mediterranean after the tour was over. Taking advantage while already in the area, they were going to enjoy the both/and – adventure AND some rest.

VACATION TIP #5

Give yourself grace!

How do you deal with time and schedule change? How do you enjoy all the things and stay committed to your health goals when your body clock gets messed up?

We started our Pilgrimage by leaving our house at 8 am to head south to meet the rest of the group and take the shuttles to the airport. Our travel plan included an overnight 8 hour flight, a four hour layover, and another flight of four hours. It was almost 4:00 in the afternoon of day 2 when we got to Tel Aviv and met our guide.

I was already a grump and we still had a long drive to the hotel – several hours that was made even longer by a ton of traffic. My body was telling me I had been up for 36 hours with intermittent and interrupted sleep, crazy meal times, or no meals, and I was cranky!

My advice or tip for this?

Give yourself grace, especially if you are traveling a long distance. Be kind to yourself; allow for a bit of crankiness from you and from others. Grace and kindness will go a long way when you travel!

VACATION TIP #6

Try to keep to your rhythm of supplements while you're on vacation and get creative about how to have them handy for when you have the opportunity for water and/or food. Baggies worked for me!

You may be like me and take a couple handfuls of supplements every day, but even if you only take one or two, keeping on schedule while you're on vacation can be a challenge.

Here are a couple tips that I used as well as one from a fellow pilgrim.

I put my mid-morning supplements in a baggie in the purse I carried. I could take them at lunch when we stopped and I had water available. I did the same thing with the evening supplements and brought those to dinner.

A fellow pilgrim had all her supplements in a pill container that she brought with her for breakfast. She pretty much did all hers at the start of the day, so that worked really well for her.

One thing about travelling internationally with medication and supplements. We were advised to take all medication and keep it with us in our carry on and it had to be in the originally dispensed bottles. Supplements didn't have to be in original containers, but you did run the risk of

having them taken if your bag was inspected. No one in our group had any trouble, but I heard it is a possibility so keep that in mind.

VACATION TIP #7

Whether you are planning a weekend, a vacation, another career, or retirement, let your venture capital bless you.

This is my final vacation tip in this series and I think it's the most important. It's about work vs. vacation.

I know what you're thinking – it's a no brainer that I'd rather be on vacation than work, right? I totally get it! Just hear me out for a few minutes. When I realized this, it was a mic drop moment for me and completely changed my mindset. My

mindset about work, that is.

I remember years ago in my morning prayer time I would talk to the Lord about "when I'm retired I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that.... I'm really going to be relaxed." I had a whole slew of things that I was going to do, or how I was going to feel. WHEN I retired.

You may be thinking the same thing, or even how you're going to be or feel when you're on vacation. Always looking forward to "ending work" – whatever that means to you.

But I came to realize several points:

ONE – we are not promised tomorrow. I may not live to see retirement. If that was all I was living for, and

then I never actually experienced it – how sad is that?

TWO – I was missing out on the blessings of each day by only looking ahead – at either the weekend, the vacation, or retirement. I was not present, I was not grateful for the moment, I was not savoring the life that God had given me.

THREE – and this was my mic drop moment – my job (and that was when I was working full time for someone else) was funding my retirement, my vacations, and my coaching business that I was getting off the ground. In essence – it was my venture capital.

Oh my gosh! I could truly appreciate my job for all it was allowing me to do.

What an incredible mind shift!

As my last tip from our Pilgrimage to the Holy Land – I invite you to be present, be grateful, and look at your job, not as a necessary evil, but as a gift of venture capital. And whether you are planning a weekend, a vacation, another career, or retirement, let your venture capital bless you.



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