

W2W

Dream Chaser's Guide

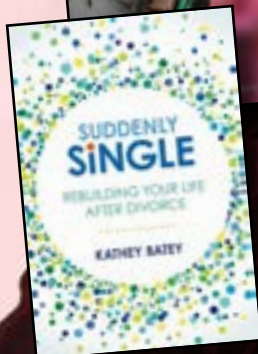
Debra Loader

Changing Your Perspective

Jennifer Beard

An Interview with Susan Perrish

Colleen Kilpatrick



Katheryn Batey

Suddenly Single: Rebuilding Your Life After Divorce

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note from our editor

“You need power, only when you want to do something harmful; otherwise, love is enough to get everything done.”

~Charlie Chaplin



Debra K. Collins
Publisher



Mimi Matthews
Editor



Jennifer Gardner
Creative Director

theme

All Things Women

Hello there and happy spring!! I hope when you read this it is actually looking and acting like spring, but that's the beauty of Michigan. We never get bored here, at least not weather-wise!

Our publisher, Debi, had knee replacement surgery on January 4, and she has been recuperating, enduring physical therapy, and has gotten stronger. She was determined to take her health back, and the first thing she accomplished was this surgery. It was a priority because she was having difficulty walking and even sleeping at night. Now she is moving forward to check off other items on her list. Her final check mark will be next to “wear a red crocheted bikini on the beach”!! We are all cheering for you Debi!!

We have a unique issue this month, with a mixture of themes including Education/Lifelong Learning, Women's Matters, and an interview with artist Susan Perrish. And of course, we are delighted to introduce to you our beautiful cover girl, Kathy Batey. Enjoy!

Until next time,

Mimi



"You have been criticizing yourself for years, and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens."

~Louise Hay

Would you be interested in being an Ambassador for Women2Women?

We are looking for women interested in collaborating with us on a variety of different projects throughout the year. If you support what W2W stands for and like to be out in the community, this could be you! Please email our publisher, Debra, at deb@w2wmichigan.com if this sounds like something you would be interested in.

contributing writers

Kathy Batey • Lynn Nicole Turner • Deborah St. Hilaire • Suzanne Young
Mimi Matthews • Tarnesa Martin • Arlene Crane-Curns • Jennifer Gardner
Debra Loader • Colleen Kilpatrick • Jennifer Beard • Kelly Haskins Stonerock

W2W

Women *Inspiring* Women *for Good!*

Our Mission:

Women2Women Michigan was created to connect women with women for good to encourage, support, have fun, do business and provide links for women's resources.

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Women make the majority of purchasing decisions. They buy goods and services 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.

READERSHIP & DISTRIBUTION

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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Quotes By

Dolores Cannon

These quotes reflect Cannon's belief in the power of meditation as a tool for self-discovery, connection, and accessing deeper knowledge within oneself.

"Meditation allows you to connect with the universal consciousness and gain a greater understanding of your purpose."

"By going within, we find the answers to all our questions. We are the keepers of the knowledge we seek."

"The conscious mind only thinks it knows the answers; the subconscious mind knows it knows the answers."

"Every lesson you learn will repeat itself until you learn it. Once you have learned it, it will never come again."

"If you can understand that the universe is constantly expanding and growing, then you can understand that the soul must do the same."

10 Reminders for Renewal



1

Embrace your uniqueness; it's your superpower.



2

Prioritize self-care without guilt—it's essential.



3

Your worth isn't defined by others' opinions; it comes from within.



Celebrate your achievements, no matter how small.

4



"Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself."

—Maya Angelou



5

Take risks—it's where growth and magic happen.



Surround yourself with positivity and supportive people.

6



7

Practice gratitude daily—it changes perspectives.



8

Trust your intuition—it's your inner compass.



Comparison is the thief of joy—focus on your journey.

9



10

Remember, you are capable of more than you imagine.



Jennifer Gardner is a wife and mother of two girls. She loves being creative with the ladies of Women2Women Michigan Magazine.

I AM



I remember who I really, really am, the good stuff I've discovered about myself, and I change my thought pattern. It does work! I even say some of those things out loud to others, and I haven't gotten struck by lightning yet!!

I urge you to try it. This world seems to thrive on negative criticism, comparison, bullying, and zillions of images that could leave us feeling like a mess. We certainly do not need to be our own enemy by fueling that

self-concept with negative thoughts and beliefs about ourselves!!

If you have no idea what makes you fabulous, then ask a friend. Our friends see and know what we do well, how we have helped them or others, what our true personality is like, and our strengths. They can give you a few real characteristics to get started.

But first of all, above everything else, please know that you are loved. Knowing we are loved can change how we feel about ourselves. You have family and friends who love you. But also, most importantly, the One who really, truly loves you unconditionally is our Creator God who wants a close and personal relationship with you.

So go ahead, discover some good things about yourself, and then begin replacing the ugly self-talk with uplifting, affirming words instead.

I've given you an alphabet card below full of suggestions. From my own experience, I believe that if you read these words daily--using them to describe yourself--and begin to

believe them (because of course you are all these things), you will become empowered and equipped with stronger self-esteem, self-love, and confidence.



So there you have it--strong, uplifting words to fill in this blank:

I AM _____.

I am very excited to hear about your journey. Let me know how you do!

You can buy this 5" x 7" card from my Etsy shop if you desire.



Mimi Matthews is in the "encouragement business" as the owner of Empowordment 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.

I AM _____.

Whatever words you would choose to fill in the blank determines how you behave. For you see, **the way you perceive yourself governs your actions in life.**

In my past I didn't like myself much. I felt like I could never measure up or please anyone, although I spent most of my waking minutes trying to. The words I used to put after "I am" were not very nice words at all.

My beginnings were a bit rocky, which led me to feel as if I really didn't deserve love, or even much of a place in this world.

After going through a LOT of healing, prayer, reading/study, and consciously changing my thought patterns, I began to view myself differently. Believe me, this process took a long time, but the journey has set me free. Now, when I begin to think of myself with words that cut me down, words that undermine the fabulous person I was created me to be, I pull myself back and change them.

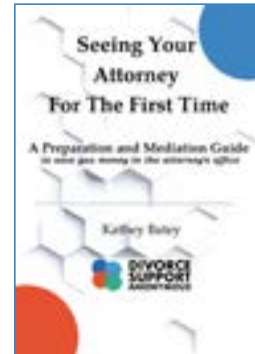
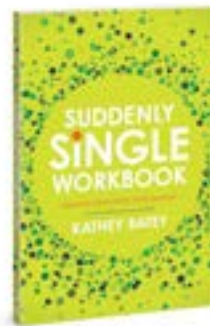
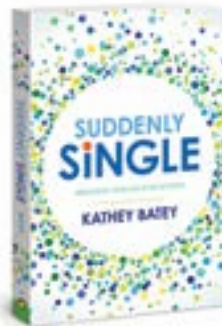
covergirl

Kathey Batey

Court-Appointed Mediator, Divorce Coach, Group Support

“My work is to guide people through the trauma of divorce with the least amount of damage emotionally, financially, spiritually and physically.”

JOIN US as we get to know our Cover Girl, Kathey Batey. We invited her to tell us about herself, her work, and her passions.



**DIVORCE
SUPPORT
ANONYMOUS**

I have always been a writer and have loved speaking and writing since I was a child. I received trophies many times in high school, college, and in Toastmasters competitive speaking.

I was raised, and then raised my kids, on the east side of the state—Grand Blanc for me, Burton/Davison for my kids. I moved to Grand Rapids for a job offer in 2004 and my oldest daughter lives here. I'm still trying to get my youngest daughter and son to move their families here! I adore my family and they are the most important to me. I have 3 kids, their spouses and 10 grandchildren. They are the ultimate joy in my life. And I am so incredibly proud of who they are.

I am currently an elected Trustee of Plainfield Township. After working 25 years in the corporate world, I am now a corporate trainer and life coach for life transitions. I went through my own divorce 28 years ago, after 20 years of marriage. My children were teens. It had a profound effect on me. There were no support groups back in that day and when the opportunity came to receive training to lead one, I jumped in.

I have been working in the divorce world for the past 19 years. I hold support groups, I'm a divorce coach, and a court-appointed domestic mediator. I do these things because I remember how lonely it is to go through a divorce. I never want anyone to be as afraid, uninformed or lonely as I was during that life trauma.

Because of the effectiveness of this work, I receive a lot of referrals from previous participants, therapists and attorneys for mediation, coaching and my support groups. My church and my community have been extremely supportive because they have seen the benefits and responses of those who work with me. I have been told I am a calming presence for people in trauma. I listen well, I am present, and having experienced my own traumas I relate without talking about myself. I am a peacemaker.

When tough challenges come in my life, I find strength in my faith. I learned many years ago that this life and this work are too difficult to handle alone. We are desperate for wisdom! God has it and we need it. The purpose of our lives is to ultimately be healed spiritually through Jesus Christ. Very early in this work I realized I cannot take into my heart the traumas people have. It can consume you. I have a "deal" with God. He does His work of healing people and I do my work of showing up, caring deeply for people, letting them articulate what is going on in their minds and hearts, helping them with the details, and pointing them to Him. He is the only healer, and He does it through people. It's my goal that He does it through me.

My education is in counseling. I am a coach, which allows me to work nationally and internationally. I continue to study since the complexities are many in marriage dynamics. I am a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and part of Leslie Vernick's Equip group for counselors and coaches. The state requires continual learning for mediators, which I receive. Also, I have an inexhaustible desire to

continue learning about the broken human condition in order to help others through it.

I was asked to share any **life lessons** that I feel women should know that would improve their quality of life.

For many years I've been studying trauma in women's lives and the effects that still work within us today.

We must be curious of what is buried deep inside of us and pursue our own healing.

We must be brave enough to unbury it and stop denying it, for our own healing and good. Anxiety, depression, addictions and other ailments ruin our lives because we cannot be honest with ourselves about the pain and trauma in our story. Your story matters and you need to stop minimizing it for your own good and the good of your relationships and children.

"The most profound thing we can offer our children is our own healing."

~Anne Lamont

Another lesson, unrelated to my work or trauma, is to **go after your God-given calling and dreams** because your satisfaction in life depends on it. Take the risks necessary to make them happen! Nothing else satisfies or will make such a profound impact on your world.

On a side note: I am a hopeless creative. I cannot stop writing and creating. My most recent venture is *The Lipstick Chronicles* which depicts the decades of our lives by the lipstick that we wore. I've presented a few versions; this is a remake of a one-woman show I wrote in the past. It is a one-hour main stage event that evokes laughter, tears and melancholy about the decades of a woman's life. My women audiences love it! Find more on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnpvgdiQo4c.

My books are available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Christianbooks.com. My books are a gentle guide through and after divorce. There are many life-altering decisions we make during and after divorce that either keep us stuck or launch us into a new life. Don't go through this alone!

All of my work is available online. I hold mediations online as well as my support groups and coaching online. I hold Friday Night Lives on my DSA (Divorce Support Anonymous) page to give people hope and direction through divorce. My YouTube channel holds over 300 videos to walk you through divorce.

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The Confidence of a Woman

Many times, we as women struggle to rise to our rightful place at home, at work, at church or in the community because we lack confidence. Not too long ago, I was asked this question by one of my friends.

“WHERE HAS MY CONFIDENCE GONE?”

This question triggered a memory of when I was not operating in assurance and didn't really know how to take control of my life and wellbeing. Life can be challenging and hard to navigate, especially if you lack confidence, in the areas of your life that matter.

Confidence is the feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities. Confidence means feeling sure of yourself and your abilities, not in an arrogant way, but in a realistic, secure way.

Confidence isn't about feeling superior to others. It's a quiet inner knowledge that you're capable of being able to excel in life, accomplish goals with the capacity to withstand or to recover timely from difficult times.

Many times, we hide our true selves in front of others and shrink down because we have allowed ourselves to think that we are not measuring up to others in the room who may have a higher level of education or more experience etc. When we shrink down, for whatever reason, we take the risk of not experiencing all that God has for us. God's word in Philippians 1:6 tells us that we can be confident of the confidence that he put inside us, and that he who began a good work in us, will carry it to the return of Jesus Christ.

Being able to excel and move forward in your purpose takes confidence, resilience and a forward-thinking mindset that gives you faith to turn your obstacles into opportunities. But if I am truly honest, everybody lacks confidence in some areas of their life. Gaining confidence is a life-altering journey. You can gain so much just by making small adjustments to your thought process and behaviors.

Unfortunately, many of us have been led to believe that our confidence comes from other people. As a result, we often point the blame finger at others for “failing” to instill in us the confidence we desire. In addition, we blame other people for shattering our confidence into little pieces.

The truth is that you get your confidence from YOU, not from other people. It is purely an *internal process*. It doesn't matter how long you have felt lacking in confidence, you can decide right now to activate your confidence muscle.

I would like to share 4 areas you can start with.

THE FIRST AREA IS SOCIAL CONFIDENCE.

Social confidence is the ability to portray yourself as confident in social situations. This is done by connecting, engaging, and understanding the mindset of the people around you. This can be demonstrated through body language, appearance and how you communicate with people.

THE SECOND AREA IS CONFIDENCE IN YOUR EXPERTISE.

Having confidence in your expertise or profession is trusting in your skills or abilities.

THE THIRD IS PHYSICAL CONFIDENCE. Having physical confidence is when you prioritize your appearance, and wear clothes, makeup, hairstyles, and shoes that compliment you, allowing you to feel good about you and your presentation.

THE FOURTH IS SELF-WORTH CONFIDENCE. Having self-worth is the internal sense of being good enough and worthy of love and belonging from others.



Tarnesa Martin R.N. is a life and personal development coach who leads sessions in health awareness, education, and self-care that focus on enhancing one's capabilities for becoming a better version of themselves. She is an author, speaker, educator, and leadership mentor. Her business is Empower To Live Better, LLC, and she may be reached at empowertolivebetter@gmail.com.

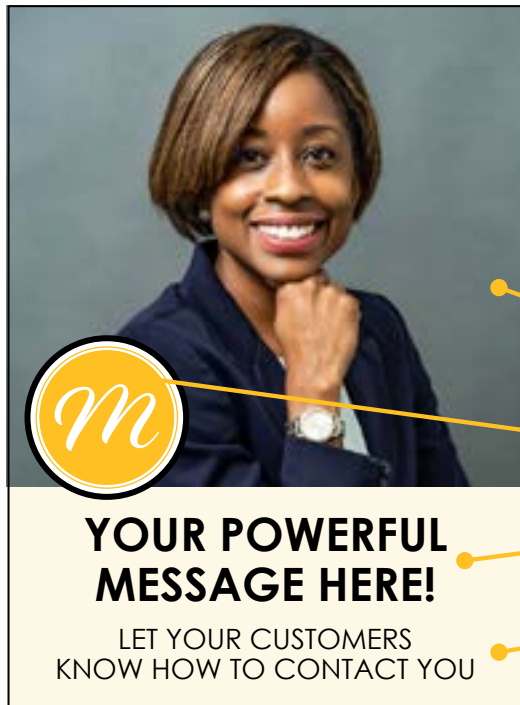
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Taco Tuesday Twist

(Family Features)

Solve Busy Weeknights with a Simple, Satisfying Meal

Juggling those weeknight responsibilities including homework, catching up on emails, after-school activities, social events and more can leave families scrambling when it comes time for dinner. When your busy schedule leaves little time to spend in the kitchen, turn to family favorites you can put on the table in 20 minutes or less to give loved ones the fuel they need without sacrificing taste or quality.

Take Taco Tuesdays to a new level (without the hassle) with this deconstructed version of classic fish tacos. Served over a bed of quinoa and drizzled with yogurt crema, these Baja Fish Taco Bowls let you switch up average taco nights by swapping out tortillas and shells for quick-cooking, protein-packed quinoa mixed with nutrient-dense kale. This easy, satisfying meal adds deliciously seasoned fish, creamy avocado and hearty whole grains to your diet with a lighter version of Baja sauce as a perfect companion for fish tacos.

At its core, this tasty weeknight meal relies on the ease and light, nutty flavor of Success Tri-Color Boil-in-Bag Quinoa, which is ready in just 10 minutes. It's packed with protein, all nine essential amino acids and is a good source of fiber, making it a perfect solution for busy moments whether your loved ones eat vegan, vegetarian or a mix of everything.

Visit SuccessRice.com to find more recipe solutions for busy weeknights.

Baja Fish Taco Bowls

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Servings: 4

- 2 bags Success Tri-Color Quinoa
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 white-fleshed fish fillets (5-6 ounces each)
- 1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lime zest
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 4 cups packed baby kale
- 1 ripe avocado, halved, pitted, peeled and thinly sliced

Prepare quinoa according to package directions.

In large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Season fish with Cajun seasoning and salt. Cook 2-3 minutes per side, or until fish is lightly browned and starts to flake. Set aside.

In small bowl, stir yogurt, lime zest, lime juice and cumin.

In medium bowl, toss quinoa with kale. Divide between four bowls. Top each with fish, sliced avocado and dollop of yogurt and lime crema.

Substitutions: Use taco seasoning or chili powder in place of Cajun seasoning. Use arugula or baby spinach instead of kale.

Changing Your Perspective

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

-Dr. Wayne Dyer

Dr. Wayne Dyer wisely reminds us that we have a lot of control over how we see every aspect of life, and as a result, the meaning we assign to it.

I challenge you to view meaning as something we *choose*. People often assume events, actions, and even items have an inherent meaning to them. Consider that if we take responsibility for the meaning we assign things, we can change what they mean. This takes a high level of maturity, but it's well worth the effort.

According to Tony Robbins our quality of life is determined by two things--meaning and emotion.

The meaning we give things determines what we feel. Anytime we experience emotional upset, it's because we've attached a meaning to something that isn't serving us. My suggestion is to find a way to reframe what life offers so that we feel good about it. I challenge you to do this, because if we do, we can live an amazing life.

Let's look at a simple example such as cleaning the kitchen. This can be seen in two ways: as a burdensome task akin to slavery or as a meaningful activity that reflects gratitude for having a wonderful place to cook and care for our health, which in turn supports a fulfilling life.

Seeing common activities from their highest possible vantage point makes them meaningful.

Changing the way we see daily life duties can be transformative, but seeing the most challenging situations this way can turn them into our greatest opportunities. Achieving this requires taking complete responsibility, not for the situation itself, but for how we respond.



Jennifer Beard, owner of Bold Life & Bold Life Academy, guides individuals through transformative shifts in behavior, beliefs, and emotions, unlocking the path to their most extraordinary lives. Visit Jennifer at JenniferBeard.com.

I offer you a few journaling prompts to find even greater meaning in everyday life. Ask these questions at the end of the day:

1 What challenged me today, and how did I respond? Challenges are opportunities for growth. Reflecting on them can provide insights into your resilience and coping strategies.

2 What did I learn today? Every day holds opportunities for learning, whether from a challenge, a conversation, or even a mistake.

3 How did I make a difference today? Reflect on how your actions, however small, may have positively impacted someone else's day.

4 What am I grateful for today? Recognizing even the smallest things you're

grateful for can shift your focus to the positive aspects of your daily life.

5 Consider an event from your day and ask yourself, "What meaning have I attached to this?" Acknowledge that there are countless ways to interpret any experience. Reflect on how this event is neither inherently good nor bad, but is shaped by the meaning you give it. By choosing your focus, you determine the significance of the event. This exercise can help shift your perspective and open up new ways of seeing your experiences.

Take 10 minutes to answer some or all the questions daily to shift your experience of life. Commit yourself to getting the greatest value out of these questions. Use them to create your most beautiful and meaningful year yet.

called to create

Susan Perrish

Her Inspiring Journey from Novice to Virtuoso

INTERVIEW BY COLLEEN KILPATRICK



I can vividly recall the moment I first learned of Susan Perrish and the sublime works of art she creates. It unfolded within the walls of a public library during an art installation where I found myself captivated by the allure of a particular painting - a portrait of a regal young woman draped in elegant finery, her gaze wistfully engaging with the viewer. What enthralled me most was not the beautiful subject, but the artist's masterful play with light and shadow, as well as her exquisite treatment of fabric.

During this memorable encounter I learned that Susan, the creator of this mesmerizing artwork, had embarked on her painting journey merely three years prior. That astonished me as it does so many others when first introduced to her work.

Eager to learn more about the artist's creative journey, I looked forward to an opportunity to meet Susan personally. Eventually that opportunity presented itself. I am thrilled to share our conversation and her inspiring story with you.



I'D LOVE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR FORMATIVE YEARS. WERE YOU INTERESTED IN ART AS A CHILD?

No, I was not into art at all. I was a piano player and could sit for hours listening to concertos. But, by the age of 19, I was a divorced single mom on welfare with a 6-month old child. I moved back into my parents home, my dreams of living happily-ever-after with my husband and baby dashed. I had no idea what to do with my life. I was considering nursing school when a friend told me about her new career as a court reporter. She encouraged me to give it a try. Because of my piano playing skills, I was quite good at it. For years, I alternated between freelancing as a court reporter and working in the court system.

When I was 27, I met and married my current husband, Bob. He and his two brothers are all fabulous artists. For many years, whenever the family got together, Bob and his brothers would sit together at a table and talk about art. I never joined those conversations because I wasn't an artist and didn't feel like I had anything to contribute.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN DRAWING?

By 2013, I had become disillusioned with playing the piano. I never felt like I was good enough and I always had a fear of sharing my music with others. I had this creative urge within me, but I didn't know where or how to direct it. One day, when I was 57 years old, I Googled, "How to draw an eye". A training video came up and I clicked on it. With the help of that video, I drew my first eye. I was pleased with my results so I decided to Google, "How to draw a nose" and then "How to draw a mouth". Later, I showed my husband what I had drawn and he was very complimentary and encouraging. That's how I got started. For the next two years I took online drawing classes and developed my skills little-by-little.

HOW DID YOU BECOME THE AWARD-WINNING PORTRAIT ARTIST YOU ARE TODAY - JUST 10 YEARS AFTER YOU DREW YOUR FIRST EYE?

In 2015, I learned about a figure drawing class taught by a woman named Amy Foster at the Atelier in Royal Oak. With



Amy's exceptional guidance, I began refining my figure drawing skills. Eventually, I was taking two figure drawing classes a week. I started posting my drawings on Facebook. The feedback I got was positive and encouraging which inspired me on.

WAS IT DIFFICULT TO SHARE YOUR EARLY DRAWINGS WITH FRIENDS OR ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Oh, yes! When I was playing piano, I was always afraid of criticism and making a mistake, which caused me to keep my music hidden. I decided I was not going to be afraid to share my art. I was not going to hide any longer.

IS SHARING YOUR ART EASIER NOW?

I still feel a lot of fear when it comes to sharing my art. I go through this process while I'm creating a new portrait: first I love it, then I hate it, then I hide it in a closet. Eventually, I take it out of the closet and realize it's pretty good, so I finish it. Then I love it again. Then I post it, then I hate it. It's still hard for me to put my creations out into the world. The judgment is so difficult. But my husband reminds me, "They're judging your art, not you." I have to keep reminding myself of that.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT SURPRISES YOU ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED AS AN ARTIST IN SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME?

It's like I had this seed of possibility within me that wanted to be brought to life, but I had to take action to realize it, to bring it into reality. Without my effort, it would have stayed a seed, a longing, a desire. I would guess that 80% of my ability comes from being in the studio twice a week, drawing live models in the company of other artists. I wasn't born with drawing skills. The effort I've put into developing my skills has made all the difference.



"When you're not worried about what other people think, you can really blossom."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS AN INTEREST THAT'S BEEN CALLING TO THEM?

Figure out a way to turn it into reality. Inspiration is the start, but realizing a dream takes consistent effort. Find the time to nurture your interest and bring it to life.

I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD PEOPLE SAY, "I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO LEARN TO DRAW OR FILL IN THE BLANK, BUT I'M TOO OLD FOR THAT NOW." YOU DIDN'T START DRAWING UNTIL YOU WERE 57 YEARS OLD. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THEM?

When I was in my 20s and 30s, I was too worried about what other people

think to pursue art. I didn't have the self-confidence to do what I'm doing now. In my 50s, I started to accept who I was and not be so concerned about other people's opinions. "When you're not worried about

what other people think, you can really blossom."

HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED SINCE BECOMING AN ARTIST?

I just love what I do! I love creating portraits of people! Sometimes I wake up at 2:30 in the morning and think to myself, "Oh, darn! I have to wait four more hours before I can start painting again!" I love having an interest that I enjoy that much! And, on top of that, I now have a place at the Artists' Table at our family gatherings!

Learn more about Susan at www.susanperrish.com.



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.



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Ageless Scholar

A Midlife Adventure in Pursuit of Lifelong Knowledge

In a world that's constantly evolving the journey of education is not a mere passage of time; it is an endless exploration of possibilities, dreams, and self-discovery. At 42, as I stand on the precipice of a new academic adventure at my dream school, Harvard University (Division of Continuing Education), I am reminded that the pursuit of education is a transformative odyssey, one that holds the key to unlocking the fullest potential of who we are and what we can become.

Embarking on my educational journey at the age of 42 feels like stepping into a time warp. The process of applying for financial aid, conversing with academic advisors, and choosing courses seems surreal. I grapple with uncertainty about which courses to select and whether to test out or take classes. The stress of deadlines and strict pre-requisite requirements to even apply to be in my desired degree program adds to the complexity. The upcoming classes create a sense of anticipation, with the pressure not to stress about passing them and securing eligibility. In this unique situation, I learn to handle the uncertainties, navigate complexities, and appreciate the excitement of a transformative journey where both the destination and the path hold equal importance.

Life, with its vast opportunities and many challenges, led me down a path where I skipped over traditional educational milestones and dove headfirst into my career. Certifications from renowned institutions like Yale, John Hopkins, and Stanford became stepping stones in my quest for knowledge, obtained at my own expense as a testament to the unwavering importance of learning in my life.

Now, as I embrace the surreal reality of being a student once again, I want to share the profound encouragement

that echoes in the halls of my own journey. Education, in its myriad forms, is not confined to the classroom or a specific age group; it is a dynamic force that propels us forward, shaping our perspectives, honing our skills, and enriching our lives in ways we never thought possible.

To be a student is to be a perpetual explorer of the boundless realms of possibility. It is to approach life with the curiosity of a child, unafraid to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and seek understanding. As we navigate the corridors of learning, whether in a traditional setting or through the avenues of online education, we realize that each lesson, each encounter, is a brushstroke on the canvas of our personal and professional growth.

The pursuit of education is not just about acquiring degrees; it is about fostering a mindset—a mindset that craves knowledge, embraces change, and revels in the joy of discovery. It is a commitment to being a lifelong student of life, ever-ready to learn, adapt, and evolve. The classroom is not just a physical space; it is a metaphor for the world around us, brimming with opportunities to expand our horizons and deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit.

As we embark on the journey of education, dreams, and goals, let us celebrate the beauty of being perpetual students. Let us revel in the joy of growth, savor the richness of new experiences, and recognize that the pursuit of our dreams is an ongoing, dynamic process. Whether you're stepping into a university for the first time, returning after a hiatus, or navigating the digital landscape of online education, remember that every step is a stride toward a brighter, more enriched future.

So, fellow learners, seize the opportunity to be students of life, for in the pursuit of education lies the key to unlocking the extraordinary potential within each of us. Embrace the journey, relish the process, and let the pursuit of knowledge be the guiding star that lights your path to fulfillment and success.



Lynn Nicole 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



Taco Tuesday Twist

Part 2: Pair this easy side with the Baja Fish Taco Bowls on page 16

If a jam-packed calendar calls for a light dinner, or you're searching for a quick side to pair with your protein of choice, add a little color to the table with this Edamame Brown Rice and Lentil Salad. Brimming with tasty, colorful ingredients like bell peppers, cucumbers and more, it's a wholesome and satisfying way to recharge after a long day.

Take the guesswork out of cooking this flavorful salad with 100% whole grain Success Boil-in-Bag Brown Rice, offering high-quality, pre-cooked grains that's ready in just 10 minutes without measure or mess. It leaves you with a serving of fluffy, nutty brown rice that cooks up perfectly every time to take some stress out of family dinners.

Edamame Brown Rice and Lentil Salad

Prep time: 10 minutes | Cook time: 10 minutes | Servings: 4

- 1 bag Success Brown Rice
- 1 cup cooked green or brown lentils
- 1 cup edamame, cooked, cooled and shelled
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup roasted almonds and sunflower seeds (optional)

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Prepare rice according to package directions.

In large mixing bowl, combine rice, lentils, edamame, bell pepper, cucumber, red onion and parsley. Toss gently to combine.

To make dressing: In separate small bowl, whisk olive oil, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, garlic, salt and pepper until well combined.

Toss salad with dressing until well combined. Sprinkle with roasted almonds and sunflower seeds, if desired.

Visit SuccessRice.com to find more recipe solutions for busy weeknights.

(Family Features)



Be Gentle on Yourself

In 2021 my friend Rebecca and I decided to take on a 30-day challenge. I chose journaling because it was something new and different that I had never done before. Within a few weeks, this new experience soon became a comfortable habit.

Over the next two years, I found that journaling helped me identify my problems and find solutions.

One thing I've learned for sure is that life always includes changes and here it was, 2024, and it was time for me to decide what new thing I might want to try that could change and enhance my life.

My journaling came to the rescue. On 1/9/24, I woke up feeling sick with a hacking cough, and a bad sore throat. I climbed out of bed, took my vitamins, got my cup of coffee, and pulled out my journaling book. I have a favorite place I like to journal during the winter, so I climbed into my comfy lazy boy chair with a heating pad, warm blanket, and my book in my lap. I began to write down how angry I felt that I was suddenly and unexpectedly feeling so sick right at the beginning of a new year. *No one wants to start out their new year this way! Why now and why me?* My next question then became, *What is it that I need to learn today?*

As a quick reminder I've learned that If I focus too long on misery, I attract more misery, so after I've spent time venting out my frustrations or writing down any

problems that are concerning me, I know it's time to let it go and start a new paragraph. So I purposely change the vibrational tone of my journaling by writing about any physical things I feel blessed to own, or people, places, or events that I've recently experienced that I truly appreciate.

On this particular day, within about 5 minutes after I began my new paragraph, a sentence popped into my head. I wrote it down. It said: "Suzanne, be gentle on yourself."

**"Identify your problems,
but give your power and
energy to solutions"**

- Tony Robbins

I thought about this message and what it might mean. I began to review my previous month. I admitted to myself that during the holidays I had gotten up every morning and instantly began working on getting my long list of daily things to do accomplished. I

immersed myself in cleaning and decorating the house. I made sure all the Christmas lights were put on the outdoor bushes before Thanksgiving. My busyness continued with lots of shopping for gifts and preparing food for the various holiday gatherings. I did feel the self-induced stress I was putting on myself but ignored it by rationalizing that it was temporarily OK since Christmas only came once a year.

I also had ignored the fact that I had stopped journaling during the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas and admitted that I had found myself constantly **doing**, instead of **being** present with myself. I had stopped

taking time to journal and go inward and listen to my Inner-being/Higher-self/God.

I suddenly became aware of what the message “Suzanne, be gentle on yourself” meant. Throughout the holidays I had been hard on myself and I had chosen to put my own self-love and self-nourishment on the back burner. I’ve always been fully aware that ongoing stress can weaken my immune system, but I chose to ignore this fact and fell back into an old habit of mine which was trying to make things perfect in order to feel accomplished and good about myself. And the evitable result was that my body spoke to me by presenting me with a severe ear infection, sinus infection and bad cough.

With this awareness I decided to write this question in my journal. I said “Spirit, if the message I have written down, *to be gentle on myself*, was a message from you (and not just something I conjured up in my mind) please send me a sign in the next day or two that included either the feeling of **relief** or the word **relief**.

Within the next 8 hours I had five experiences where I either felt relief from a particular conversation or had a physical experience that brought me total relief. I immediately journaled about them, but sorry....it would be way too long to write about in this W2W issue. However, I do want to share the one last thing that happened that inspired me to write this article.

The morning after the 5 signs had shown up, I woke up and randomly selected a YouTube podcast to listen to. After the host introduced his guest, it went right into the first commercial. Wouldn't you know, the first commercial was promoting a product called **Relief Factor**. Suddenly, I lost interest in listening to the podcast, because right before my eyes, at the very beginning of my day, the word **relief** had appeared in this advertisement.

I quickly grabbed my journal and began writing: Thank you, God, for letting me know I am never alone and that you are always listening. **I intend to make 2024 my year to be gentle on myself** and I thank you for sending me the answers I am asking for, always in your divine timing, and always when you know I am ready to receive them. I'm looking forward to co-creating with you in many more surprising and delightful ways!



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.

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Women—Come Together For Good!

Would someone please explain why women...

... feel as though we are in competition with every other woman?

... are seldom able to communicate, no matter the age difference, with each other?

...feel like we need to have our butts and/or boobs hanging out, even at totally inappropriate engagements... like a little league game for example?

... hesitate to allow someone, especially a male, to assist us...unless we're playing "helpless"? Why do we play "helpless" or "little girl"?

...gossip about each other, even our closest friends?

These issues have puzzled me for many years. I witness at least one every day.

I have searched for the answers. I've asked, called women out and tried to enlighten us both individually and collectively.

I've given up.

Do you not see it? Does it make you uncomfortable? Do you see yourself being this way?

Why are we unable to treat each other with the kindness, respect and empathy we deserve...especially from another woman?

I have reached a few conclusions.

1 We live in jealousy because of our own insecurities.

2 We consume whatever the media suggests to LOOK better, younger, and thinner. What about the way we should feel? Are there products that will allow internal exploration? Do we purchase those?

3 We judge ourselves and others by society's standards, against magazine ads, models and women half our age.

4 We often abandon our female friends when we become "involved" in a new relationship...then those whom you have left behind talk about you.

5 The grass is always greener. We're seldom satisfied with what we have, who we are and where we're going.

Why? Because we're selfish. Selfish enough to entice another woman's partner, spread nasty rumors, and/

or make a scene because we need to be right. We are full of ego.

We need to stop *trying* to be and just "*be*".

We have to begin a journey of self-exploration. Examine ourselves morally and spiritually. We need to sit down to think. Yes, think about something other than the grocery list, what to wear, what others think of us and our next Botox treatment.

I get it, we're busy. Being busy accomplishes nothing... it just looks good and is often used as an excuse instead of the truth. We do not seek our own truth or search for enlightenment because we "do not have the time".

I'm here to tell you, make the time. You are so much more than your reflection. Your purpose is greater than wearing the latest fashion. Your body is made to move, stretch and nourish...not just to look good to others but to know that you care about your physical and spiritual health. Caring for yourself in a way that you would nurture a child will allow you to feel more secure, to know that you are equal to all womankind.

Nurturing ourselves will help us realize that we

share the same emotions, no matter our faith, ethnicity or sexual orientation. We are sisters, bound together by an invisible feminine force that will allow us to expand our collective consciousness, together and as individuals, for the benefit of all.

We raise the children, cook the meals, clean, sacrifice, laugh and cry for we are the nurturers. We mold the future. We hold the future.

Let's come together for good. Let's act with kindness, reverence and compassion. Start right now.

I guess I haven't given up after all!

Love.



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.

Education

Born In My Heart

Education is many things to different people.

My father, born in 1893, had an 8th Grade education, yet he was one of the wisest men I have ever known. His employment was driven by the timeframe of his birth.

His first job was as a blacksmith, then he worked at The Owosso Carriage Company. As America advanced into the automotive era, that kind of work wasn't needed any more. He eventually went to work and retired from AC Spark Plug in Flint, Michigan.

My Mom, born two years after my Dad, went to work at The Owosso Casket Company when she was fourteen, to help out at home. After Mom and Dad were married, my Mom never worked outside our home.



Top: Arlene - High School graduation 1945

Bottom: Farewell party - saying goodbye to my friends at GMPD



My mother, Hazel when Courting
My dad, Blanch when courting



Still, to say they lived successful lives would be an understatement. They raised five children to be stellar citizens. They loved us, protected us, and provided for us --- even throughout the Great Depression. We always had food on the table and a clean home. Many times I would go to sleep to the hum of the vacuum sweeper --- Mom cleaning house after the five of us kids were in bed.

Fast forward a generation to 1942. I also went to work when I was fourteen --- not because I had to --- I wanted to. This girl who had lived through the Great Depression was eager to earn money to be able to dress beautifully. Having three older sisters, I had a lot of hand-me-downs growing up.

My first job was at the Palace Theater, downtown Flint, as an usherette. The pay scale was 35 cents an hour and my first pay check was \$7.00. My Great-Grandchildren would have a difficult time relating to that when the minimum wage now is \$10.33 an hour.

I graduated as a member of Sigma Chi Lambda National Honor Society, but the opportunity for further education was not an option for me. Still, through dedication and excellence in my performance and work ethic, I advanced to the position of Assistant to one of the Directors at General Motors.

In the sunset of my life, I wrote two books that were published --- the first at 95, the second at 97. I didn't realize I had a creative side!

Education is many things to different people. Mine was born in my heart.



Arlene Curns 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.

Dream Chaser's Guide

5 Tips to Make Your Goals Happen

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

But creating a vision, a dream, or setting goals is not always easy. Well – I should say it's not the setting that can be hard, it's hitting those goals that can be challenging.

In all my years with a large nonprofit, we always set goals. Usually those were financial goals, and we would set up budgets.

But in my personal life, I never set goals. When I became an entrepreneur as a Health Coach I tried to set goals. I had goals for everything. But I never hit them! I set goals for income, I set goals for the number of women I wanted to serve as clients. You name it, I had a goal. I had goals AND all I had was frustration – why? Because I never hit my goals.

So, what was wrong? I tried lowering my goals – have you ever done that? (Say you set a weight loss goal of 25 pounds, and because you didn't hit it, you start out the next year with lowering it to 20 pounds.)

That didn't help either! That just created more frustration! What was the point in setting goals if I would never achieve them?

Then I learned the number one reason I didn't hit my goals and it

was not because of me, or how hard I was trying (or not trying).

The reason is because I set a goal that I could not control.

Let's use the example of losing 20 pounds – you actually cannot control that. Let me say that again. You actually can't control losing 20 pounds. What you can control are the actions you take on a daily basis toward losing 20 pounds. Does that make sense? Losing 20 pounds is a "target" not a "goal."

What's the difference between a target and a goal?

Let's break it down:

- A target is the result you want when you do something
- A target is a destination
- A target is a result you can influence, but you don't have complete control over it

Now a goal:

- A goal is an action that will support your target
- A goal involves action you can control
- A goal is an action toward the destination
- A goal is often broken down into action steps

So, you see – it's not you, it's not because you can't reach your goals. It's because we are setting ourselves up for failure because we can't

control the outcome or the goals we set. We can put actions in place that will move us toward the goal, but we can't control the outcome. Let's change the words. We can set a "target" and then the actions we take toward that target are our "goals".

Let me give you an example.

To lose 20 pounds or to lose 2" off your waist is a target.

This is something you don't have complete control over, but it's the result you want.

What might you set as goals?

- Drink 60oz of water each day
- Walk at least 1 mile 3x each week
- Meal plan each week
- Choose organic whenever you can

You have control over those actions.

When I realized the difference between a target and my goals – that was a mic drop! Just a shift in words and a shift in how I looked at what I wanted.

Okay – now to take your heart vision and create a target!

You can use this link to access the workbook and you work right along with these steps! bit.ly/GoalSettingWorkbook2024

I invite you to be specific about your target. Don't be afraid to go big here. It's absolutely okay to want what you want. No judgment.

The **first tip for inevitable success** is to consider what is important about that target. You can list as many reasons as come to your mind. For example – we'll talk about a weight target:

- You have a class reunion coming up in the summer and you want to look so super hot that the guy who dropped you in high school will be really sorry!
- You have a closet full of the most awesome clothes that are a little tight right now.
- You have a vacation planned and you want to be able to do all the walking without struggle.
- You have grandkids that you want to get on the floor and play with (and you'd like to be able to get back up)

NOW – we'll set the goals! Write down 3 – 5 goals/actions you can take that will lead you toward your target. These are actions that you can track. Have at least 3 but no more than 5.

You can use the ones mentioned earlier or come up with some of your own.

The **second tip for inevitable success** is to track your actionable goals. I call it a Habit Tracker and it is included in the workbook. In the first column write down your goals. In the next to the last column, you can list the # associated with your goal. Say your goal is 60 oz of water, the Goal # would be 7, or perhaps 1 for the # of times in the week you will plan your meals. Each day check the column if you completed your goal/action. The last column is how many times you achieved that goal during the week. A bonus tip here – this is not for judgment – this is a time to be curious.

The **third tip for inevitable success** is to ask yourself – now that you have your goals thought out – what could get in your way? And it's more than just "myself" – it's what we're thinking. "I don't have enough time", "I've never been able to be consistent before" – these are mindsets that can get in your way. It may be "I don't know where to walk, my neighborhood isn't very safe". "I don't have access to organic foods in my area".

List out everything that comes to your mind that could get in your way – and yeah, it might feel like an excuse. I've heard some say "It's my mindset that gets in the way". I invite you to go a little deeper into that. What exactly is the mindset you are experiencing? Is it that you think you can't? Is it that you've tried before and were not successful? No judgment – this is a time to be curious. What are you believing about yourself, about the world, about what it is you want?

These obstacles can be very legitimate and can feel overwhelming. List them down whether it's a mindset or belief or a physical reason.

Once you have those down you can take some time to look at options – maybe your grocery store doesn't have organic food, but there may be options to order online. When you take the time to list out what could get in the way, you have the opportunity to work around it even before you start. This can be one of your most powerful steps to success.

The **fourth tip for inevitable success** is to schedule the actionable goals in your calendar. If you are like me, if it's not in my calendar, it doesn't happen. When are you going to walk, when are you going to read that professional development book or watch the workshop? When are you going to have date night? Put it in your calendar.

The **fifth tip for inevitable success** is to do a weekly, monthly, and quarterly reflection from your tracker

sheet. What's working – what do you think went well? Then look at what you could do differently. This might be to find an accountability partner. Have someone join you as a walking buddy. Use lemon in your water so it tastes better and then you'll drink more.

Then – if something needs to be revised or updated, make those changes.

No judgment – just be curious!

Reflection is another powerful tip! If we don't take the time to review and think about what we're doing, and what is working, or not working, we easily slip back into auto pilot and the next thing you know – it's the end of 2024 and nothing is different from the end of 2023. Believe me – I have had a lot of experience with this in the past and I want it to be different for you. I don't want you to get stuck in that trap or on that hamster wheel.

This is where your growth mindset can propel you to success toward achieving your dreams.

Use reflection as a time to embrace challenges. Use reflection as a time to learn from feedback – there is no failure only feedback. Use reflection as a time to be inspired by the success of others.

So, grab these success tools, embrace your growth mindset, and let's turn those dreams into your 2024 reality! You've got this!



Debra Loader is a Christian Health and Wellness Coach, a Christian Life Coach, as well as a National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC). She helps women integrate their Christian faith into their health and wellness journey to find greater motivation and resilience. You can contact Debra at debraloaderlivingwell.com or 810-287-4096.



Lifelong Learning as a Parent

I think I can call myself a lifelong learner. I was the kid with all the questions that grew into the adult with all the questions. Sometimes when you really want to understand something, people mistakenly accuse you of NOT listening, because you are asking a lot of questions. That has occurred to me in job settings. Oh, I heard you, I'm just asking questions because I really DO want to thoroughly understand what you are saying.

When I was raising eight young children (yes, you heard me right, eight kids!) I not only read numerous books and listened to several radio broadcasts; I literally interviewed every parent that I met that had already raised their children. I was not interested in asking people like myself that were still in the process of raising kids. They had the same questions that I had.

I asked approximately twenty sets of parents, from all over the world, questions like, "What's easier, raising boys or girls?" I would delve deeper with some couples and ask, "What was the most effective lesson you learned when raising kids?" Sometimes I got gutsy and asked, "What was the biggest mistake you made in raising kids?" I applied much of what I learned to raising my own children. Five of the kids that I raised are my biological children and for eight years, I raised two nieces and a nephew. Now, you don't really care about my kids and their stories, because, if you are a lifelong learner too, you are really still thinking and wondering about the answers I received to those parenting questions that I listed above.

Well, by far, nearly every single couple said that boys were easier to raise than girls. I only had one mother say that she thought that girls were easier to raise than boys. I met that mother on a beach in Barbados. I bought some jewelry from her. When I inquired further, I concluded that her daughters were at home helping her raise her other children, while she provided for her family by selling jewelry. Maybe, in her case, the girls were easier because they were more helpful. Some of the couples that I interviewed went into more detail. They would say that the boys were harder to raise when they were younger because they were so loud and active, but that the girls were more challenging in their teen years. Overall, the teen years were so overwhelming that they just claimed that the girls were harder to raise.

One of the greatest lessons a couple shared with me was that they made a commitment to each other to "keep their word" to their children. This kept the two of them in check and made them both very careful with the words that they spoke to their kids. They told me the story of one parent telling their child who would not stay in bed, "Get back in your bed or I'm going to tie you to it." Uh oh! They both looked at each other, wincing. Guess what happened? Of course, that kid got out of bed. Now, I know you may think this is wrong, but those two parents kept their word, and for a short time, tied that kid to the bed. They reported to me that the two of them and their child were all in tears, but they each learned a valuable lesson. The child knew that his parents did

what they said they would do, and the parents learned to weigh every idle word before they spoke. I am guilty. Are you? I know I made vain threats to my kids without thinking of what I was saying. We DO need to be careful with our words and keep our word. Why should a kid trust you if you do not keep your word on ALL occasions? Some childhood discipline issues grow from the reality that our kids may not know WHEN we mean what we say and WHEN we don't mean what we say. They may decide that doing something they are NOT supposed to do may be worth the 50% chance that the consequence will NOT occur. This lesson turned into both the best parenting lesson learned and the biggest parenting mistake learned.

Another helpful lesson I learned from my inquiring mind came from both a couple that I met and from a book that I read. The idea was to create a Behavior/Consequence Plan. This was great! We sat down with all of our kids and wrote rules for their behavior and their corresponding consequences. The kids helped to write it and all of them signed the typed document. My husband and I were no longer the bad guys: The document became the bad guy. If they broke one of the rules, we would just say, "Darn that Behavior/Consequence Plan that *you* helped write and *you* signed, now you are grounded from technology for 2 weeks." If they argued with the consequence, one of the rules said, "All consequences doubled." We came off as the supporters. We could help our kids and say, "Jesse, I wouldn't try to argue if I were you because one of the rules you wrote and signed says that your consequence doubles if you argue."

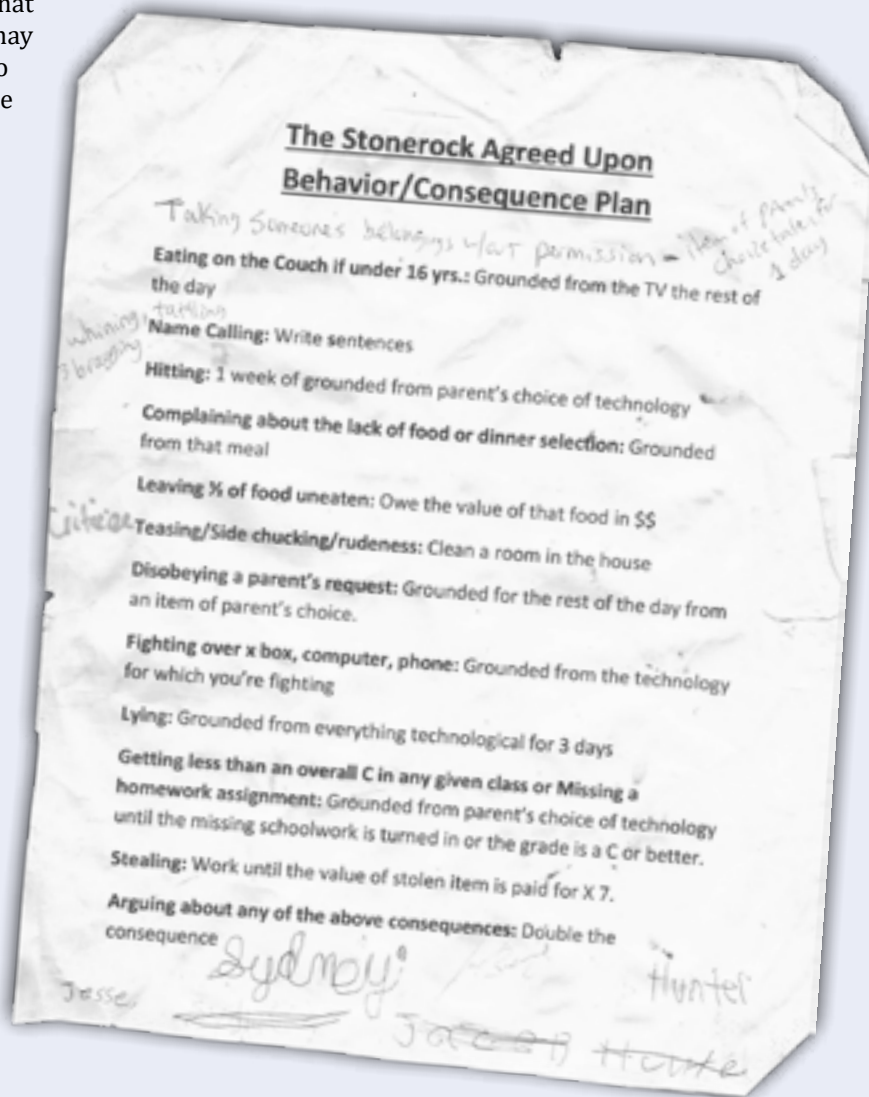
That Behavior/Consequence Plan became a real topic of conversation when our family was featured on a tv show called, "Wife Swap" 18 years ago.

Today, our oldest son Devon is a Doctor of Pharmacy specializing in Oncology, serving in the Bone Marrow Transplant department of a hospital in Grand Rapids. Our second oldest has lived and worked in Hawaii for the past 6 years and is a Certified Private Pilot. Our third son is a 2023 U of M Ann Arbor graduate of Mathematics and Risk Management and is working as a mortgage underwriter. Our fourth son is a gifted salesman, studying to go into Real Estate. Our last biological child, and only girl, is attending Madonna University to study nursing on a full ride volleyball scholarship.

The other 3 children include my oldest niece, who was the main feature on the "Wife Swap" show. She now has a child of her own and is also raising her younger brother and sister. One of the lessons I learned on that show was to adapt my style of mothering to accommodate each unique child. When this niece moved in with us I was a "Boy Mom." She was the first female child to join our family. I learned from that experience of swapping my life with the life of another woman, to spend more time with my young

niece doing "girly" activities and to be more emotionally sensitive.

I have included the original Behavior/Consequence Plan that my kids signed. Over the years, many of them crossed out their names. Furthermore, new rules were added, by hand, in the years that followed. Keep in mind, these rules were created nearly 20 years ago in 2004.



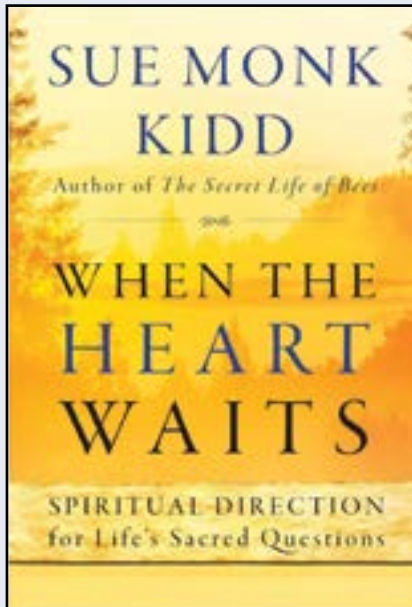
I am still in the lifelong learning stage of my life. I am now gathering great advice and ideas from the grandmas that I know in preparation for the day that I become a grandmother. Those grandma lessons may have to wait for a future article.



Kelly Haskins Stonerock was raised in Clarkston. She has been a resident of Goodrich for 29 years. She is presently the CEO of BatsAndTraps.com, an animal removal company that services Genesee County and it's surrounding communities. Kelly has five children of her own and she raised three other children. She was featured on ABC's television show, "Wife Swap" in 2005. Her episode is available on Hulu, Season 2: Episode 11.

Book Club Classics

Books that Change You



When the Heart Waits

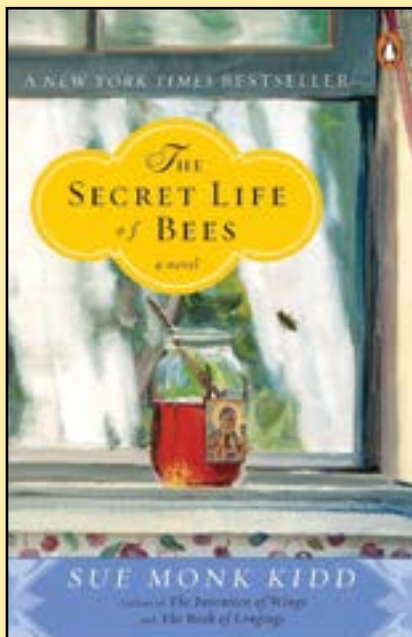
Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions

by Sue Monk Kidd

From the bestselling author of *The Secret Life of Bees*, an inspiring autobiographical account of personal pain, spiritual awakening, and divine grace.

Blending her own experience with an intimate grasp of spirituality, Sue Monk Kidd relates the passionate and

moving tale of her spiritual crisis, when life seemed to have lost meaning and her longing for a hasty escape from the pain yielded to a discipline of "active waiting." Full of wisdom, poise, and grace, Kidd's words will encourage us along our spiritual journey, toward becoming who we truly are.



The Secret Life of Bees

by Sue Monk Kidd

The multi-million bestselling novel about a young girl's journey towards healing and the transforming power of love, from the award-winning author of *The Invention of Wings* and *The Book of Longings*.

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted Black "stand-in mother,"

Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of Black beekeeping sisters, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.



Flint Resident Creates Black History Museum

Maxine Fairley cultivates art in the Oak Street Senior Apartments Community Room

FLINT, MI – In honor of Black History Month, Maxine Fairley has put her art and vintage collections on display at the community room in Oak Street Senior Apartments, a development of Communities First, Inc. The idea of a Black History display came to Fairley during her time as a teacher, where she decided to use art to inspire and teach her students about black history.

The art that Fairley has created for the museum consists of what she calls “silhouettes” - abstract, black shadows made out of felt and dressed with real fabric and jewel ry. “These silhouettes give me the opportunity to imagine people however I want. I started making these using just construction paper, but it’s really grown into whatever I can imagine a person to look like.”

Fairley is fueled by her love of people. Her goal in her art is to inspire and bring joy to whoever looks at it. “There’s so much sadness in the world,” says Fairley. “I just want to bring joy, peace, and happiness to everybody.”

The other artifacts in the museum include items of a

time past – magazines, vinyl, CDs – all of and about black artists and people. Fairley says, “Everybody has a gift. Mine is that I can create something out of nothing. If I have an idea, a lightbulb goes off and I have to execute it immediately.”

“This community room has transformed since Maxine came to Oak Street,” says Cherise Pagels, the Supportive Services Coordinator at Communities First, Inc. “It started with puzzles, and she decorates for every single holiday – Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving. She has all these ideas. Residents feel welcome when they come here. It feels like home to them. Her creativity blows my mind, every time I come in here there’s something different.”

About Communities First, Inc. (CFI)

Communities First, Inc. is a nonprofit Community Development Corporation. Headquartered in Flint, CFI serves over 35,000 community members across Michigan and Indiana. CFI’s mission is to build healthy, vibrant communities through economic development, affordable housing, and innovative programming. More information about Communities First, Inc. can be found at www.communitiesfirstinc.org.



Innovative Breathwork Experience "Symphony of the Soul" Offers a Path to Healing and Mindfulness Michigan Event Combines Live Music, Sacred Geometry, and Guided Meditation to Support Veterans' Mental Health

On Saturday, April 27 at 7:30 PM, the Flint Institute of Music Capitol Building will host the groundbreaking event "Symphony of the Soul: A Journey of Music and Mindfulness." This immersive experience brings together the power of breathwork, live symphonic music, and visual projections to offer a unique path to mindfulness, healing, and expanded consciousness.

As the nation grapples with a mental health crisis, there is a growing interest in alternative therapies like psychedelics. While research into MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD shows promise, with potential FDA approval in 2024, access to these treatments remains limited. "Symphony of the Soul" offers an accessible, legal alternative for those seeking the transformative benefits of altered states of consciousness.

Breathwork, a safe and powerful non-pharmacological modality, has been shown to facilitate deep healing and mindfulness, similar to the experiences reported with psychedelic therapies. By combining guided breathwork meditation with live music and immersive visuals, "Symphony of the Soul" creates a profound, shared journey of self-discovery and inner peace.

Leading the breathwork session is Vivian Rosenthal, founder of Frequency Breathwork and a renowned expert in crafting transformative experiences.

Rosenthal's work has been featured at major events like SXSW, Art Basel, and AREA15, showcasing her ability to guide participants to new levels of awareness and healing.

"In a world where so many are struggling with mental health challenges, especially our veterans, it's crucial that we explore every avenue for healing," Rosenthal explains. "Breathwork offers a safe, accessible way to achieve profound states of consciousness and self-discovery. Symphony of the Soul is more than just a concert; it's a truly immersive journey into mindfulness and healing in a space of connection and community."

Proceeds from the event will directly support a pioneering breathwork study for veterans with PTSD, conducted in partnership with the nonprofit Heroic Hearts Project. This research aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of breathwork as a complementary treatment for mental health conditions, paving the way for greater acceptance and accessibility.

For those seeking a transformative experience and the chance to support a meaningful cause, "Symphony of the Soul" offers an unparalleled opportunity. **Tickets are now available at <https://tickets.thefim.org/symphonysoul>**

Don't miss this unique journey into the cutting edge of mindfulness and healing. Join us on April 27 at the Flint Institute of Music Capitol Building and be part of a movement towards expanded consciousness and collective healing.

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