



# Desert Health<sup>®</sup>

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July/August 2019

## what's inside

- 3

Medical News

The Only Question You Need in a Crisis
- 11

Natural Options

Do Deodorants Affect Breast Health?
- 16

Integrated Practices

An Effective Option For Low Thyroid
- 19

Fitness

A "Night Out" Workout with Disco Inferno Pilates
- 21

Through the Generations

What is Your Vision of Retirement?
- 22

2019 Wellness Awards

Oh What a Night! The Celebration in Pictures
- 25

Fresh Cuisine

Is Meal Planning a Good Dietary Solution?
- 26

Financial Health

Businesses Honored for Workplace Wellness

A Little Box of INSPIRATION

Learn from yesterday,  
live for today,  
hope for tomorrow.  
The important thing is  
not to stop questioning.

– Albert Einstein



## This Crazy Ride Called Life

By Lauren Del Sarto

These past couple of years have been peculiar for me and my friends. Every time we stop to catch our breath, a new crisis occurs. As I write this, I have one friend returning from her third family funeral and another who lost her business partner and father in the same month. One is back in the hospital from a botched routine procedure; three have been newly diagnosed with cancer; and another was laid off with three months to find a job before losing her home. The list goes on...

We are all in our 50s and I couldn't help but wonder... Is it something in the universe or simply our age?

I used to think that a midlife crisis was eccentric behavior due to boredom or dissatisfaction, but we're all trying to step off the rollercoaster and start enjoying a little mundane.

So, I decided to look for answers. After all, we couldn't be the first 50-somethings experiencing such a crazy ride.

I had to laugh when my first Google search on 'life in your 50s' resulted in this headline: *Under 50? You still haven't hit rock bottom, happiness-wise.*<sup>1</sup> Turns out age does have a lot to do with it, and we seem to be at the bottom of the U curve.

It's probably normal to start experiencing more deaths and disease at this age, but science says the factors don't seem to matter; people in their 50s are less happy than they were, and less happy than they will be in the years ahead.

A 2017 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research<sup>2</sup> considered the psychological well-being of 1.3 million randomly sampled people between the ages of 20 and 90. They found that happiness seems to peak in our 20s and declines until our early 50s where it reaches a nadir (a new term I learned meaning "the lowest point in the fortunes of a person or organization" which certainly doesn't sound encouraging). Our happiness meter then starts to rise again towards our 60s and into our golden years.

What's even more remarkable is that findings of the seven different surveys studied all follow the same U-shaped trajectory while representing populations from 51 different nations around the world including the U.S., U.K., and more than 36 other European countries.

While the study doesn't identify reasons for the midlife low, those reporting the findings note financial stress, job insecurity, demands of the roles taken on, the onset of disease, divorce and death around us,

Continued on page 3



## How Do People Heal?

By Andrea Georgiou, CMT

In my work as a massage therapist and energy medicine practitioner I consider this question every day. Every client—each person—has a story. We are each on a healing journey. The details vary, but the quest is the same for all: we are searching for wholeness. What helps? What constitutes success?

Recently I had a personal experience that shed perspective on these questions...

I'm at a fairy tale wedding, held in a beautiful castle in northern Italy. The sun is shining; the bride is beautiful; the groom is handsome. They are so much in love! Their love lights up the assembled crowd of friends and relatives. On this day, at this moment, it's easy to believe that the newly wedded couple will live "happily ever after."

Very few people here know that the bride is a cancer survivor. She certainly doesn't look it! At 37, she is glowing with health, confidence and joy. She's come a long way since that awful day in 1996 when she was first diagnosed with cancer. I know, because I'm her mother, the "cancer mom" who saw her through treatment—the ups and downs, the surgeries,

the many rounds of chemo and seemingly endless weeks of radiation.

Her story—our story—began when we noticed a tiny bump under her jawbone. Doctors thought it was an infected salivary gland. Two surgeries later, we knew it was a rare, aggressive form of cancer—by then the size of a walnut. Rushing to a world-class cancer center, we consulted a team of top oncologists, only to learn that the tumor had gone deep, wrapping itself around vital structures—her carotid artery, windpipe and vocal cords. Cancer literally had my daughter in a stranglehold.

The lead oncologist explained gravely that the tumor was inoperable. My daughter had a 10% chance of living until her next birthday—only four months away! With treatment, the oncologist stated carefully, the odds of survival might improve. But there were no guarantees.

My daughter took the challenge. She said she was willing to "fight for her life," but, as I soon learned, only on her own terms. As a child she had been strong-willed, hard to discipline. But she was also

Continued on page 7



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## Sweet Days of Summer

Remember when you couldn't wait for summer? In your young mind the word screamed freedom, bare feet, nature and fun.

Where will you find those things this summer?

July and August are the perfect time to escape on a new (or familiar) adventure. Whether it's a drive to the beach, staycation at a local resort, two weeks abroad, or your summer home, we all need time to relax and rejuvenate in this off season.

Wherever your journey takes you, choose to "Fall All-In" as Timothy Courtney shares on page 12. Our summer issue is a good read to bring along offering everything from inspirational love stories (How Do People Heal? on p.1) to insights on your health; from high aspirations (Making an Impact on the World, p.19) to Lifting Your Mood with a Mantra (p.20).

We also share photos from this year's Desert Health Wellness Awards (pp. 22 & 23). The sensational event brought together a variety of doctors, health practitioners and wellness fans who all share the same goal of living healthy and living well. The energy was electric, our speakers spectacular, the meal divine, and the take home goodies cherished by all.

I would personally like to thank all who took part and congratulate all our 2019 nominees. It's a privilege to honor the work you're doing to move health forward in our community.



Lauren and Tommy Del Sarto

Tommy and I are excited to trade in our desert casual for bathing suits and flip flops. We've been dreaming of a tropical island for years and can't wait to pack our bags.

Wherever the sweet days of summer take you, I hope you find freedom, bare feet, nature and fun...

From my heart to yours ~

*Lauren*

Lauren Del Sarto  
Founder/Publisher



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## The Only Question You Need in a Crisis

By Kristii MacEwen

I was sitting at a stranger's kitchen table. In fact, I was surrounded by strangers. Strangers who had, with a single text at one o'clock in the morning, become my sisters. There were people congregated in the living room and sitting at the table with me and on the kitchen floor when I asked the only question you'll ever need.

You may be wondering what text message could possibly draw you to a stranger's home in the middle of the night. The text I received said, "My fiancé died today. He loved me," and the person who sent it was my best friend. My best friend who had just moved out of her apartment a few days earlier and hadn't yet told me her new address. Once I saw the text, I began calling her phone obsessively, grappling with what this text message could mean, desperately hoping that there had been some kind of mistake, all while fearing that my friend, too, was in grave peril.

I have never been more grateful for Mark Zuckerberg's monster in my life! I got on her Facebook page and began, with the fervor of a cyber-stalker, looking through her enormous list of friends. I began to private message everyone I thought was a potential lead, and an agonizing 20 minutes later got a reply that said that my best friend was safe and finally asleep. I got the address; then I promptly packed a bag with Kleenex and booze, called our boss and told him I didn't know when I'd be back to work (turns out she had texted him too), and drove myself into a teary-eyed stranger's home, uninvited.

While trying to make myself comfortable in these unfamiliar surroundings in the middle of the night, I began softly and tenderly coaching myself: "She is going to need you for a long time. You will have to grieve for him, and you will have to grieve for the life your best friend was supposed to have. But right now you can choose to simply show up" and I did.

I did not tell myself to be strong or power through. I did not diminish my own pain or needs. I did not martyr myself. Even if I did have energy for these things, my friend is the sort that doesn't allow any of her friends to diminish themselves, so doing it in this time and place was not an option.

I partnered with myself and honored that I was in pain and decided that I had the capacity because of the pain, not in spite of it. I couldn't truly show up for her until I had showed up for myself, and I had.

At this moment, the phone rang.

Her cellphone showed her fiancé's area code but a number we didn't recognize. I had been sitting on the living room floor in that grief dream state when I heard the ring and heard her say, "Oh, shit," as she dropped the phone and hit the floor. I may have jumped over the couch to get to her, I'm not sure, but then I was there beside her and

Continued on page 25

This Crazy Ride Called Life

Continued from page 1

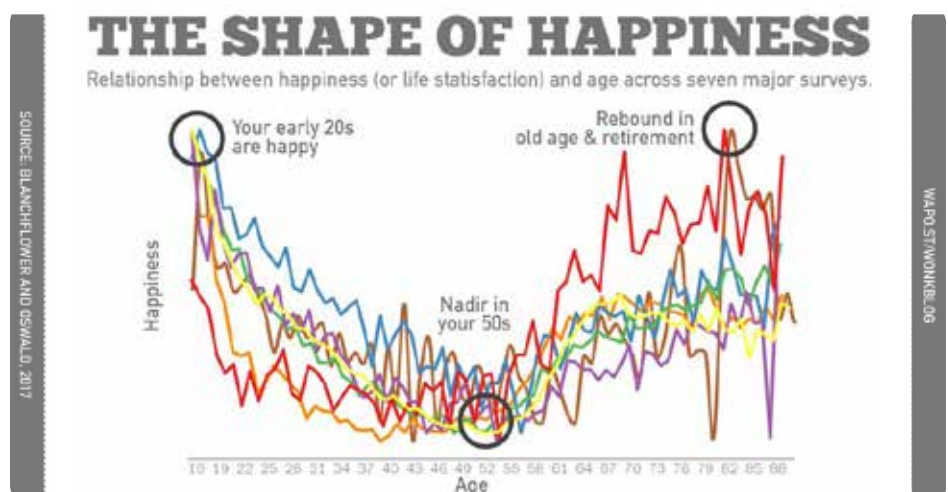
and the mere thought of being "half way there."

Of course, beyond the external factors are physiological changes, such as decreasing hormones leading to menopause in women and andropause in men (yes, male menopause is a reality).

And sometimes it's none of these.

The "midlife slump" is often about nothing, says Jonathan Rauch, author of *The Happiness Curve: Why Life Gets Better After 50*. He adds that it's not the same as a midlife crisis which can result in urgent, irrational actions and considers the slump "a natural transition, simply due to the passing of time."

These are sobering words for those of us in the midst of it all. I guess, as they say, this too shall pass and the challenges will make us stronger.



While researching his book, Rauch spoke to many who have experienced the slump. In an interview with *The Guardian*,<sup>3</sup> he describes Karla, 54, who is on the upswing of the curve and says she is savoring her friendships more, feeling more organized and efficient, and doing more volunteer work. "Now I feel grateful for the now. On a day-to-day basis I probably do the same things, but I feel different."

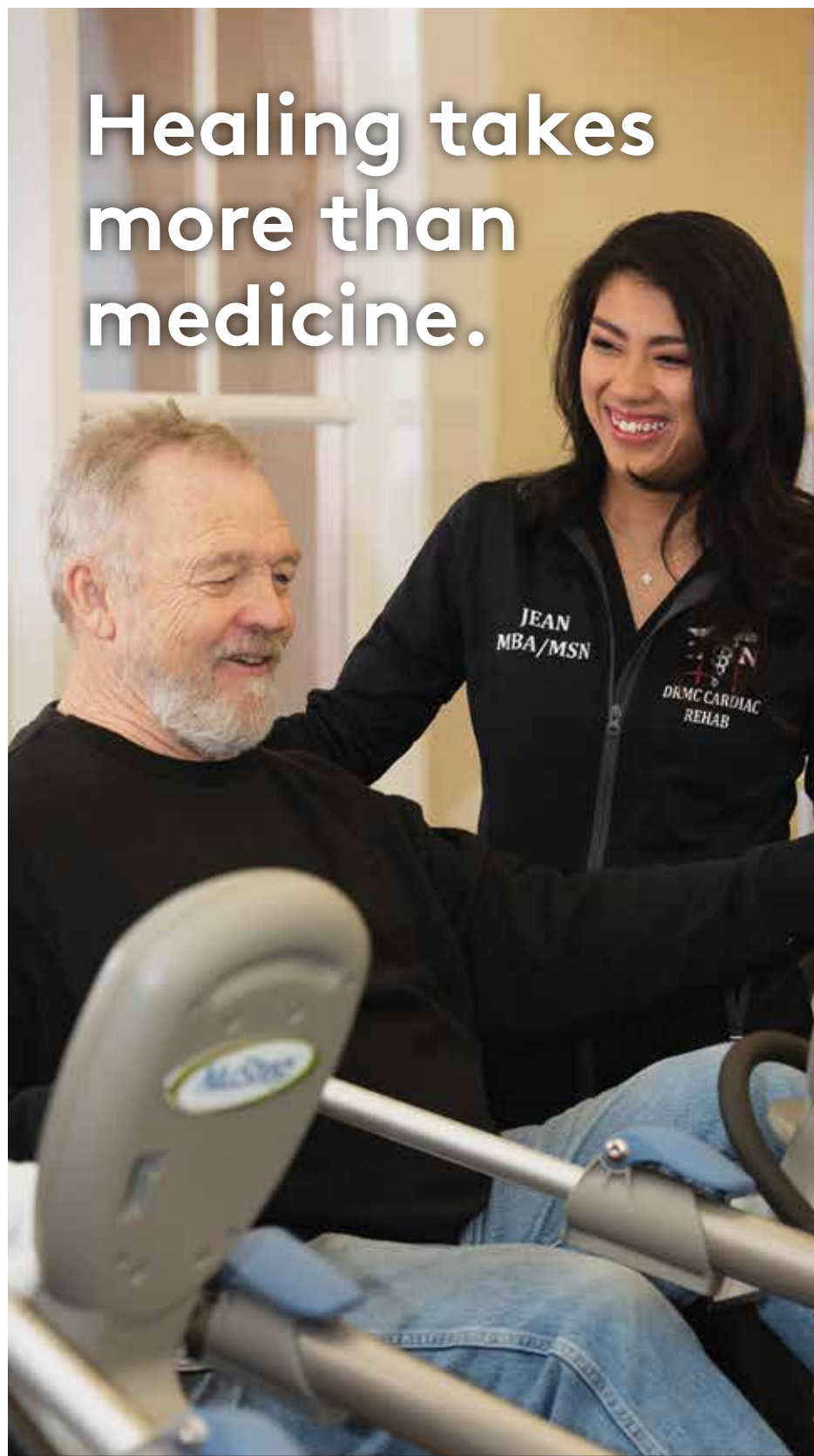
"That's a very profound insight," he says, "because what we're talking about here is not that the conditions of your life change in some huge way, but how you feel about your life changes."

Maybe this dip is simply teaching us lessons that will make us better human beings and able to enjoy – and greater appreciate – what we have, and our later years. These struggles certainly change your perspective on life, and it's good to learn from those who came before you.

In her article *50 Life Changes to Make After 50*, Sarah Crow reminds us that growing older is a privilege.<sup>4</sup> "Many people find that their 50s are the perfect time to make some serious changes in their lives in pursuit of happiness, health, and overall well-

Continued on page 10

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## We Are Team Movement for Life



Zainab Kothari,  
PT, DPT, MS

Dr. Kothari was raised in Mumbai, India and came to the U.S. to attend Ohio State University where she received her Bachelors of Science in Health Science and then her Doctorate of Physical Therapy at Duke University. Returning to India, she worked in an orthopedic spine setting for two years before receiving her Masters of Science in Health and Rehab with a musculoskeletal focus at the University of Pittsburgh. In addition to her orthopedic work, Dr. Kothari is currently establishing a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy program for men and women of all ages including postpartum women, female athletes and patients experiencing incontinence. She enjoys exploring nature, hiking with her husband and trying new restaurants in the valley. She also enjoys traveling and hopes to visit at least one new country each year.

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## Help for Pelvic Area Dysfunction

By Zainab Kothari, PT, MS, DPT

As a society we are uncomfortable talking about dysfunction and pain in the pelvic region including urinary and fecal incontinence, constipation, and problems with sexual performance. Patients are embarrassed to talk about their issues and thus, continue to live with problems which can significantly affect their quality of life.

Patients who want to seek help may be unable to do so due to lack of awareness, difficulty with communication about the subject and symptoms and limited access to an appropriate pelvic floor medical specialist, who is specially trained to help individuals with these symptoms. A pelvic floor specialist works with patients to improve their condition by training the pelvic area, educating the patient about the function, anatomy and factors that influence and impact their symptoms, and providing therapy and holistic treatment to improve their quality of life.

Our bodies have the ability to heal if symptoms are addressed correctly using evidence-based research and treatment protocols. This includes patients that have suffered with their conditions for an extended period of time. Patients post hysterectomy, prostatectomy, ante and postpartum; female athletes engaging in high impact sports, and bladder transplant and pelvic organ prolapse patients experiencing incontinence or constipation can be treated effectively by pelvic floor physical therapy irrespective of the timeline of their condition.

What can cause these symptoms? Surgical removal of an organ from the pelvic area can affect the internal pressure and integrity of the muscles that provide support. Female athletes engaging in high intensity sports are likely to experience incontinence with jumping, running, and cutting type movements due to muscle weakness and incoordination of the pelvic region.

Childbirth can also impact the muscles and ligaments of the pelvic region causing women to experience problems associated with sexual intercourse secondary to internal scar tissue and incontinence due to muscle weakness.

A pelvic floor specialist can address all of the above symptoms by performing scar massage, neuromuscular re-education and strengthening of the pelvic floor. The therapy also aids in regulating bowel and bladder habits and teaching strategies to the patient to resume functional tasks without experiencing leakage or pain.

If you suffer from these conditions, know there is help. A pelvic floor specialist can help create a tailored therapy program to improve your quality of life and get back to the activities you enjoy.

Dr. Kothari is a doctor of physical therapy at Avid Physical Therapy in Cathedral City and can be reached at [zkothari@avidphysicaltherapy.com](mailto:zkothari@avidphysicaltherapy.com) or (760) 202.0368.



## Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry MENTORING THE FUTURE

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## The Pressure of Competition

By Simon Moore and Jodie Capper

Over the past year, parents of the wealthy and privileged have been exposed for cheating the college admissions system. These individuals have personified the levels of desperation to which some parents descend in order to get their child into their school of choice.

Stresses of college admissions and even competition among high school students contribute to the consistent 25 percent (1 in 4) CDC-recorded mental health cases each year in the U.S. Recognizing the mental health vulnerability of competitiveness and being prepared for what college truly expects from the applicant is the best way to get through high school and into your college of choice.

Young adults must learn that self-care is an important part of maintaining mental health and stress. Anna Hope Emerson, a 20 year-old sophomore at Yale, was compelled to write a column after a week of hospitalization due to mental health issues. "If you take away anything from my experience, let it be this: Don't put off taking care of yourself. Reaching out for help when you need it doesn't make you weak; it makes you brave."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes self-care is taking a break when overwhelmed, but students also need to know how to replace the behaviors that are causing them stress. Social media, depression and anxiety are linked contributors to the stress of high school and college competition. The self-imposed pressure to earn "likes" on pictures and posts is a reflection of who they are as a person. Too many youths believe that more likes equate to success.

Fortunately, a new awareness has emerged which encourages students to hold the phone, disconnect from social media and be more aware of "screen time" statistics. But even awareness of stress can affect stressors that complicate the life of the high schooler and early college student.

How can stressed-out high school students reduce stress? Preparation is key. By learning what's expected of them in high school and sticking to the plan. There are resources to help guide students through each year of high school. American College Test (ACT) offers a year-to-year guide for high school students available at [Act.org](http://act.org).<sup>2</sup> The guide narrates how students should plan each year in order to be successful in high school - and prepared for college.

Planning should result in fair eligibility for college, not cheating. Students must employ a personal drive to honestly prepare for college. If they are used to dishonesty, they learn how to be dishonest. If they learn how to struggle to learn content, they learn how to learn.

Harvard University's *Turning the Tide II: How Parents and High Schools Can Cultivate Ethical Character and Reduce Stress*<sup>3</sup> is a good reference for students, parents and schools. The seven guideposts listed within the report serve as an ethical barometer to follow to ensure that successes are earned honestly. Competition can sometimes hurt, but it can feel so good in the end.

Simon Moore is an EMT and lead teacher of Coachella Valley High School Health Academy. Jodie Capper is an RN and health academy teacher at CVHS.

References: 1) <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/04/20/the-happy-school/>; 2) <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/students-and-parents.html>; 3) <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/turning-the-tide-2-parents-high-schools-college-admissions>



Students must employ a personal drive to honestly prepare for college.





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## How to Tell Your Kid You Have Cancer

By Nancy Brier

The hardest part of cancer? That's a loaded question, but telling my kid about it ranks up there at the top of that list. Lauren had just turned 10 when my husband and I found a lump in my breast. A few days later, an oncologist predicted that I had three months to live. "We have to tell her," Gary said. I wanted another day, just one more before we had to rock her world. But eventually, I did it, and if you have to do it, too, here's my advice:

**Get your head together.** Before I talked to Lauren, I prayed. I cried. I stared at the wall. I froze pans of lasagna. I prayed some more. I meditated, took deep breaths, binged on chocolate, went for walks, and made water color paintings. I practiced saying the words out loud so I could get through what I needed to say. Lauren would take her cues from me and this conversation would remain the cornerstone of those cues. I wanted to get it right. "Of course she wants to know about you," a social worker told me, "but she also needs to know what's going to happen to her." That sounded right, so I channeled my inner 10-year-old and planned what to say.

**Tell them cancer is not contagious.** Kids are smart, especially mine. But I'm glad the social worker reminded me that kids probably don't know they can't "catch" cancer like a chest cold. I told Lauren we could still hug and touch and share milkshakes and she didn't have to worry that she'd get cancer, too. Later, when I spoke to her classroom, I told them the same thing. I couldn't be their volunteer art teacher anymore, but at least I wasn't giving them a deadly disease.

**Say: 'Someone will take care of you.'** Lauren needed to know that with or without me, she was going to be all right. The truth is, I didn't know how we were going to pull it off, but I did know that no matter what, Lauren would have clean clothes, hot meals, a roof over her head, and God at her side. I told her she'd still go to school every day and get to see her friends. As a family, we'd figure everything out, and she would be okay.

**Tell the truth. Mostly.** The first oncologist I saw said I'd be dead in three months. The next guy, though, was more optimistic and gave me a 60 percent chance. When Lauren looked into my face and asked me if I was going to die, I chose optimism. "It's true that some people die from breast cancer," I said, willing my voice to be steady. "But the doctor thinks he can cure me. And I'm going to do exactly what he tells me to do."

**It's okay to laugh.** I told Lauren that the medicine I had to take was really strong and that it had some crazy side effects. "I'm going to lose all my hair," I said. "Even down there." We giggled because she thought it was funny, and watching her laugh made me laugh, too.

**It's okay to cry.** In fact, it's a must. In my family, we cried together and we cried separately. All of us cried for the same reasons and all of us cried for different reasons. And that's okay.

**Like George Michael said, 'I gotta have faith.'** In the United States, one in 20 children under the age of 16 loses a parent to death. It seems incomprehensible that my kid could be one of them, but at some point, I made peace with that reality. For me, my faith in God really helps, but I realize that faith can come in a lot of different packages. Find the outlet that works for you and tap into it. During my own journey, I've come to trust that God is with me, the whole time, every step of the way, and that whether or not I physically survive cancer has nothing to do with winning or losing a battle.

Telling a child that a parent has cancer is brutal, but thinking it through in advance really helped me, and I think it helped my daughter, too. And in my case, choosing optimism worked. Our conversation took place five years ago. Now, we talk about where we want to go on vacation, whose turn it is to take out the trash, and everything in between.

Nancy Brier is a writer, bread baker, walnut farmer, entrepreneur, wife, mom, sister, and friend fighting triple negative breast cancer in Palm Desert. She is also a columnist for BreastCancer-News.com where this editorial first appeared. For more of her work, please visit [www.NancyBrier.com](http://www.NancyBrier.com).

## Oh, No! I Lost My Tooth

*Simple steps to save a dislodged tooth*

By Nick Baumann, DDS

Accidents happen. And if the teeth are involved, especially the front teeth, it can be very scary. However, hope is not lost, even if the trauma is as severe as having a tooth completely come out, as most teeth can be saved and repaired as long as a few important steps are followed.

There are different types of dental trauma. The most basic would be a chip of the tooth. This can often be smoothed out, or bonding can be placed on the tooth with no long-term deleterious effect. If the chip is larger, a crown or veneer may be required for strength.

If a tooth is hit with enough force to render it mobile or knocked out of place, it is important to see your dentist as soon as possible. A mobile tooth can be monitored and likely will solidify with time. If the tooth is displaced, it will need to be moved back into its correct position and likely splinted while it heals. If attended to quickly, these situations generally have high chances of success in keeping the tooth long term. In some cases, however, a root canal will be required after the tooth is stabilized. Unfortunately, if the trauma causes a crack in the root of the tooth, it cannot be saved and will have to be removed.

The most severe type of tooth trauma, avulsion, is when a tooth completely comes out. In this case, it is still possible the tooth can be replanted, but time is of the essence. Before a doctor can be seen, a few things can be done to give the tooth a better chance of surviving. First, the tooth should not be cleaned at all. There are cells on a root of the tooth that are important in its ability to reattach to the bone. Your dentist will lightly clean off any other debris before replanting, but you do not want to scrub the tooth. It is also very important to keep the tooth moist until it can be replanted. It can be placed in milk, or if unavailable, into the person's cheek so that the saliva keeps it moist. Placing it in water is not a good substitute. Saliva or milk is best.

Once the tooth has been re-implanted and stabilized, it will require a root canal. Your dentist will make a determination of when is the best time for that, but it is usually within a few weeks. Following these steps may still not be enough to save the tooth, but they greatly increase the chances of success. All of this only applies to a permanent adult tooth. In the case of a primary or "baby" tooth, re-implanting it can do damage to the permanent tooth growing below, so they are never put back.

Falling or hitting our teeth and causing damage can be a very traumatic experience. If it does happen to you, seeing a doctor or dentist as soon as possible is vital. Most cases of dental trauma can be fixed. In the end, it's just important to remember not to panic, as in most cases, your smile can be back to normal in a short time.

Dr. Nick is with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602.





How Do People Heal?

Continued from page 1

funny, smart and creative in the ways she disobeyed. Under the threat of cancer, these qualities came to full flower. Not only did my daughter defy death, she broke almost every rule in the book.

Actually, most rules were off. There was no school, no homework, no bedtime, no responsibilities. The doctors encouraged her to do whatever she wanted, provided she showed up for treatment. I was told to relax, back off, let her enjoy whatever she could.

Can you imagine giving an energetic, slightly rebellious teenager this kind of freedom? In New York City? My daughter threw herself at life, with all her heart, soul, and humor. When chemo took her hair, she went bald. It shocked people; they looked twice when she passed on the street. Lacking hair to adorn her, she painted her face and her nails, sometimes each nail a different color. She found a group of cancer teens and pulled all-nighters with them. She threw herself into intimate relationships behind closed doors. She even disappeared into the city once, returning at 5 a.m. Who knew what she was up to?



The bride and groom, Thalia Georgiou and Alessandro Povino

Life! She was up to life. She was living life fully, whatever that meant to her in the moment. At times, her life was awful: black, dark, and painful. She was there, in that moment, experiencing it fully. But when the moment was over, she was back, living her joy full out, expressing her love of friends, her zest for connection, for art, for creativity.

Let's return to my original question: how do people heal?

In retrospect, I see how my daughter healed. She had a strong love of life, coupled with absolute determination. She received state-of-the-art medical treatment, and, along with it, an outpouring of love, prayer, and support from an incredible assortment of people: medical professionals, therapists, social workers, family, friends, even a troupe of clowns and a litter of puppies. And, importantly, she received the freedom to be herself. Every time my daughter was able to engage fully with something that brought her joy, that was healing. And every time she expressed an emotion fully, be it joy or despair, that, too, was healing.

So, in conclusion: *love is healing*. Love yourself, love your life, and love one another. Be kind and be open to what comes. We may not be able to see a positive outcome in the moment we're experiencing, but often, in retrospect, we can see that the pieces of healing were already there. If we are open to the process, with all that it entails, healing can and will occur.

Andrea Georgiou is a massage therapist and energy medicine practitioner with BodyTune Studio in Palm Springs and can be reached at (760) 218.2346 or [andrea@bodytune.studio](mailto:andrea@bodytune.studio).

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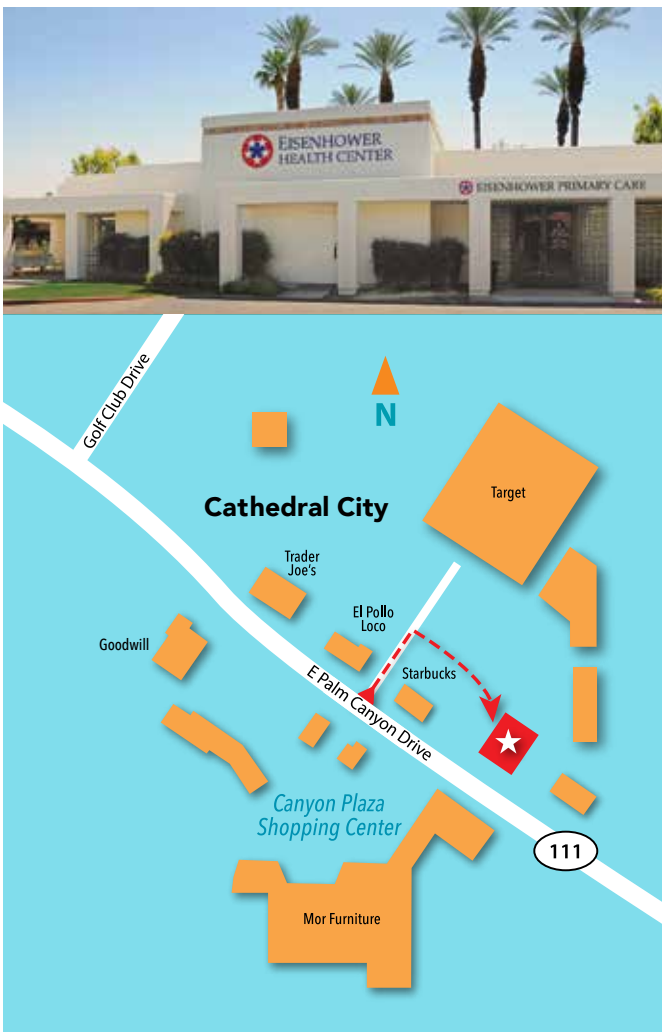


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Interacting with Alzheimer's Patients

Provided by Alzheimers Coachella Valley

Without a doubt, one of the saddest things that can happen with an Alzheimer's or dementia patient is when family, friends and acquaintances desert those diagnosed due to fear, discomfort and misunderstanding of the disease.

Being connected and involved with others is crucial for every human being, especially those with dementia, but not knowing or understanding how to communicate with those affected is a common problem.

Here are some tips from research experts for interacting with Alzheimer's patients:

**Adapt communication.** Laura Gitlin, a dementia researcher and director of The Center for Innovative Care in Aging at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, offers these suggestions: Speak slowly, simply and calmly. Make one or two points at a time and allow sufficient time to respond; don't argue. Eliminate noise and distraction – such as the TV or radio – make eye contact, and express affection by smiling, holding hands or giving a hug.

**Embrace their reality.** Susan Berger, author of *The Washington Post* article *A few Tips from Experts for Interacting with Alzheimer's Patients*, recommends that you embrace their reality.

"This disease is going to give the patient a view of the past – and even the present – that is different from yours," she says. "If the patient asks 'When can we go see my mom?' and you know that the mother is dead, you can say, 'Let's go tomorrow' and change the subject."

"The goal here is not the truth, but finding a way to avoid upsetting the person," said Berger.

**Don't give instructions.** Do ask the patient to help; everyone wants to be helpful. 'Can you help me set the table or fold laundry?' communicates ways to involve the person with dementia and help them feel productive.

**Reintroduce yourself.** Don't assume that the patient knows you, especially if you're not a family member or close friend. Approach from the front so the patient can see, hear and understand you. Do not scare them by suddenly appearing at their side. Even relatives should expect to reintroduce themselves as the disease progresses.

But if the person doesn't recognize you or says something that doesn't make sense, don't be upset in front of them; and don't talk as if the patient isn't there.

**Do not quiz.** Don't ask such things as 'Do you remember what you had for breakfast?' or 'Don't you remember your name?' This can be very upsetting to someone who cannot remember. Instead, offer gentle reminders: 'The eggs you had for breakfast seemed good' and 'Look who's here: it's your grandson James.'

**Respect autonomy and individuality.** In Judith Graham's article *How to Help Alzheimer's Patients Enjoy Life, Not Just 'Fade Away'*, published in *Kaiser Health News*, she notes that "In a review of 11 studies that asked people with dementia what was important to them, they said they wanted to experience autonomy and independence, feel accepted and understood, and not be overly identified with their illness."

A sizable body of research finds that people with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia retain a sense of self and can have a positive quality of life overall, until the final stages of the illness.

*Alzheimers Coachella Valley (ACV) is located at 42600 Cook Street, Ste. 134, in Palm Desert. If you are interested in learning more, plan to attend one of ACV's new classes, "Meaningful Conversations with a Dementia Patient," starting in the fall. All programs are free and open to the public. (760) 776.3100.*

Sources: 1) "A few tips from experts for interacting with Alzheimer's Patients," by Susan Berger, *Health & Science*, *The Washington Post*, May 30, 2016; 2) "How to Help Alzheimer's Patients Enjoy Life, Not Just 'Fade Away'" by Judith Graham, *Kaiser Health News*, April 20, 2017.

New Technology to  
Help Macular Degeneration Patients See Better

The FALCON, the only autofocusing telescope glasses, helps vision-loss people read and drive.

Dr. Gregory Evans, low vision optometrist and member of The International Academy of Low Vision Specialists is one of the only low vision doctors using the new Falcon, by Ocutech.



This new autofocusing telescope allows those with macular degeneration and other vision-limiting conditions to read, drive, and do the normal activities that once were limited by vision loss.

Designed specifically for the visually impaired, this device provides four times magnification and can change focus instantaneously.

This means one can go from far to near distances and still be in focus. Because it weighs less than 4 ounces, it is comfortable to wear all day long.

Dr. Evans has over forty years of experience and has helped vision-loss patients to read, drive, play cards like bridge and poker, write checks, and see television and sporting events.

"My job is to listen to what is on the patient's wish list and make it happen."

Dr. Evans performs a one-hour low vision evaluation which is not the same as a normal eye exam.

"Sometimes it is necessary to have more than one pair of glasses for different distances. This is why the new autofocus FALCON is so important. It may reduce the number of low vision glasses the patient needs".

"Our job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a patient functioning visually.

Whether it's reading, driving, watching television, seeing faces or sporting events, we work with whatever is on their wish list," says Dr. Evans.

Macular degeneration is the most common eye disease among the senior population. As many as 25% of those over 65 have some degree of degeneration. The macula is one small part of the entire retina, but it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp detail vision.

Low vision is a condition in which fully corrected vision is insufficient to do those things you want to do.

Telescope glasses are not the only low vision glasses that Dr. Evans uses. "There are also microscope glasses, prism glasses, special filters, electronic devices and more."



Gregory Evans OD

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## Caregiving for the Caregiver

Support comes in many forms, especially when someone is going through cancer. We think about how awful everything that they must endure is - treatments, doctor appointments, fatigue, stress and so much more. Hopefully, the person going through cancer has a good support system and a caregiver that will be by their side through thick and thin.

But what about that caregiver? Do we ever stop to ask ourselves who takes care of them? How do they keep a positive outlook when their loved one is going through so much? Do they have the chance to fill their cup up amid laundry, cooking, cleaning, updating e-mails, dealing with insurance claims and making sure their loved one is comfortable and safe? Caregiving is a lonely, thankless and stressful job, yet most caregivers will never complain to anyone because it is where they choose to be.

So how do we help the caregiver? How do we help them stay strong when they most likely are putting on the mask of strength?

Here are 5 ways you can care for the caregiver:

**Ask for forgiveness, then permission.** Caregivers are usually taking care of their loved one and that is their only focus. Don't ask them how you can help because that one question may overwhelm them even more than you know. Just do something for them that would take something off their plate. Like make a meal, go grocery shopping, do their laundry. You can ask for forgiveness later if you didn't fold the towels the right side out.

**Tell them they have the day off.** Stay with the loved one going through cancer. Assure the caregiver that you will be right by their loved one's side, keeping them safe. Tell them that they get the day off to

do whatever they want. Having the day off might mean getting a haircut, a massage or a therapy session. That day off might be the one day they feel somewhat normal for a few hours.

**Take the kids to a movie, to the park or out to dinner.** Cancer affects the entire family, and the caregiver not only is taking care of the person who is sick but the whole family. A family with young children going through cancer just wants to keep things normal. Offer to give their children a day of fun, getting away from worry. This will take the pressure off the caregiver.

**Hallmark does have the card for every occasion.** A simple card says it all, so does a text, a sticky note, an email, and a call with an "I am thinking of you" message. Sometimes we think we must make such a large impact that we tend to forget that a simple acknowledgment that you know what they are going through is just what they need to hear. They matter. They have stress. They have feelings. They have hard days. They need to be seen, too!

**Be the friend to cross the finish line together!** Cancer is a marathon, not a sprint and the longer someone has to fight, the more you have to run. Many friends drop out of the race. Don't be that friend. Be in the race to the finish line. Try to put yourself in their shoes for even one day and imagine if this were your race. Wouldn't you want a good friend by your side? Be that friend; you will thank yourself later when the marathon is over no matter the outcome of the race.

Shay Moraga, E-RYT500 is a Triple Negative Breast Cancer Survivor who teaches Yoga for Cancer Caretakers and Survivors at Eisenhower's Lucy Curci Center. Contact Shay at [shay@namstewithshay.com](mailto:shay@namstewithshay.com) or reach out on social media @NamstewithShay.



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# Help for Ulcerative Colitis

## Clinical study explores new indication for medicine

Provided by Palmtree Clinical Research

Occasional diarrhea from bad food, a medication side effect or illness is one thing, but to battle it on a chronic basis, along with other sometimes painful symptoms, is quite another. If you or a loved one has ulcerative colitis, you know how debilitating this type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) can be. In addition to more frequent stools, people with ulcerative colitis can experience diarrhea with bloody stool and abdominal pain.

Ulcerative colitis affects both men and women equally and usually presents in the teen years or young adulthood, but the disease can occur at any age. If you have a relative with the condition, you are at higher risk for this disease. The symptoms of ulcerative colitis are very similar to Crohn's disease. However, ulcerative colitis affects only the colon whereas Crohn's can affect the small intestine and other parts of the digestive system.

As an intermittent disease, the main goals for treating ulcerative colitis are to achieve remission to control symptoms and maintain remission to prevent flare-ups. Two main classes of drugs are used to accomplish those goals: 5-aminosalicylates (5-ASA) and corticosteroids such as prednisone. If patients have an intolerance to these medications or they do not provide enough relief, the next step is to consider a colectomy surgery in which the colon is removed. However, surgery is

always a last resort and only recommended when other first-line treatments have been tried and failed. About 20 percent of people with ulcerative colitis will require surgery.

Another type of drug that has been used in treating ulcerative colitis is cyclosporine. It has been used in patients with severe, rapid-onset ulcerative colitis and has helped these patients due to its anti-inflammatory response. An immune-suppressing drug, cyclosporine was developed for organ transplant patients to help the body more readily accept the transplanted organ.

Palmtree Clinical Research in Palm Springs is a national site for a clinical trial for cyclosporine to study its use in people with moderate-to-severe ulcerative colitis. This study will help determine FDA approval for this indication of cyclosporine.

Coachella Valley residents with severe-to-moderate ulcerative colitis may apply for this study. The study criteria include people age 18-75 with moderate-to-severe ulcerative colitis who have had an inadequate response to their current medication or a loss of response or intolerance to at least one conventional therapy for ulcerative colitis. Qualified study participants receive either a placebo or the investigational medication to see if clinical remission for ulcerative colitis can be achieved. Participants receive study-related care at no cost and compensation per visit, and may help advance medicine for others suffering from ulcerative colitis.

For patients who have tried several options and have become discouraged with results, cyclosporine may offer a ray of hope and the option to avoid colon surgery if the patient responds favorably.

For more information, please call (760) 778.7799 or visit [www.palmtreeclinical.com](http://www.palmtreeclinical.com).



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NICHOLAS S. BAUMANN, DDS

**This Crazy Ride Called Life** Continued from page 3

being." She advises that instead of going through this decade with a sense of dread, start considering it a time for positive change.

Her list of 50 action items is very inspiring and includes life-altering activities such as conquering long-held fears, learning a new language, taking a solo vacation and forgiving someone or making amends (even your exes).

She ends with a powerful tool when it comes to your happiness and the happiness of those around you: simply smile more. "Putting a smile on your face not only makes you seem more approachable, it can actually boost your mood, as well. A little happiness goes a long way."

On her site *Sixty and Me*, founder Margaret Manning discusses *5 Mistakes that Stop People from Finding Happiness After 50*.<sup>5</sup> "If there's one thing that I have learned, it's that happiness after 50 is a choice," she says. "You can invest in your health, wealth and happiness. Or, you can let yourself go. You can build a solid foundation for the future. Or, you can accept age-related problems as inevitable."


Her list of five mistakes to avoid are worth a read and include trying to look younger, not realizing that making friends at this stage in life requires work, buying your happiness with material things, looking at retirement as a destination, and not investing in your health.

After reading these encouraging articles, I decided to add one new and different activity to each week. I left my desk and took a painting class at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday and visited the Route 66 exhibit at the La Quinta Museum this week. Both activities took me out of my being and helped change my perspective. These simple changes sparked excitement and enlivened my spirit. I look forward to next week's selection, whatever that may be.

My friends and I continue to manage the stress with meditation, prayer, affirmations, nutrition, and exercise. This phase of our life has certainly strengthened our appreciation for each other... and wine. Both are helping us through the toughest times.

The truth is that laughter and levity just may be the best medicine for this crazy ride called life.

Lauren Del Sarto is founder and publisher of Desert Health and can be reached at [Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com](mailto:Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com).



Challenging times can strengthen your appreciation for friends.

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Do Deodorants Affect Breast Health?

By Sonja Fung, ND

Summer is finally here in the desert. We had a blessedly cool May, but now the summer sauna has returned. As we enjoy (or lament) the sweat-inducing heat, what is the best way to keep ourselves smelling sweet while maintaining our skin and breast health?

For many years, I have remained skeptical about the claims that standard antiperspirants and deodorants increase the risk of breast cancer. There is still not enough evidence that *directly links* antiperspirant use to breast cancer; however recent studies have clearly shown certain chemicals that you put on your body can increase cancer risk significantly.

Aluminum is a metal and a preservative that is used in antiperspirants to plug your pores and stop you from sweating. Parabens are synthetic chemicals used as preservatives in cosmetics, deodorants, pharmaceuticals, and food. According to governmental informational sites such as National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society, there is not enough evidence linking these substances to increased breast cancer risk. However, their data was based on older studies from 2002 up through a 2016 systematic review of two case-controlled studies by Allam. The “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence,” says Dr. Harvey, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Applied Toxicology*. In a 2016 review, he stated that parabens have been measured as present in 99% of human breast tissue samples, can stimulate sustained proliferation of human breast cancer cells, and increase invasiveness and migration activity of breast cancer cells at concentrations measurable in the breast tissue.

Dr. Philippa Darbre, an oncologist who studies the effects of additives such as aluminum and paraben in underarm products and other cosmetics, has found that these substances can create an estrogen-like effect on human breast tissue, and has questioned the role of these additives in personal products for years. New data published in *The Lancet* from Linhart's group in 2017, showed that in a large study of 460 women there was a 388 percent increased risk (OR of 3.88 percent, 95 percent CI 1.03-14.66) of upper outer quadrant breast cancer in women under 30 years old in the highest risk group who use aluminum-based underarm products multiple times a day. They recommend that women, especially in the highest risk group, limit the use of these type of underarm products.

Aside from washing regularly and thoroughly, there are other cleaner options for healthy armpits. Deodorant products that do not contain aluminum aren't as effective at stopping sweat; however, consider the trade-off. I recommend concerned patients switch to products that are based in essential oils, baking soda, tapioca starch, coconut oil, and shea butter. Baking soda and corn or tapioca starch do help soak up some wetness if you apply throughout the day. If you are sensitive to baking soda, there are products for sensitive skin.

If you're extremely committed, you could even make your own natural deodorant. To make it easier, *Jetsetter* magazine reviewed 15 types of aluminum- and paraben-free underarm products that could be helpful (search best natural deodorants at [jetsetter.com](http://jetsetter.com)). Doing mini pit scrubs with soap and water throughout the day is another clean option to keep your breasts healthy and smell sweeter.

Dr. Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor with a focus on integrative cancer care and PRP regenerative joint injections at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information call (760) 771.5970 or visit [www.livewellclinic.org](http://www.livewellclinic.org).

Sources available upon request.

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## NATUROPATHIC FAMILY MEDICINE

with Dr. Shannon

### Preventing Children's Water Accidents

In the United States, drowning continues to be the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 claiming the lives of roughly 1,100 children in 2006<sup>1</sup>. Those at greatest risk for water accidents or drowning includes this group and teenage boys. Summer also presents greater risk for water accidents as children are in pools, lakes and rivers more often and with larger groups of people.

There are many ways to prevent water accidents, primarily never letting a child out of your sight and securing water areas with greater depth greater than 2 inches. By following a list of common guidelines, water accidents can be prevented:

1. Secure all standing water areas with greater than 2 inches depth with a barrier/fence. Fence pools with a childproof latch and keep fence gates closed at all times.
2. Enroll all children in swimming and water safety lessons prior to 1 years old and beyond. Swim lessons should review water safety training including how to find a pool edge and climb out.
3. Do not trust that a child who can swim adequately in a non-distressed situation will respond the same under distress. Children who are competent swimmers, especially under the age of 5, are still in danger of drowning. A child can panic and forget to swim, panic and swallow excess water and choke, or simply fall in and have an injury that prevents adequate swimming.
4. Watch children at all times in water settings, and never assume another adult is watching the child unless you have verbally confirmed with another that they are to be watching the child at all times. A lapse in adult supervision is the "single, most important" factor in child drowning deaths, according to the World Health Organization<sup>2</sup>.
5. Drowning can occur in 1 min and 30 seconds. A child can inhale water leaving their lungs unable to breathe in mere seconds. If there are multiple children in the water at the same time, make sure to count heads and look for kids every minute.
6. Stay close. Most water accidents happen within yards of the adult supervisor.

While it is a very hard subject to read or review, it is immensely important for parents and adults in contact or in a supervising position of children in, around, or near water to be vigilantly aware of the dangers of water accidents for children. Water accidents are tragic in that they are almost always preventable, happen very quickly, and are often due to unintentional negligence in supervision.

For additional information, there are several swimming schools and private instructors that can teach water safety and CPR to adults and children, as well as a protocol to follow in the event of an accident.

*Shannon Sinsheimer, ND, is a state licensed naturopathic doctor with a focus on fertility, family wellness, and pre-conception health and can be reached at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert (760) 568.2598.*

References: 1) American Academy of Pediatrics. 5/24/2010. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Gives-Updated-Advice-on-Drowning-Prevention.aspx>; 2) The Today Show 6/6/2013. <https://www.today.com/health/drowning-often-quick-silent-how-spot-someone-trouble-6C10223428>

## Choose to Fall All-In

By Timothy Courtney

Have you been getting a tap on the shoulder that keeps telling you that you need a vacation? I believe that we never truly realize just how much we need an uplifting vacation, or "change of environment," until we have actually make that change.

I recently took a spur of the moment trip to Paris. For me, walking to my next destination while deeply appreciating the visuals of history, character and spirit-filled streets of architecture was so very rich. Other things that ignited my soul included the highly inviting variety of cafes, French foods, pastries (my favorite!), espresso, French chocolates, Parisian fashion and style, their sensual delivery of the language, the many fine boutique stores, the wonderfully friendly connections with Parisians and others from around the world, and the overall spirit of passion.

Can you remember the first time you fell in love? Maybe you've even had a second, third, fourth or fifth time. Usually, at least the first time, we fall "ALL-IN" because we made, or make, a decision to open our heart and mind allowing for the biggest, best, most fulfilling experience possible. Remember that feeling?

I started going to Paris frequently when I was 30 years old. Today I am 57, so how could another visit to Paris be so special? I mean, I've made this trip many times already. Wouldn't my trips have been the best in my younger years? I kind of thought they would be, too. It's true, my earlier times in Paris were the best, and I am grateful to say that they continue to be so today. I wonder why...

When I arrived in Paris on May 1, it was like I had arrived back at Disneyland as a kid. It was clear I would need to choose, and I decided that I would not be having a "so-so" holiday, and therefore opted to allow all of my senses - which were in dire need of love, passion, joy, and rejuvenation - to have it, and to HAVE IT ALL!

As a psychic reader, I am always looking forward to the part where I am able to offer my clients specific solutions. With this trip, my solution (my self-care to Timothy) was actually very easy and rewarding. It was with certainty, trust and faith that I fully opened my heart and mind to Fall All-In - to fall in love with Paris once again and therefore, with my life as well.

Where is this feeling missing in your life? Is it with your career, work, family, friends, partner/partner seeking; with yourself or your once favorite beach, park or city; maybe with your once rewarding hobby of singing, writing, exercising, or volunteering?

Are you willing to be open right now? If so, let's you and I take this moment to heighten our psychic-selves together. Right now, sit-up-straight. Take a couple of relaxing mind-clearing inhales and exhailes, put your hands over your heart and ask, "Where is it in my life, right now, that I might benefit by giving myself permission to "Fall All In?"

Close your eyes, be still, connect for an answer and choose to "Fall All In" for a more fulfilling life experience.

*Timothy Courtney is a psychic medium located in Palm Springs. For more information or to receive Timothy's inspirational newsletter, please visit [www.TimothyCourtney.com](http://www.TimothyCourtney.com).*

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## Third Annual World Wellness Weekend

### International campaign open to all

In 2017, a campaign was launched to raise awareness on the benefits of wellness lifestyles and to inspire people around the globe to adopt healthier habits. Now in its third year, World Wellness Weekend has grown to include over 2,000 venues in 100 countries and local businesses and community members are encouraged to get involved.

Taking place September 21 - 22, the web-based campaign promotes free health and wellness activities around the globe and is free to join.

World Wellness Weekend was started by French hospitality consultant Jean-Guy de Gabriac, CEO of Tip Touch International, and is now supported by over 40 associations and federations including the United Nations Global Sustainability Index Institute European Commission.

As a national sponsor, Massage Envy is supporting the effort and offering free services across the country on that weekend. "World Wellness Weekend gives us a fantastic opportunity to highlight the importance of integrating regular body care rituals like massage and facials into a total body wellness lifestyle," says President and CEO Joe Magnacca.

"This is our way of giving back to the community," adds Holly Lassak, owner of Massage Envy of the Desert, which has locations in Palm Springs, Palm Desert and La Quinta.

Other businesses and organizations are encouraged to join as an opportunity to showcase services and inspire new clients while taking part in the worldwide initiative. Participants are encouraged to get creative in developing fun activities based on the campaign's five pillars of well-being: Sleep and Restoration, Nutrition and Nourishment, Vitality and Movement, Serenity and Mindfulness, Purpose and Solidarity.

The Massage Envy desert locations will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday (9/21) and Sunday (9/22)

and community members can sample one of three free offers: a skin consultation with a licensed esthetician to learn about their particular skin condition and needs along with a free sample (while supplies last); trial of Rapid Tension Relief which combines the skills of a licensed massage therapist with the cutting-edge technology of Hypervolt, a percussion massage device; and a free trial of Total Body Stretch, Massage Envy's head-to-toe assisted stretch that

helps increase mobility, flexibility and performance.

"We hope to see a lot of people come try these free services during World Wellness Weekend," adds Lassak. "There are no hidden costs and no strings attached. The services are a great way for us to help people understand how they can keep their bodies working."

One of the goals of World Wellness Weekend is to remind people that while "health is a relationship between their body and a doctor, wellness is a responsible relationship between one's body and one's self." Organizers encourage properties across the globe to "open their doors during a weekend of discovery and initiation dedicated to the sheer joy of Living Well with friends and family."

"There is no nobler mission in life than encouraging each and every one to become the best version of themselves," says de Gabriac at World-Wellness-Weekend.org. "It feels great to be well!"

Applications for participation along with a worldwide map of activities being offered can be found at [www.world-wellness-weekend.org](http://www.world-wellness-weekend.org). For more information on Massage Envy of the Desert's planned activities, visit the Massage Envy Coachella Valley Facebook page @ [MassageEnvyDesert](https://www.facebook.com/MassageEnvyDesert).



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## Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco



### Following Your Inner Compass

We often say, "Trust your instincts" and "Listen to your inner voice." Yet, with all the external noise and internal conflict, how do we follow our inner compass?

Our world revolves around strategy, data, knowledge and facts, which challenges us to navigate unknown territories. Over 4,000 years ago Phoenician sailors used the sun and stars to navigate. Many of us now have difficulty managing a paper map when on a road trip. When it comes to our internal guidance system, we spend a lot of time sailing the seas of Facebook, YouTube, and social media likes and dislikes as a litmus test for the legitimacy of our future life steps.



The path to wellness rests in finding quiet and clarity in the busyness of life.

If we settle into the present moment, the key to wisdom becomes apparent. Internal truth is knowing the difference between wild hopes and fears and common sense and intuition. It is evident that the outer world can pull us away from our inner world, sending us into a spiral of self-doubt and compromised self-worth.

A reminder of this lesson came about recently during a discussion with my 17-year-old daughter regarding her grades in school. High school students currently have access to grades 24/7. My daughter shared with me a classroom discussion initiated by her language arts teacher regarding how students process and interpret grades as the primary aspect of achievement. A resounding number of students maintained that it is not uncommon to check grades multiple times during the day. Each time a grade is checked it becomes immediate feedback, validating one's self-worth. The grade is likened to currency, as the importance of earning a high grade is insurance of being admitted to the college of choice.

Maybe there are benefits to easy and timely accessibility to grades, but it also reinforces that the grade is the hyper focus, which can create stress, worry and a cascade of doubt. The world is in synchrony and humans are, too. The more accessible all of life's report cards are, the less we tend to look within.

Neuroscientists have postulated that approximately 5 percent of our cognitive activity - decisions, emotions, actions, and behavior - come from our conscious mind. With 95 percent of our brain activity happening at the subconscious level and 40,000 neurons and neurotransmitters residing in the heart, we find the answer to true being and internal discernment.

The ultimate path to wellness rests in finding quiet and clarity in the busyness of life. As Ram Dass, clinical psychologist and author of *Be Here Now*, so eloquently said, "Be still. The quieter you become, the more you can hear."

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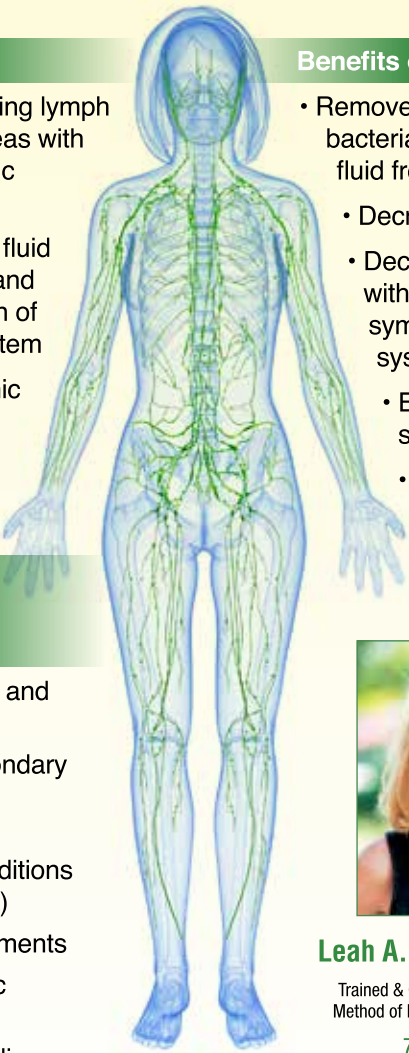
- Assists in increasing lymph drainage from areas with impaired lymphatic function
- Eliminates lymph fluid from extremities and aids in contraction of the lymphatic system
- Increases systemic effect on affected areas and local regions

### Benefits of MLD

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## Natural Options for Candida

By Jessica Needle, ND

*Candida albicans* is a yeast that lives in and on the human body. In small amounts it is not harmful, but an overabundance can cause infections in the genitourinary tract, the digestive system and on the skin. An overgrowth of candida in the gastrointestinal tract is associated with ulcers, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Along with causing many infections patients acquire in hospitals, candida can also be at the root of longstanding symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, rashes and post-nasal drip.

The growth of candida is usually inhibited by the presence of friendly bacteria in the gut and on the skin. When the internal or external environment is disrupted, candida can proliferate. Some of the factors favoring candida overgrowth are taking antibiotics and steroids, using antibacterial soaps, eating a diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates and consuming alcohol. Poor oral hygiene, wearing dentures and using oral contraceptives are other contributors. Diabetes, cancer, AIDS and recent surgeries all result in a weakened immune system and make pathogenic levels of candida more likely.

Vaginal yeast infections are the most common manifestation of a candida imbalance, affecting 75 percent of women. Symptoms include itching of the vulva, burning sensations and a thick, white discharge. A health care practitioner can often recognize a vaginal yeast infection using visual inspection. A swab of vaginal fluid can be examined under a microscope to help with diagnosis, and candida can also be detected on a Pap, the test used to screen for cervical cancer. A woman should refrain from intercourse when she has a yeast infection, as she can transmit the infection to her partner.

A mild yeast infection can be treated with topical antifungal medication, as can thrush, which is a yeast infection of the mouth or throat. For more serious cases, oral and intravenous forms of medication exist, although numerous species of *Candida albicans* have developed drug resistance.

If your infections are recurrent, following an anti-candida diet is warranted. In addition to eliminating foods that are obvious sources of yeast such as bread and beer, foods that feed yeast should also be excluded including sugar and other sweeteners like honey and maple syrup. Dairy products contain lactose, a milk sugar, and may also contain molds that cause unwanted immune system responses. A water fast can jumpstart the process of killing off candida, as can a specialized amino acid formula similar to a liquid protein diet.

There are numerous foods that fight candida infections which should be consumed along with a yeast-free diet focusing on non-starchy vegetables and gluten-free grains. These are garlic, oregano, curcumin, pomegranate, coconut oil, Aloe vera, kombucha, sauerkraut, kimchi and apple cider vinegar. Concentrated supplements with antifungal properties can be added to your regimen. Caprylic acid (one of the constituents of coconut oil) is available in capsule form, as are grapefruit seed extract and undecylenic acid. Probiotics are recommended to repopulate the gut with friendly bacteria to keep candida in check.

Visit [www.yeastconnection.com/pdf/yeastfullsurv.pdf](http://www.yeastconnection.com/pdf/yeastfullsurv.pdf) to complete a questionnaire which will tell you the likelihood that your symptoms are related to *Candida albicans*.

Dr. Jessica Needle is a licensed naturopathic doctor practicing at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568.2598.





Form and Function

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? This question has a new application for me as I pursue optimal brain function for patients. For most of my “doctor life” I’ve believed brain function to be dependent on the right environment and care – a fragile organ sustained by the right brew of vitamins, nutrients and hormones. In other words, I was more enamored with physiology than anatomy as I believed anatomy was static and that which we had at birth.

But there is a basic premise in science that form dictates function. I’ve “dusted off” this perspective as I have pursued further understanding of brain performance and am in awe of our complexity as conscious creatures.

The physical structure of the brain includes white matter and grey matter, an inner and an outer layer. Concealed in this tissue are millions of highly adapted, elongated cells called neurons – with star-like projections - meant to connect with their neighboring cells. These connections occur through neurotransmitter hormones but are also highly dependent on electrical voltage. The ability of the brain to create this electrical voltage requires intact structures. True, there must be a myriad of chemical players present, but electrical voltage creation varies based on the preservation, connection and structure of the neurons.

Insults that harm these neurons can include toxins in the environment, brain trauma such as concussions or worse, but most commonly circadian rhythm disruption. Our brain performs trillions of “computations” every day. The world’s greatest super-computer can only perform a small fraction of what our brain can do in one day – and takes rooms of cooling fans to keep it functional.

So how does our brain function and not overheat? It is dependent on shifting to slower electrical frequencies to cool off. This is one of the most important functions of sleep because during deep or light sleep our brain operates at states that allow for regeneration through cooling.

The circadian rhythm is controlled by our exposure to light and when we start our day with light in the outdoor blue-light spectrum, it suppresses melatonin so that we can stay alert and functional during daylight hours. Approximately 14 hours later, this suppression eases off and our melatonin begins to increase, preparing us for sleep. When we work with this cycle, we support our brain in resetting for work the next day, and we allow cooling from the previous day’s exertion. The circadian rhythm preserves the function of the neurons in creating electrical voltage, which in turn secures the physical connection of the neurons – or what we call neuroplasticity.

While there are many new interventions to support brain health, the simplest first step is to rebuild the circadian rhythm by spending 30-45 minutes outside in the morning without glass blocking the daylight wavelengths. We are at an amazing place in history where emerging brain treatment techniques can support resolution of anxiety, depression, cravings, insomnia, poor memory and injury. The interplay of optimal metabolic, structural and electrical function is becoming a reality through the advances we see in medicine today.

Dr. Brossfield practices functional medicine for men and women at her practice, XO Health, in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 573.2761.

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## Low Thyroid: Taking Levothyroxine, But Still Don't Feel Right?

By David M. Odom, MD

One of the most common chronic maladies affecting people is low thyroid function. Symptoms which bring patients to a doctor may include unexplained weight gain, fatigue, loss of hair and lateral eyebrows, brain fog, feeling cold when others are warm, cold hands and feet, and menstrual irregularities.

These symptoms are caused by lack of the active form of the thyroid hormone, T<sub>3</sub>. Invariably, as a part of the diagnostic work-up, the doctor will order a thyroid stimulating hormone or TSH test. TSH is a brain hormone that stimulates the thyroid gland to make more or less of the inactive form of the thyroid hormone thyroxine or T<sub>4</sub>. The thyroid gland makes T<sub>4</sub> and it goes into circulation in the body converting into the active form of the thyroid hormone T<sub>3</sub> in tissues requiring an increase of metabolic rate.

If the TSH is high, the demand by the brain is for more production of thyroxine; if the TSH is low, the request is for less production of thyroxine (confusing, I know). This is a general relationship that has no specific correlation with the signs and symptoms of low thyroid function. Remember, it is T<sub>3</sub> (not T<sub>4</sub>) that is responsible for how a patient feels.

Unfortunately, the medication most commonly prescribed for thyroid patients is synthetic levothyroxine<sup>1</sup> which very poorly converts to T<sub>3</sub>; yet is a \$2.6 billion a year business in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

The TSH has a very definite, very specific relationship to the dose of synthetic levothyroxine.

The problem, however, is that most doctors have presumed, without any scientific evidence, that the TSH has an exact relationship to the suffering perceived by the patient.

The patient may notice some improvement of symptoms as the dose of levothyroxine is raised, allowing some conversion to T<sub>3</sub>. However, the doctor may be more focused on the TSH levels than the patient symptoms, and if the patient tells the doctor that symptoms are improved with a higher dose, but the resultant TSH level is below the range listed on the lab report, the doctor may dutifully lower the dose to the amazement of the patient.

The relationship between the dose of synthetic levothyroxine and the TSH test allows the appearance of a rational mechanism for the diagnosis and treatment of low thyroid function. The reality is that there is no specific blood test for measuring hypothyroidism. The best way to determine adequacy of treatment is by how the patient responds to thyroid supplementation.

I have found that patients taking Thyroid USP, a regulated product made from real pig thyroid glands, will immediately notice an improvement in symptoms. Pig thyroid glandular composition is very similar to that of the human, except containing more T<sub>3</sub>. The United States Pharmacopeia (USP) establishes written and physical standards for medicines and dietary supplement products<sup>3</sup> which are used by regulatory agencies and manufacturers to help ensure the products strength, quality, purity, and consistency.<sup>4</sup>

If you suffer from low thyroid and standard medical treatment has not been successful, know that additional options are available.

David M. Odom, MD practices bio-identical hormone replacement therapy and weight loss medicine at Longevity Therapeutics in La Quinta. (760) 698.8400. [www.dr-odom.com](http://www.dr-odom.com)

References: 1) Levothyroxine is the generic name for brands such as Synthroid, Levoxyl, and others; 2) <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/amneal-announces-10-year-licensing-and-supply-agreement-with-jerome-stevens-pharmaceuticals-inc-for-levothyroxine-300699199.html>; 3) <https://www.usp.org/reference-standards>; 4) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Pharmacopeia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Pharmacopeia)

## Hypnosis for Cancer Care

By Roger Moore, CHt

Cancer patients and survivors often experience significant problems with pain, fatigue, sleep, stress, anxiety, trauma and grief associated both with the cancer diagnosis and side effects of treatments. Hypnosis can be powerfully effective for the physical, mental and emotional fallout that comes with the disease - and after, when life is often profoundly different.

Cancer also impacts those surrounding the patient, so loved ones often need help to process and deal with their new situation. Often couples need to talk through role changes caused by cancer and at times, the impending death of one of the partners. Others need space to grieve the loss of body parts and functions. Hypnosis can help ease these transitions.

A few years ago, I received a phone call from an oncologist at a cancer center. He had an emergency situation with a male patient and really wanted me to meet with the man that afternoon. His patient—we'll call him David—had an aggressive form of cancer and had completed chemo. The chemo hadn't worked and his doctor wanted him to try radiation. Because of the chemotherapy, David had nearly died three times and had suffered broken ribs resulting from the resuscitation.

David's appointment that day was to get the tattoos for radiation. He was in extreme pain, couldn't lie down and was also claustrophobic. The oncologist wanted hypnosis to help him relax, overcome the pain and feel more comfortable being confined for the procedure.

When I arrived, I found David in a room by himself looking at a picture of a young girl on his phone. He told me he had changed his mind and wasn't going to go through with radiation. He believed the chances for his survival—with or without the treatment—were not good, and he had lost all hope.

I asked him about the girl in the photo. He lit up. It was his 4-year-old granddaughter for whom he and his wife had provided daycare since birth. I asked David about his hopes for her, and he just bubbled over with love and joy.

Clinging to his hopes for his granddaughter, he chose to go ahead with the tattoo. Using hypnosis, I helped him to lie down on the table and then talked with him over the microphone from the booth. When the marking was completed, I was at his side and talked with him as he sat up with minimal discomfort. Over the next few weeks, I was in the booth guiding David with hypnosis as he received his radiation treatment.

Today, David is alive and cancer-free. He makes a point to call me each December to wish me a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

There is life after cancer, and it can be made easier with support and therapeutic tools like hypnosis.

Roger Moore is a certified counselor and registered hypnotherapist with Palm Desert Hypnosis and can be reached at [Roger@HypnosisHealthInfo.com](mailto:Roger@HypnosisHealthInfo.com); (760) 219.8079. For more information, visit [www.PalmDesertHypnosis.com](http://www.PalmDesertHypnosis.com).

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## The Cancer and Food Connection

By Joseph E. Scherger MD, MPH

Siddhartha Mukherjee, MD, an oncology fellow at the time, wrote a detailed biography of cancer in his 2010 book *Emperor of All Maladies*. In it he reports that early in human history, cancer was a very rare disease. As we all know, cancer has become increasingly common, especially since the industrial revolution. This increase cannot be blamed on genetics; this increase has to do with the environment, including what we eat.

Empiric and epidemiologic research has shown that foods can cause cancer, prevent it and even reverse the disease. Here is what we know: 1) Meat and other animal products are associated with cancer, especially colon cancer; 2) A whole food plant-based diet can prevent cancer and help with cancer reversal.

With this knowledge, it is unfortunate that the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), has not conducted large clinical trials of nutrition and cancer. It is also unfortunate that cancer treatment centers usually do not include nutrition education based on our current scientific evidence.

Chris Wark was an active and healthy 26 year-old male when he developed invasive colon cancer. He admits his diet was not healthy. After his initial surgery, his instincts told him not to pursue the recommended chemotherapy and radiation therapy even though his body still had cancer. He dove into what was known about nutrition and lifestyle reversing cancer and went all in. His diet became plant-based and organic when possible. He became an active juicer of healthy vegetables and fruit to release more of the nutrients. He exercised, prayed a lot and managed stress. His cancer disappeared and has not come back over the 15 years prior to his book release *Chris Beat Cancer* in 2018.

Chris Wark is not alone. There have been numerous accounts of nutritional and lifestyle healing of cancer. T. Colin Campbell, the celebrated emeritus cancer epidemiologist from Cornell, conducted *The China Study* (Updated, BenBella Books, 2016) showing the regions of Asia with the highest and lowest cancer rates. The whole food plant-based diet is

associated with the lowest rates where animal products are the highest (except for wild caught seafood). High dairy intake is associated with higher rates of breast and prostate cancer. In his follow-up book, *Whole: Rethinking the Science of Nutrition* (BenBella Books, 2013), Campbell discusses his wife's metastatic melanoma and how that was reversed on a whole food plant-based diet.

We know that nutrition with other healthy lifestyle factors can reverse cancer; however, anyone who wants to trust healthy nutrition and lifestyle over chemotherapy and radiation is taking a risk: all cancer therapy is risky. There is much more we need to learn. What plants are the most important? What about seafood? A reanalysis of the *The China Study* by Denise Minger shows that wild caught seafood is also associated with low cancer risk.<sup>1</sup> Since only about 3 percent of Americans are choosing to be pure vegetarians, we need to know what animal products are safe with respect to cancer.

Not getting cancer, and reversing it, requires an immune system and other defense systems such as an anti-angiogenesis (cutting off the blood supply or "starving" the cancer). In his book, *Eat to Beat Disease*, William Li, MD, offers a large number of foods that have strong evidence of helping five of our defense systems against diseases including cancer (I reviewed this book in the May/June 2019 edition of *Desert Health*).

Cancer treatment is moving away from the toxic and damaging drugs of chemotherapy to health-enhancing methods such as immunotherapy; however, the new treatments are incredibly expensive. Eating a healthy diet is what we should all be doing anyway, along with the other lifestyle factors of daily exercise, stress management, restorative sleep, social connections and meaning and purpose in life. Wouldn't it be nice to return to an earlier time when cancer was a rare disease?

Dr. Scherger is an Eisenhower Health Primary Care 365 physician and core faculty member of the Family Medicine Residency Program.

References: 1) <https://deniseminger.com/the-china-study/>

## The "Dope" on Brain Health

*The important role of dopamine*

By Deborah Schrameck, NC, PT

Wellbeing is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. In past *Desert Health* articles, I have discussed aspects of lifestyle to achieve brain health for quality of life; now I'd like to dive a bit deeper into brain chemistry and discuss the importance of dopamine.

Dopamine is one of the brain's neurotransmitters, a chemical that moves information between neurons. It is associated with feelings of euphoria, pleasure, bliss, motivation and concentration. The biological purpose of dopamine is to encourage life-sustaining behavior such as eating when hungry by producing a pleasurable sensation. It is involved in many cognitive functions including movement, sleep, learning, mood, memory and attention. Dopamine imbalances are associated with ADHD, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, depression, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, substance use disorders, binge eating, addiction and gambling.

Dopamine is found in four major areas of the brain:

- The neurons in the basal ganglia are responsible for the motor control of the body. Imbalances of dopamine here are related to the symptoms found in Parkinson's disease—tremor, stiffness and loss of voluntary movement.
- The limbic system in the brain utilizes dopamine to control reward and emotion. This is the system thought to be responsible for substance use disorders, addictions and other deregulated mental states such as psychosis.
- The meso-cortical pathway, found in the frontal cortex, is responsible for planning, responsibility, prioritizing, motivation, and some elements of emotional regulation. Imbalance of dopamine here is associated with ADHD and depression.
- The tuberoinfundibular pathway is between the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland, which blocks the release of prolactin. Blocking dopamine in this pathway allows for increased prolactin needed for lactation and breastfeeding.

Dopamine is an important neurotransmitter to have balanced when we are striving to achieve wellbeing. So how do we get dopamine? We eat it. The amino acid tyrosine, the precursor to dopamine, is obtained from the protein we eat. High tyrosine foods include cheese, soybeans, beef, lamb, pork, fish, chicken, nuts, seeds, eggs, dairy, beans, and whole grains. Tyrosine can also be synthesized in the body from foods containing phenylalanine. Foods high in phenylalanine include chicken,

Continued on page 24





# Making an Impact on the World

## Riding 920 miles for St. Jude's

By Michael K Butler BA; PTA; CSCS\*D; RSCC\*D NMT

We've all heard of the phrase "working on your bucket list," or completing all the things you wanted to do in life. For most it's things like skydiving, climbing Mount Everest, bungee jumping off big cliffs or visiting exotic islands. For me, it's what I consider a challenge of a lifetime, which at the same time enables me to help someone else and leave a legacy for others to follow.

It's called Race Across the West, a 920-mile grueling bicycle race which began in 2008, starting in San Diego, traversing through Arizona and ending up in Durango, Colorado. The time limit for this event is 2 days and 20 hours. In order to complete this "bucket list ride for cycling," one must be organized, fully committed and in great shape. It takes a full team of supporters to keep the cyclist on the road, fed, hydrated and healthy. The conditions of the course can sometimes be both mentally and physically overwhelming. The team must deal with weather and climate conditions that include searing temperatures that can reach 125 degrees, which can drop down to the low 30s overnight, plus winds up to 50 miles per hour and elevation gains reaching a summit of 14,800 ft.

What also makes this race unique are the countless number of charities for which these cyclists are riding. The training alone is challenging enough, but the commitment to time and organization is full-time. The cyclists who participate come from all walks of life, mostly amateurs, doctors, lawyers, former athletes - some with disabilities. Some of these cyclists have raised as much as \$1 million for their charity and spend countless hours trying to find reputable organizations to fund their costs. The costs alone for participating in this event, including registration, lodging, food, vehicle and bicycle maintenance, etc., can cost in excess of \$25,000.

So, one always asks the question: why do these cyclists put themselves through such a grueling, exhaustive, financially expensive and sometimes life-threatening event? I can answer that question for you!

An athlete is always an athlete; at any age, we are always seeking something challenging and sometimes just plain crazy! The thrill of setting such an extreme goal invigorates us and gives us a purpose. I'm an avid cyclist and have done some of the most challenging, dangerous climbs and distances in California. Over the past three years, I have ridden for a 9-year-old girl battling pelvic cancer, who was so brave and courageous, but unfortunately lost the battle. This really affected me, and I was so motivated to make an impact on this world and pediatric cancer that I came across this ride and St. Jude Hospital. I am riding for pediatric cancer and to also push my athletic and mental limits.

Each one of us riding in the Race Across the West has a story. We are a very small group, but with big hearts and a deep purpose.

**Editor's note:** We are all rooting for Mike on his ambitious journey. If you would like to support his efforts please visit [www.fundraising.stjude.org](http://www.fundraising.stjude.org) (search Michael Butler) or send him an email of encouragement!

Mike is co-owner of Kinetix Health & Performance in Palm Desert and can be reached at [Michael@kinetixcenter.com](mailto:Michael@kinetixcenter.com) or (760) 200.1719.

# A "Night Out" Workout

## By Cara Van Dijk

While Zelda's has long been known as one of the valley's hottest nightclubs, upstairs they are turning up the heat at Bikram Yoga Plus – Palm Springs where Disco Inferno Hot Pilates offers Friday night fun combined with a full body workout. With many fitness fans seeking healthier nightly activities, this rocking class is growing in popularity.

Hot Pilates is a training system which combines Pilates principles with high intensity interval training set to high energy music and performed in a room heated to 95 degrees with 40 percent humidity. The practice is designed to create long, lean muscle mass, burn fat, and increase fitness levels. On Friday nights at Bikram Yoga Plus – Palm Springs, multi-colored lights from all directions are added, along with a disco ball and nonstop beat orchestrated by a live DJ.

It has all the makings of a discotheque dance floor, but with a full body workout designed to strengthen muscles, increase flexibility, and improve overall health.

"I'm not a club girl, so this is my disco night," said Meredith Pour, who started attending Inferno Hot Pilates classes at Bikram Yoga Plus - Palm Desert. "Now that there is a studio in Palm Springs, where I live, I go to Inferno Hot Pilates classes about three times a week. I have seen amazing weight loss and have made so many friends."

The exhilarating class follows the same principles of other Pilates classes in controlling muscles while lifting against gravity and resistance, a technique originally developed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th Century. Both studios offer Inferno Hot Pilates classes throughout the week; Disco Inferno Hot Pilates takes place Fridays from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. in Palm Springs.

"By adding heat, we are warming the muscles so they are working more efficiently," said Annmarie Lynn, who opened the Palm Springs studio with Denise DuBarry Hay in March. "And, when we add the lights and music, it just becomes more fun!"

Lynn is one of only six certified Inferno Hot Pilates instructors in the Coachella Valley. She is also a certified Bikram Yoga instructor taught directly by Bikram Choudhury who developed the unique practice in the 1970s. Lynn is a former gymnast who found life-changing pain relief after practicing Bikram Yoga for less than three months. Since then, she has dedicated her life to helping others find the same healing through yoga and Pilates.

"Annmarie and all the instructors are so positive and inspiring," adds Pour, "and Disco Inferno is definitely a healthier Friday night option for me!"

Bikram Yoga Plus – Palm Springs is located at 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive. Bikram Yoga Plus – Palm Desert is located at University Village. For more information, visit [coachellayoga.com](http://coachellayoga.com) or call (760) 832.8655.



Disco Inferno Pilates offers a fun and healthy Friday night alternative.

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## Lift Your Mood with a Mantra

By Laya Raznick, CHHC

Wouldn't it be great if you had a tool you could count on to instantly relax you and lift you up? A mantra is a sound tool that with repetition can shift the charge on your nervous system, and all you need is your own voice and a little guidance.

What you hear has a powerful effect. Think about how the howl of a coyote on a long, dark night can give you the chills, or the sound of a cat purring can relax you.

Sound is a form of vibration. Vibration changes the molecular structure and shape of water. The human body is made of 60% water, so sound has a strong effect on the shape of our inner environment.

Studies show that certain sounds can have a beneficial effect on the inner functioning of humans and plants. Farmers assisted by the China Agricultural University increased crop output by 15 percent by placing loudspeakers in the fields and playing repetitive Buddhist mantras. And experiments by Masaru Emoto, Japanese author and pseudoscientist, showed that water exposed to negative sounds or thoughts created chaotic formations when frozen, whereas water exposed to mantras, prayers, or positive thoughts formed beautiful, organized, and striking images.

The word mantra can be broken down into two parts: "man," meaning mind, and "tra," meaning transport. A mantra is a sound tool to transport your mind and relieve your stress. Most mantras are made up of seed sounds from the ancient language of Sanskrit. They've been used since ancient times to relieve stress and heighten present moment awareness.

Mantras create a single, powerful vibration. With repetition, the vibration of a mantra will override any disorganized smaller vibrations. These smaller vibrations are absorbed by the single vibration of the mantra. When the vibration of the mantra fills your body and mind, your mood is relaxed and elevated.

The mantra that is most familiar here in the West is OM. According to Vedanta Buddhism, OM is the sound of the vibrating Universe. It is a frequency of energy that connects and joins all things in a field of unlimited potential. It is not short and sharp; it lingers and is flowing. It is constant.

OM is pronounced A-U-M when chanted. When done properly, the sound reverberates from the pelvic floor to the crown of the head, filling the body with the pulsating energy of peace. To begin, sound the first two syllables A-U. Open the mouth for the long A sound and then form an O shaped mouth for the U sound. Now vibrate the lips together for the M sound. Return to silence at the end of your OM before inhaling for another round. A round of 4 or 5 OM's will shift your mood immediately.

For a live demonstration of how to OM as I demonstrated on NBC Palm Springs morning show with anchors Joe Smith and Thalia Hayden Farrell, visit <https://youtu.be/dSnLRI6DUFM>

OM is the sound of the vibration of the Universe. When you chant it, you are bringing the vibration of unlimited potential right through you.

Laya Raznick is a certified holistic health coach guiding clients to release limiting stress patterns so they can relax and live with more inspiration, joy and ease. She can be reached at (760) 512.3399 or visit [www.layaraznick.com](http://www.layaraznick.com).

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## A Little Hot Under the Collar?

By Amy Austin RN, PsyD, LMFT

The heat is on in our desert paradise and many have sought an escape from the rising temperatures. If tempers flare and you or a family member get hot under the collar, is there also an escape for that?

Let's explore how angry outbursts and rage serve as an immediate distancing mechanism in our relationships.

Tantrums are a normal part of the emotional age and stage of development of a young child. Although annoying to those witnessing firsthand, they serve as a way for a child to assert their independence and autonomy. According to Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, (trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame/doubt, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. role confusion, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and integrity vs. despair) if an individual gets stuck in one stage of development, that part of the individual's personality can remain emotionally stunted which can then impact a person later in life, causing a myriad of negative consequences. These impulsive behaviors are not only confusing, but harmful and self-destructive. In the end, interpersonal relationships can be scarred beyond repair.

Can a rageaholic be cured? There's no cure per se, but there are ways to decrease impulsive and reactive behaviors. Here are a few:

**Triggers.** It's important to notice what sets you off and what you're feeling in your body before you rage. Take some time to write them down to increase your conscious awareness.

**Breathe.** When you're about to blow, allow yourself a few moments to take five deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, like you're blowing on hot soup. This method helps to oxygenate your brain and gives you time to calm, re-calibrate, and attempt to make a healthier choice.

**Time.** It's okay to give yourself some time to think about something that has been presented to you. You can say, "You know, I'm not sure, but I'll think about that and get back to you."

**Walk Away.** Remove yourself from a heated situation. Take a walk. Give yourself permission to have a cooling off period.

**Be Curious.** Ask yourself why; what's setting you off or bringing you to a boiling point? Is your wounded inner child (or adult child) feeling hurt? Abandoned? Criticized? Fearful? You can always share your thoughts and feelings at another time. Talking about the things that make you feel vulnerable can help to create close, long-lasting bonds with others. Rage only distances. Remember, it's important to share, but make sure you share where you feel emotionally safe.

A teacher once told his student on a windy day, "Open your bag and let out all the feathers." The feathers fly out. The teacher then says, "Now, go pick them up." The student runs and tries desperately to catch some feathers and can't possibly retrieve all of them. The teacher then gently says, "That's what happens when you let your anger out on someone. You can never take back all the feathers."

Remember, when the temps rise, you can remain cool.

Amy Austin is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFC# 41252) and doctor of clinical psychology in Rancho Mirage. Dr. Amy can be reached at (760) 774.0047.

## What Is Your Vision Of Retirement?

By Tracy J. Smith

You may have financially prepared for retirement, but are you psychologically and emotionally prepared? Being psychologically and emotionally prepared is equally as important as your financial preparations for your overall retirement health and well-being. The root of the word retirement implies retreat from battle, or stepping back to safer ground. This contradicts the excitement and anticipation of the freedom in your lifestyle as retirement begins.

What feelings does your vision of retirement inspire within you? Fun, excitement, freedom, adventure? Or does it spark feelings of stress, uncertainty, fear and anxiety? Do you view retirement as a new beginning or the beginning of the end? Retirement is a transition from a familiar lifestyle to an unfamiliar lifestyle. Have you envisioned a new lifestyle and how each day might look? What expectations do you have for your retirement?

Working environments provide mental stimulation and cognitive health through camaraderie, social interaction, feelings of purpose and fulfillment; for many, it is the essence of their identity. Retirement offers a new identity along with freedom of your time, talents, physical activities, social connections, and mental and emotional focus. It's a chance to learn to have fun again, make new friends, and have less structure in your life.

For some, the loss of structure, social interaction, cognitive stimulation and fulfillment can create feelings of boredom, sadness, isolation and depression. It is not uncommon to hear people say, "Retirement isn't all it's cracked up be"; "It isn't what I expected"; or "I struggle with it."

According to Chip Conley, author of *Wisdom @ Work: The Making of a Modern Elder*, the most important thing people need in retirement is to reframe their mindset on what they have to offer the world and their perspective on aging. When choosing a job, we approached the prospective with "what can I do?" Conley says now is the time to change your mindset to "what can I give?"

Retirement offers infinite possibilities to recreate yourself and to share your knowledge. In visualizing the retirement lifestyle you would like to experience, ask yourself: "How will I spend my time? What activities bring happiness? What brings feelings of fulfillment? Are there goals or challenges I'd like to pursue? How can I stay socially connected?"

If you are married or sharing your life with a partner, include them in your vision as your new freedom could impede or enhance their lifestyle. Use this new chapter to not only re-create who you are, but also redefine and strengthen your relationships.

Retirement is a continuous transition of living. After you've done all the traveling, seen the grandkids, visited friends, tried different activities, take time to visualize and decide how, what and who you'd like to be. This is your time to live, and to be the truest and happiest form of yourself you can be.

Tracy Smith is an energy intuitive therapist and Emotion/Body Code practitioner with AcQpoint Wellness Center and can be reached at (760) 409.9289. [www.TracyJSmith.net](http://www.TracyJSmith.net).



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# Desert Health® Wellness Awards

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Thank you to all who took part in this year's celebration and congratulations to all 2019 Desert Health Wellness Award winners and nominees!

Benefiting:



1) 2019 Winners: Andres Castaneda (Youth); William Grimm, DO (Integrative Practitioner); Pat Kaplan, Edie Keller and Dom Calvano of Alzheimers Coachella Valley (Non-profit); Valeria Batross (Individual); Gerry Washack of Fit in 42 (Business); Annmarie Lynn on behalf of Denise DuBarry Hay

- 2) Ann Marie Palma of Bikram Yoga Palm Desert, Marcie Madain of Fresh Juice and Lauren Del Sarto
- 3) Evening Co-host Janet Zappala
- 4) The Farmer's Market compliments of Prime Time Produce
- 5) Winner Gerry Washack of Fit in 42

- 6) The AcQpoint Wellness Center team toasts their nomination
- 7) Nominee Celeste Amaya, MD, with family and friends
- 8) Nominee Lisa Lindley, MD, with Dan Cosgrove, MD
- 9) Valeria Batross accepts her award

- 10) Orli and Eric Presser, MD
- 11) Megan Guerra, Nielah McKee, Barry Dayton and Edith Jones-Poland, MD, of Desert Oasis Healthcare
- 12) The prized Wellness Awards
- 13) Gita and Mehrdad Asgeri, MD, with Hessam Mahdavi, MD



# Desert Health® Wellness Awards



14) Carol and Joseph Scherger, MD

15) 'The Garden' vegetarian and raw cuisine selections

16) Nino Capobianco and Tiffany Dalton Capobianco

17) The Family: Russ Piercy, Tom Del Sarto, Lauren, Doris Steadman ("Mom") and Diane Gordon, RN

18) Youth nominees Alondra Rodriguez, Lisa Nguyen, Zenia Hernandez, Selena Hernandez, Genesis Valenzuela, Renato Escobar, Janelly Ramirez, Gustavo Serrano, Andres Castaneda

19) Celebrity author/guest speaker Mimi Kirk

20) Farm table décor

21) Rhonda Ramirez, Annmarie Lynn, and Vee Hercog or Bikram Yoga Plus

22) Jason and Laura Tate of the Human Health Initiative (beneficiary)

23) Youth winner Andres Castaneda

24) Guest speaker William Grimm, DO

25) Pam Bieri, Lauren and Edie Keller with guest gift bags for the farmer's market

26) Decadent (and sugarless!) chocolate drizzle with fruits and vegetables

27) Deborah Tryon and Eric Burke

28) Executive Committee members Tricia Gehrlein, Susan Butler, Lisa Ford and Donna Sturgeon with Lauren

29) Mimi Kirk compliments Chef Erick of The S Rancho Mirage on mastering her raw vegan recipes

30) Bronwyn Ison displays her take home goodies



A special Thank You to photographer Lani Garfield

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## Okra Stir Fry

By Dipika Patel

Okra is one of my favorite vegetables. It's an edible ornamental flowering hibiscus which smells of cloves and looks a little like a cotton plant. This aromatic plant has many uses and is an important crop within the U.S. because its fresh leaves, buds, flowers, pod, stem and seeds all have great value.

Okra is well known within Cajun and Creole cuisine, and can be used in salads, soups, stews, fresh or dried, fried or boiled. Okra, called lady fingers in England and bhindi in India, is known for its slimy inside texture, which most people don't like. (A trick that my mother taught me to decrease the sliminess is to wash without cutting the fruit, dry thoroughly and then cut in desired shape before cooking.)

Even though people are turned off by the sliminess, this substance contains exopolysaccharides and glycoproteins which hold a lot of the incredible health benefits. Okra is a powerhouse fruit of valuable nutrients high in antioxidants, which is supportive in improving cardiovascular and coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, digestive diseases, and even some cancers. It is rich in several vitamins and minerals including thiamin, vitamin B6, folic acid, riboflavin/vitamin B2, zinc and dietary fiber.

For those who may suffer from lactose intolerance or are vegan or vegetarian, okra provides calcium to make up for the lack of dairy. It is loaded with pectin which can help reduce high cholesterol simply by modifying the creation of bile. The amino acid composition of okra seed protein is actually comparable to that of soybean having a balance of both lysine and tryptophan amino acids, which is a good serving of protein.

The main thing my mother used it for was to stabilize her blood sugars; okra helps to regulate the rate at which sugar is absorbed from the intestinal tract. A traditional Ayurvedic practice of soaking cut-up okra at night and drinking the water in the morning would significantly help to decrease blood glucose. This fruit also aids digestion, as it contains insoluble fiber and helps to lubricate and cleanse the large intestines helping to relieve constipation.

As always, not all foods are for everyone. For those of you who do not consume nightshades, this plant is of the nightshade family containing solanine and is recommended to avoid if you have joint issues. Okra is high in vitamin K which is not the best to consume in high amounts if you are on blood thinners, so eat in moderation. For those of you who suffer from IBS or other gut/bowel-related problems, check with your doctor before consuming okra. Okra is also high in oxalates, so consult with your doctor if you are prone to kidney stones. Like I always say, connect with your body; the body will always tell you if it likes something or it does not.

Below I share with you a favorite recipe that I grew up with which is perfect as a side dish to complement any meal.

### Ingredients:

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 16 oz okra washed and dried   | 1 tbsp sesame seeds       |
| 6 tbsp avocado oil            | ½ tsp garlic powder       |
| 1 tbsp of fresh grated ginger | ½ tsp turmeric powder     |
| 1 tbsp whole fennel seeds     | ½ tsp ground black pepper |
| Maldon Sea salt to taste      | ½ tsp of raw sugar        |
| ½ tsp cayenne pepper          |                           |

### Directions:

1. In a large frying pan add oil of choice and heat on a medium flame.
2. Add in fennel seeds, ginger, turmeric and stir; cook for 30 seconds and add in whole okra.
3. Stir in the rest of the spices: cayenne pepper, sesame seeds, garlic powder, black pepper, and sugar.
4. Keeping the flame on medium, cook for about 7 minutes, stirring intermittently until you have cooked okra al dente. Turn off the heat and serve immediately.
5. Finish with cilantro and squeeze of fresh lemon juice.

Dipika is a holistic health and lifestyle coach who empowers clients to activate a balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. She can be reached at [dipika@dipikapatel.life](mailto:dipika@dipikapatel.life). For more information visit [www.loveyourlifehealthy.com](http://www.loveyourlifehealthy.com)



### The "Dope" on Brain Health

Continued from page 18

turkey, fish, dairy products, peanuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, soybeans, lima beans, avocados and bananas.

Several studies have shown that regular intense exercise several times per week significantly improves motor control in people with Parkinson's, suggesting that there is a beneficial effect on the dopamine system. Other studies evidence that regular exercise can improve dopamine symptoms found in ADHD and depression.

Having too much or too little of any neurotransmitter can have drawbacks. Low levels of dopamine are linked to reduced motivation and decreased enthusiasm for life, which may explain some substance use disorders. Alcohol and other mood-altering drugs artificially create the pleasure sensations more efficiently and intensely than natural rewards. Research has shown that the drugs most commonly misused (opiates, alcohol, nicotine, amphetamines and cocaine) create a chemical reaction that significantly increases the amount of dopamine released in the brain's reward center. Substance use disorders continue to interest professionals in a wide variety of addiction-related fields and are in no way as simple as one neurotransmitter imbalance.

It takes a holistic perspective to achieve wellbeing. I hope this glimpse into neurotransmitters and brain health will support your incentive to eat, move and be healthy.

Deborah Schrameck is a wholistic kinesiologist, health coach, nutritional counselor and owner of Body Alive and can be reached at (760) 238.0625 or [happyfit@mac.com](mailto:happyfit@mac.com). [www.BodyAlive.us](http://www.BodyAlive.us).







# Gluten-Free with Tiffany

Meal plans are the number one request I get from new clients who are fed up with dieting. Meal plans are set recipes for days or weeks, measured out and calculated, telling you exactly what to eat and when. Seems like a slam dunk success, right? The dreamy concept of following a done-for-you plan and not having to make any choices on your own sounds great, but the truth is they inevitably fall short when we have to live our unpredictable real lives.

Don't worry, if you have tried and failed with meal plans; you didn't fail the plan, the plan failed you, and I'll explain why.

A successful approach to evolving into a more health-focused person has to start with identifying, practicing, and sustaining good new habits that replace the bad ones. A habit by definition is "an acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary." To be a healthy person for life, we have to fill our thoughts and lifestyle with new, healthy habits that seem simple and eventually feel like our new "normal." This is far from what a meal plan could ever accomplish. Science shows we can start to form new habits in as little as 21 days, but often it is more like months before the change is embedded deep in the subconscious. The secret to lasting change is to master one habit at a time by replacing a bad habit with a good one. So, where do you start? This is why athletes turn to professionals for habit-based coaching programs - to help them decide where to begin and what next steps to take.

Learning how to live a healthy life and be a healthy person may be more difficult for some of us, depending on how we were raised and what we were taught. It is always a good idea to ask for help and seek accountability, no matter where you are or what your goal is. The foundational good habits to form start with tasks such as identifying portion sizes appropriate for you, eating real food instead of packaged food, cooking more often at home, learning how to special order at restaurants, reading ingredients on the labels (when you do buy something in a box), and it is especially important to conquer on a daily basis sleep, stress, and making time for fun - we can't forget that!

It is true that meal plans can be very helpful initially, as they help you eyeball portions and maybe experience new flavors or new foods, but following a stringent plan can only be sustained for so long before you eat something off the plan, feel guilty and give up on changing. When you feel like a failure, you will go back to old habits, and all that work felt worthless. To put in the work that counts, your goal should not be to follow a plan, but rather learn new habits that keep you within healthy boundaries, helping you overcome bad habits like emotional eating, and even help you logistically structure your time and finances to meet your needs with ease while allowing for variety and spontaneity.

Tiffany is a certified nutrition consultant and functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner and can be reached at (760) 285.1221. For more information visit [www.tiffanydalton.com](http://www.tiffanydalton.com)

## The Only Question You Need in a Crisis

Continued from page 3

asked her if I could put the call on speakerphone. To my surprise there was another woman suddenly at the table with me. She might have also leaped over the couch; she seemed like that kind of woman.

Together we listened as the coroner's gentle voice continued what he had been saying. I imagine that my friend was not the first person to drop a phone in his ear that day. I took one of his pauses as an opportunity to introduce myself, to let him know that he was on speakerphone with us, and to ask if he could continue to speak to me, too. He was very good at his job and started to relay all the information he had.



Showing up is the first step in comforting a friend in crisis.

Together, the other woman and I began to ask every question that came to mind. Because I am trained to work with people in crisis, I am fully aware of how limited our capacity to think and make sound decisions is when our brains are in crisis mode. I know that physiologically our body has prepared itself for fight-flight-or-freeze and moved all of the blood to our extremities in preparation for one of these three responses. This primitive response and our intuition serve us well when we face an attacker; however, the lack of blood in our brain does us disservice when the attack is emotional rather than physical.

I knew I had suffered a trauma and I knew that I was not thinking clearly, had not expected the call, had never in my life considered the questions that I would ask a coroner about my loved-ones' remains and knew that my best friend was counting on me to show up for her.

That is when I asked the only question you'll ever need in any traumatic situation: "What questions should I be asking that I'm not asking?"

In this instance with the coroner, and in so many other professionals in more and less dire circumstances, I have asked this question to the same result. Nearly everyone says "Wow. That's a great question," and then something to the effect of "you've already asked some really good questions but..." or "let's see what else we haven't yet covered..." and then they bring forward their infinitely better informed expertise to the conversation in a powerfully invested way.

The next time you are in pain, or shock or stunned disbelief, remember you have never done this before, but the person delivering the news does it every day. You do not have to be the expert, but you are talking to one.

There is a divine simplicity and freedom in recognizing that you do not need to have all of the "right" questions to receive all of the information you need. I gift this question to you, dear reader, in the hopes that it serves and frees you the way it has served and freed me.

Kristii MacEwen is the owner of Mindful Passings®, a crisis concierge and end-of-life coaching practice which helps clients and their families work through the most difficult times of their life by empowering them with resources, experience and guidance. Visit [www.mindfulpassings.com](http://www.mindfulpassings.com). email [info@mindfulpassings.com](mailto:info@mindfulpassings.com).

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# My Friend “Charity”

By Michele T. Sarna, AIF, AWMA

I have a close friend, Charity. I like Charity. She’s one of those friends who always makes you feel good about yourself. Unfortunately, as with most friends, finding time to spend together presents challenges. We are busy with work, family, and other commitments. Sometimes, months go by without ever connecting. Like a true friend, however, when we do get together, it’s like no time has passed. We pick up right where we left off. And, Charity, in her usual form, never makes me feel I’ve neglected her. She’s always content with the time we share together.



The donation of money or time contributes to personal wellbeing.

Charity is an important part of everyone’s life, and it comes in different forms. Whether it be with cash donations or volunteering your time, budgeting for charity is necessary.

Professionals will advise that approximately 3 to 5 percent of your budget (take-home dollars) should be allocated towards charitable donations. For example, if your net income is \$3,000 per month, a 3 percent donation would be \$90. However, for some, that \$90 might be hard to part with even in the best of circumstances.

**Time is Money.** If you’ve tried to set aside funds to donate, but other uses always seem to get in the way, then volunteer your time. A few hours a week at your local church or favorite charity has as much value as the dollars you’ve intended to send. An additional benefit of donating your time is that you become involved in the community and feel satisfaction about making a difference.

**It’s the Standard.** Many people donate knowing they’ll be able to deduct a portion of charitable contributions when itemizing their deductions for taxes. However, the 2018 tax law changes increased the standard deduction to \$12,200 for individuals, \$18,350 for heads of household, and \$24,400 for married filing jointly, which omits itemizing for many of us. However, if your overall itemized deductions are higher than the standard amounts, you will still benefit. Although volunteering your time doesn’t qualify for a deduction, related personal expenses do! For example, mileage for the charitable use of an automobile. Always consult with a tax professional, such as a CPA, and keep good records.

**Stay connected with Charity.** Whether you send money, volunteer your time, or donate items you no longer need, try to keep charity as a part of your routine and overall budget. With practice, you will become accustomed to the habit of giving!

Michele Sarna is a financial advisor at Beacon Pointe and can be reached at (760) 932.0930.

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# Businesses Honored For Workplace Wellness

In June, HARC hosted the 4th Annual Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards recognizing local businesses that prioritize employee health and wellness. The event took place at the Classic Club in Palm Desert and brought together a variety of organizations which recognize that having a healthy workforce is key to a healthy and thriving business.

Winners were announced and successes shared among all in attendance whose common goals contribute to building a healthier community.

Twenty-one local organizations applied for the awards this year, all providing extensive wellness programs for their employees. Applications were anonymized and then blind-judged by a panel of seven experts. Scores were averaged together to determine the winners and ensure fairness in the process.

HARC awarded four small organizations (1-100 employees) and four large organizations (101+ employees) in the following categories:

- Nutrition and Fitness
  - Safety and Environment
  - Mental Health and Wellness
  - Grand Prize Winner
- 2019 Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards were presented to:
- Large Organization Awards:**
- Grand Prize: Renova Energy
  - Nutrition and Fitness: Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa
  - Safety and Environment: Palm Springs Unified School District
  - Mental Health and Wellness: Desert AIDS Project



Master of Ceremonies Janet Zappala with Josh Zahid and Dawn Rashid of Loma Linda Children’s Hospital

- Small Organization Awards:**
- Grand Prize: Loma Linda University Children’s Health - Indio
  - Nutrition and Fitness: Lund & Guttry, LLP
  - Safety and Environment: County of Riverside Emergency Management Department
  - Mental Health and Wellness: Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter

California State University, San Bernardino Professor of Psychology Mark Agars, PhD, delivered a keynote speech on the critical role of leaders in empowering their employees to live healthy and balanced lives, and NBC Palm Springs’ Janet Zappala served as Master of Ceremonies. The event was proudly sponsored by Desert Oasis Healthcare, Desert AIDS Project, Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo, and College of the Desert.

HARC, Inc. (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is a nonprofit that advances quality of life by helping community leaders use objective research and analysis to turn data into action.

For more information on the annual event visit [HarcData.org](http://HarcData.org). To get involved in next year’s Workplace Wellness Awards, contact [jquintana@HARCdata.org](mailto:jquintana@HARCdata.org).



# Congratulations, Winners!

June 6, 2019 was the 4th Annual Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards, presented by HARC (Health Assessment and Research for Communities). Congratulations to all of the winners! These organizations are doing exemplary work to protect and promote employee health and wellness in the Coachella Valley. They represent some of the best places to work in the low-desert region.

## Large Organizations

## Small Organizations

### Nutrition and Fitness Winners

Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort and Spa

Lund & Guttry LLP

### Safety and Environment Winners

Palm Springs Unified School District

Emergency Management Department, County of Riverside

### Mental Health and Wellness Winners

Desert AIDS Project

Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter

### Grand Prize Winners



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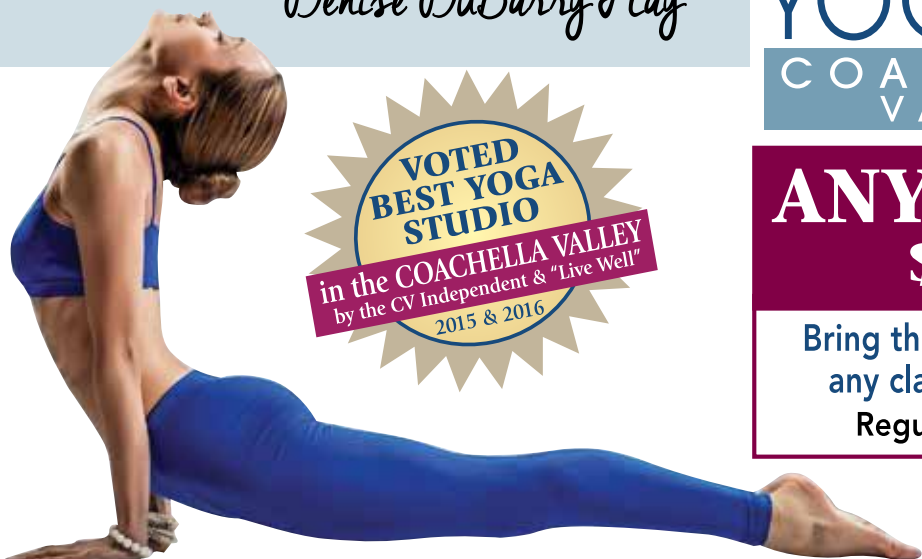
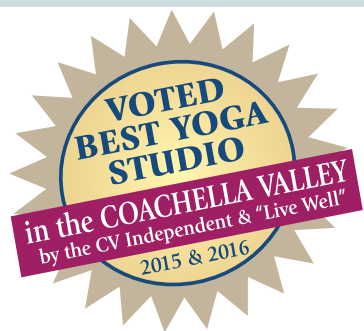
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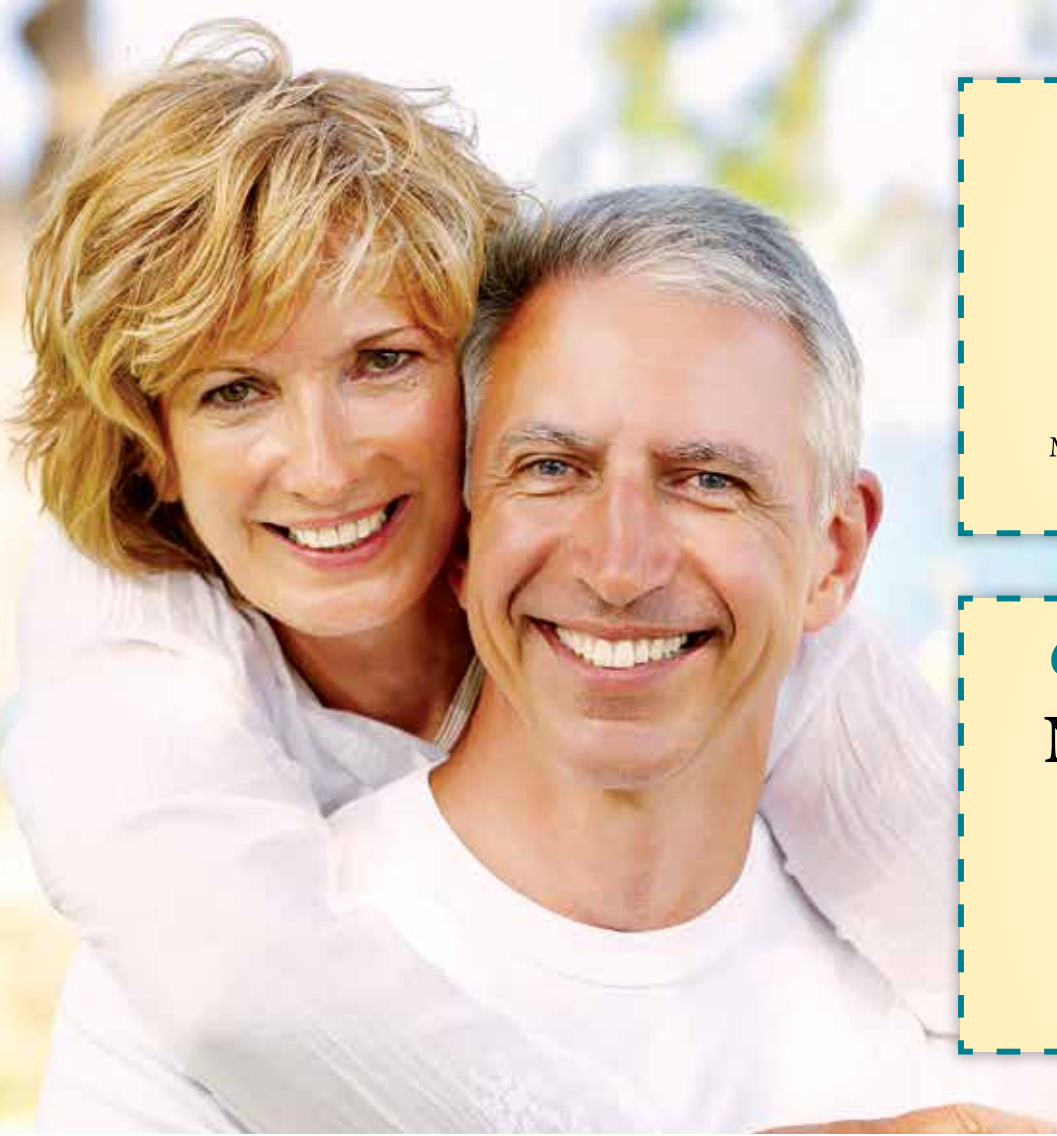
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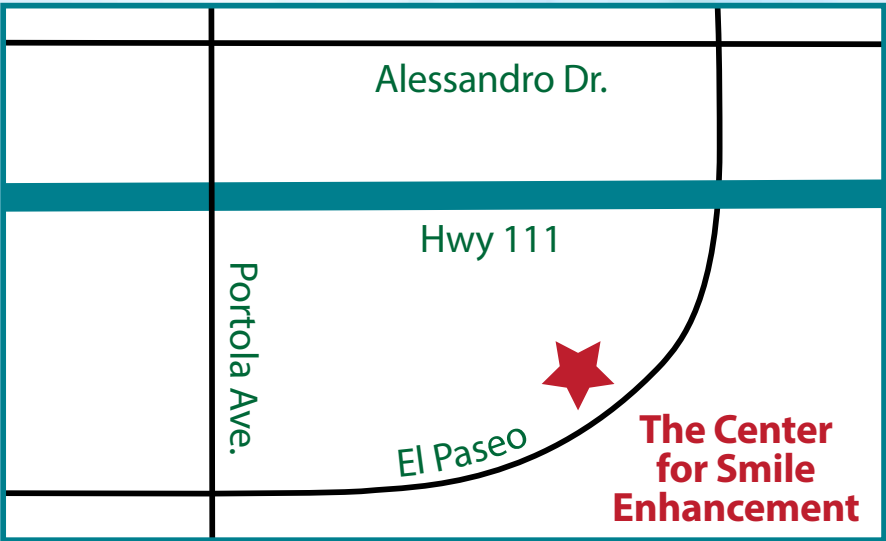
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\*New and cash patients only. One-time use. Some restrictions apply.  
Not valid for gum disease. Offer expires 8/31/19. Call for details.

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- Crowns (Lava Crowns)
- Bridges
- Mini Implants for Dentures & Fixed Teeth
- Periodontal Therapy
- Extractions
- Laser Dentistry
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## The Center for Smile Enhancement

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