

# Desert Health<sup>®</sup>

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

May/June 2022

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As we settle into our new normal, have you reconnected with your circle of friends? It seems many of us haven't.

According to a recent survey by American Perspectives, a large number report having fewer close friendships than they did in the past. We are not talking with friends as often and relying on them less for personal support.

Experts say the reasons are many. In quarantine, we became focused on family and those in our immediate circles. With so much time having passed, reaching beyond that small sector can now feel strange. Our new schedule doesn't include time with friends like it used to. Change in geography - from bustling offices to our spare room at home; from classrooms to the kitchen table; from social functions to zoom happy hours - has severed ties and many don't know how to reconnect. For others, the feeling of overwhelm still lingers and the thought of adding get-togethers is simply too much.

But we need our friends for personal health and happiness, and it's important to re-establish those

once close and more distant connections. Stepping out of our comfort zone not only helps us, it could also help another who has withdrawn due to depression, anxiety or fear.

We often take healthy relationships for granted, but studies show that those with hearty social circles live longer and with more vitality. Friends boost happiness and reduce stress; they improve our self-confidence and increase our self-worth, sense of belonging and purpose. Friends are there when we need to talk or simply let off steam; they can encourage us away from bad habits and into healthier ones. But maybe most importantly are the warm and fuzzy feelings you get from *being* a good friend.

As you establish your new normal, don't forget old friends. While it may feel uncomfortable to reach out after so much time, that feeling will quickly pass when the connection is made. Letting someone know you've been thinking about them will help you, and may help them more than you know.

## From the Earth. For the People.

Honoring the past and realizing the dream



Mary Ann Martin was unaware of her Cahuilla Indian heritage until after her mother, Roberta Augustine, the last living member of the Augustine Band, died in 1986. In her early 20s at the time, she moved to the Coachella Valley with her three children and larger-than-life dreams to reclaim her history and re-establish the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Under her nearly 30-year guidance, one of the nation's smallest Tribes established a tribal government, resettled their reservation in Coachella and built the Augustine Casino to ensure long-term economic success. Her dreams included a renewable energy project, a cultural center to preserve the band's history and an organic farm to feed not only members, but the community at large.

Martin lived to see the Augustine Band regrow to 12 members (now 16) and their casino flourish to become one of the largest employers in the eastern Coachella Valley.

A sizeable 25,000-panel solar field was erected, and in 2014, work began on an organic farm. Sadly in 2017, Martin passed before completing all her awe-inspiring initiatives.

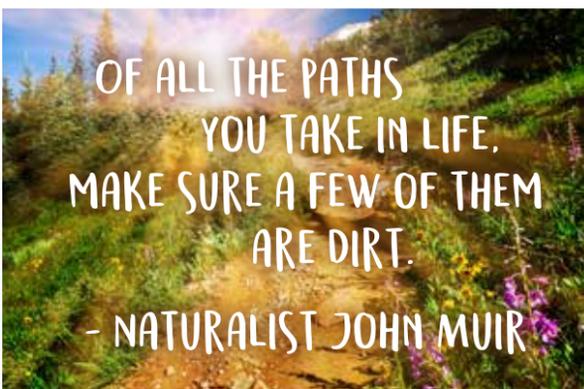
Today, her dreams of providing healthy food for the community at large and preserving the Tribe's history are coming true thanks to the admiration and dedication of her children. In January, under the guidance of her eldest, Amanda Vance, who succeeded Martin as Chairperson in 2016, the Tribe unveiled the beautiful, time-honored Temalpakh Farm featuring a natural market and cultural center (scheduled to open later this year).

"This farm was the vision of my late mother, Mary Ann Martin," says Vance. "She single-handedly rebuilt the Tribe and reclaimed our lands. Her dream was to grow healthy, organic food that is also affordable, and provide it to the local community. When I came on as chair, I wanted to ensure that dream became a reality."



Farm Manager Pancho Velez

Continued on page 16



## Stroke Care

when every second counts.



Take a quiz to learn about your risk.

[DesertCareNetwork.com/StrokeQuiz](https://DesertCareNetwork.com/StrokeQuiz)



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# A Special Place

I love hot air balloons. Their bright colors against our blue, desert sky always bring a smile to my face, and I can't help but pause to watch them float by. This photo was taken in our back yard. You know you live in a pretty cool place if it's hot air balloon worthy.

And we most certainly do! People from around the globe relish our stunning landscapes, world-class sporting events, unparalleled festivals and preeminent health and wellness community. But this time of year, we get to slow down and appreciate it all to ourselves.

The Cahuilla Indians have been appreciating this land for over 2,000 years. Now the Augustine Band, one of the nation's smallest, is honoring their past while offering their organic bounty through Temalpakh Farm (p.1). Their history is fascinating. Take a trip to enjoy a smoothie, purchase fresh goods and learn about organic farming. *It's a very special place!*

This is also a good time of year to focus on self-care and we are grateful to the many practitioners offering words of wisdom on our pages. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and several share insights (pgs. 4, 6, 9, 14) for those of us who may still be struggling.

With this edition, we hope you find much inspiration for your wellness journey and thank you for bringing us along.

Here's to your health (and hot air balloons!) ~

*Lauren*  
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# Know the Signs of Stroke

**BE FAST** replaces **FAST**

By Lauren Del Sarto

**May is  
Stroke  
Awareness  
Month**

In medicine, when research is conducted and systems improved, lives are saved. Such is the case with the acronym FAST which was first launched nationally in 2013 to generate awareness for the signs of stroke: Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time to call 911.

Now, research has identified symptoms missed and two have been added: Balance (loss of balance, leg weakness, dizziness) and Eyes (blurred vision or loss of vision in one or both eyes) creating BE FAST. This new acronym is being adopted by both the American Heart/American Stroke Associations (AHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), according to JFK Hospital's Stroke/Chest Pain Coordinator Jean Novales, MBA, MSN, RN.

"There were signs people were missing that were previously considered atypical, but adding these symptoms has proven to save lives," says Novales. Symptoms can be similar for both types of strokes: ischemic, when a blood clot creates oxygen deprivation, and hemorrhagic, a brain bleed due to a vessel burst or head injury. About 87 percent of all strokes are ischemic and 13 percent hemorrhagic.<sup>1</sup>

### The study for change

A 2014 study at the University of Kentucky Stroke Center concluded that 14 percent of those presenting with stroke did not have any FAST symptoms. Of those, 70 percent had either gait imbalance/leg weakness (42 percent) or visual symptoms (40 percent). Adding these symptoms to the list decreased the number with non-listed symptoms to only 4.4 percent, potentially saving 10 percent more lives.<sup>2</sup>

### Both men and women need to know

It's important for both men and women to recognize the signs of stroke. According to the CDC, the lifetime risk for women between the ages of 55 and 75 in the U.S. is a staggering 1 in 5. Stroke kills twice as many women as breast cancer, making it the third leading cause of death for women.<sup>3</sup>

However, stroke is a leading cause of death in men, killing almost the same number each year as prostate cancer and Alzheimer's combined.<sup>4</sup> It is also a leading cause of long-term disability.

"People don't realize that this could happen to them," says Novales. "Especially woman, as we tend to tell ourselves 'I'll be fine; I just need to sleep it off.' But symptoms get worse with time." In her experience, women can also present with more subtle signs such as trouble walking or lack of coordination, severe headache without a known cause, general weakness, disorientation and confusion, memory problems, fatigue, nausea or vomiting.

"A lot of people who experienced stroke had no idea their symptoms were indeed stroke," she notes. "One gentleman told me that he didn't realize his achy, uncontrollable foot was the sign of a stroke until his speech started to slur and he got a headache."

### Most strokes are preventable

The good news is that 4 out of 5 strokes are preventable, so knowing your risks and taking action is a good place to start.<sup>4</sup>

Uncontrolled high blood pressure (the major cause of a stroke), physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, smoking, excessive

alcohol, obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol and illicit drug use are all contributing factors which can be modified. Novales adds that contraceptive use, preeclampsia (pregnancy induced high blood pressure), hormonal therapy, a-fib (atrial fibrillation) and migraines with auras can also increase risks, and smokers have two to four times the stroke risk of non-smokers, even for those who quit more than 10 years ago.

She recommends moderate to vigorous activities such as biking or swimming which may reduce stroke risk by 35 percent, and choosing healthier eating habits which incorporate fruits, vegetables, low salt and heart-healthy fats. "Be compliant with medications and keep regular doctor visits as these preventative measures can keep you away from the hospital."

### Act fast

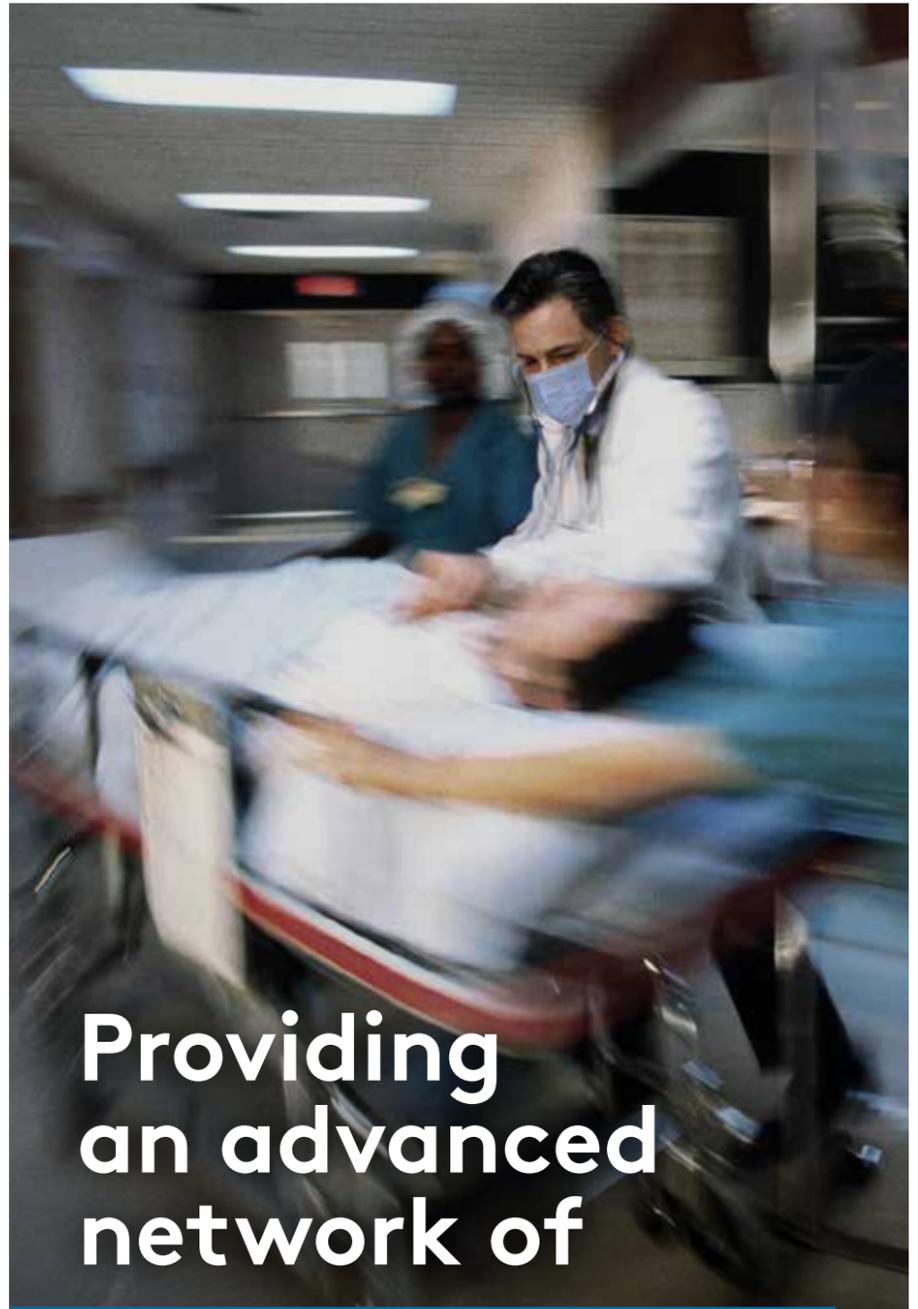
Time is still the most important factor as minutes matter when it comes to stroke, reminds Novales. "Symptoms can come within minutes or build over days, so it is important to be aware and to get help. In 10 minutes brain matter can die; within an hour, more tissue can die and the damage can then become irreversible."

The gold standard in treating ischemic strokes is still an injection of tPA (tissue plasminogen activator) which can dissolve clots, restore blood flow to the brain and potentially reverse symptoms if given within the first three hours.

If you learn to recognize the symptoms and think you may be experiencing a stroke, it is best to get yourself to the emergency department, advises Novales. "People are apprehensive to go to the emergency room these days due to COVID or cost, but nothing is more important or valuable than your life, so it is better to be safe, and time is of the essence."

Jean Novales is available to speak with neighborhoods and groups about preventative measures for stroke and heart attack. All Desert Care Network hospitals have stroke certifications: Desert Regional Medical Center is a Comprehensive Stroke Center; JFK is a Primary Stroke Center; and Hi-Desert Medical Center is a Stroke Ready Hospital. For more information, contact Jean at (760) 775.8034 or go to [www.DesertCareNetwork.com/stroke](http://www.DesertCareNetwork.com/stroke).

References: 1) <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/stroke/types-of-stroke>; 2) <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/STROKEAHA.116.015169>; 3) <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/women.htm>; 4) <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/men.htm>



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There is No Shame in Struggle

By Kelly Lewallen, LMFT

We all go through tough times. It is normal to feel anxious, sad, grief, uncertainty and a host of other feelings within the same month - or even the same day.

Throughout the pandemic, many individuals have struggled with isolation, financial hardship, and simple boredom. To top it off, political strife, human rights violations and the current war have added fear and resentments - all of which fuel mental health challenges.

The current situation reminds me of the emotional impact of the 2008 economic crash. During that time, I worked solely in private practice as a marriage and family therapist. I had many "successful" clients - business owners, entrepreneurs, hardworking and responsible individuals - who proclaimed bankruptcy, loss of employment and, for many, their homes. Their standard talk therapy sessions no longer sufficed and additional medications, increased treatment, and support were needed. These were solid citizens without previous diagnosis of anxiety or depression; the stress of 2008 simply catalyzed their mental health crisis.



Mental disorders are now addressed as any physical condition.

This type of stress, which can be physical, mental, emotional, environmental, and relational, can also be the catalyst for disease. An example is alcoholism. An individual can have the gene for alcoholism and it is never expressed. The individual may grow up in a family that is abstinent from drinking and life is easy going. They leave home, go to college, start a career, get married and start a family. They go to church, take their kids to soccer and experience normal life stresses. Perhaps in their 40s, the person (who now drinks socially), has a traumatic event such as the loss of a child or career. Potentially, this can lead to a person's genetic system being "turned on" where they now abuse and/or become dependent on alcohol. They require intensive treatment to manage this destructive disease and a continuous treatment plan to prevent relapse.

The same is true of other diseases such as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and major depressive disorder (MDD). Our center has seen a 50 percent increase in patients being treated at a higher level of care for anxiety and depression within the last two years. Individuals who could have been treated in regular weekly outpatient programs are now being seen multiple days per week, several hours a day. The same is true for our intensive outpatient program for eating disorders, with the number of patients seeking treatment up by 50 percent. Those requiring residential care have had to wait 8-12 weeks in outpatient settings as residential facilities are full.

Continued on page 6

Emergency Room or Urgent Care?

Knowing the difference can save time and money

By Tammy Porter, DNP, MLS, RN-BSN, CPHQ, CCM

On Sunday afternoon, your cold seems worse, you have a headache and are vomiting with a fever. Do you head to the emergency room (ER), urgent care or call your doctor in the morning?

This dilemma is common and can be costly. In fact, the cost difference can be well over \$2,000 in some cases. Even if insured, your deductible/co-pay is usually higher for ER than urgent care. Keep in mind, a minor illness or injury can generally wait until your doctor's office opens in the morning. Urgent care is the "middle ground" between your doctor and the ER for issues that just can't wait until tomorrow, or if you have other health conditions such as diabetes, heart failure or asthma. Remember, even if you visit the ER for a non-emergency condition, you will be charged emergency room rates for all care and treatment provided. Also, if the physician at urgent care thinks you need emergent care, they will get you to the ER. However, don't ignore an emergency; if your condition seems life-threatening, call 911.

Below are important differences to consider:

Urgent Care	Emergency Room
Non-life-threatening injury or illness	Immediate treatment of critical, life-threatening injuries or illness
Avg. cost: \$180	Avg. cost: \$2,200
Avg. wait: 30 min or less	Avg. wait: 2 hours or more
Staff: typically nurse practitioners (NP), physician assistants (PA), nurses and some have physicians	Staff: physicians, NP/PAs, quick access to specialists (cardiology, neurology, orthopedics, etc.)
Services: basic labs, x-ray	Services: labs, x-ray/CT scans (do not expect a non-urgent MRI), other resources for severe situations
Some types of conditions treated: • Sprains or joint pain • Earache • Diarrhea/vomiting • Urinary tract infections • Minor cuts/burns • Bronchitis/upper respiratory infections • Skin rashes • Asthma nebulizer treatment • Mild cough, aches/pains, temperature below 100 degrees • Back or muscle pain	Some types of conditions treated: • Chest pain/pressure • Head injury • Seizures • Sudden, severe headache • Sudden paralysis or weakness • Uncontrolled bleeding • Fracture with bone through skin • Severe allergic reaction (swelling lips, difficulty swallowing or breathing) • Loss of consciousness

Always call 911 if you have signs of a heart attack (chest pressure, pain or fullness in the center of chest that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms for more than a few minutes; lightheaded, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath) or stroke symptoms remembered as BE FAST (see page 3) and call 911 immediately.

Dr. Porter is a doctorate-prepared nurse of 30 years and health care advocate dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of medical processes aiding patients, families and caregivers. She is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 851.4116 or www.myhealthmyadvocate.com.



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**Still Moving Forward**

By Students Noor Diab and Olivia Dore

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a challenge; however, students at the Palm Desert High School Health Academy (PDHA) are trying to make the best of the situation and continue to push forward despite adversity.

The pandemic has created many obstacles to how the academy typically runs, but despite these unique circumstances, students are finding every opportunity to overcome these obstacles and get the most out of the year.

One of the opportunities students look forward to every year is volunteering. Many non-profit organizations are beginning to reopen and health academy students are jumping in to lend a hand. They are getting out into the community and making a difference in any way possible including assisting with the Alzheimer's Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's, the Heart Association's Heart and Stroke Walk and activities for seniors at the Joslyn Center.



Noor Diab, Alexander Lezama and Olivia Dore took home 2nd place in this year's SkillsUSA Career Showcase state competition.

Another unique program available to PDHA students is SkillsUSA which offers the opportunity to compete in various health-related competitions against other students all over the United States. Competitions include the Health Knowledge Bowl, Career Pathway Showcase, Medical Terminology, Medical Math, and CPR. Students begin at the regional level and if successful, can qualify and advance to both the state and then national competitions. Currently, many students in the PDHA are busy preparing for their respective competitions.

Among them are sophomores Noor Diab and Olivia Dore, who will be competing in The Career Pathway showcase. In this event, a group of three members pick a research topic to discuss and then create an informational board and presentation. Contestants present to a panel of judges and are scored in a variety of categories. Diab and Dore have decided to present on the impact of concussions in adolescent students.

Another sophomore currently preparing for a skills competition is Devin Castro. He will be competing in the medical math competition where he will have to answer several health-related math questions. "I am very excited to have the opportunity to compete against other students who have the same passions as me," Castro said.

Palm Desert Health Academy students continue to push through and are reaching out for additional opportunities as every step brings great impact to our community. As the pandemic is still ongoing, students learn from these challenges and continue to grow, to become better individuals and to develop skills that will help them succeed in the future.

For more information on Coachella Valley Health Academies, visit [www.OneFutureCV.org](http://www.OneFutureCV.org) or contact Kim McNulty at [Kim@onefuturecv.org](mailto:Kim@onefuturecv.org), (760) 413.5990.



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THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD



Mental Fasting

We have been hearing a lot about the benefits of intermittent fasting as decreased inflammation and weight loss often accompany eating less or eating in less hours of the day. The main reason this works is because of autophagy (“aa-TAA-fuh-jee”), which is the self-cleaning our body does when we have fasted more than 10 hours. The word literally means “consumption of the body’s own tissue.”

Autophagy helps us lower inflammation and live longer because it allows the body to focus on cleaning up waste products like older, broken or mutated cells, and any toxins we have ingested. By doing daily clearing of the damaged tissue, the body remodels and builds new cells for each of our systems.



The positive practice of shutting down our brains does not come naturally.

What if we transferred this concept to our mental well-being? We tend to expect that our minds can be constantly “on,” handling input every waking hour. Not only that, but most of us do not actively monitor or control what comes into our head-space. Digital and media outlets have content galore to fill our brains. Friends and family influence what we think about and the brain-state we allow.

But perhaps the greatest influence on what occupies our thoughts is US! We have choice in this matter; the thought patterns and focus of our brain activity are in our control. So, why not practice a bit of mental fasting?

Shutting down the chatter in our brains is not easy and does not come naturally. Many of us were raised by parents who had their own issues with self-worth or emotional intelligence and we may have heard words that created tapes that replay in our heads as our own inner critic. But if we have adopted those words into our own thinking, it means we can kick them out.

Stop and think

The first step is to notice. Notice what thoughts occur when we fail or don’t live up to our own expectations. Are the thoughts critical or kind? Are the thoughts accompanied with body sensations like a twist in the gut or a headache? If so, we can use the body feelings to remind us that judgmental thoughts are occurring. When we are able to notice these thoughts, we are at a point of choice...what could we choose instead? What if instead of criticism we chose compassion?

I have worked on this and found it helpful to shift to thoughts such as, “I didn’t do a good job at that, I’ll do it differently next time,” or “Failing means I tried. What did I learn that would help me succeed?” Some of my hardest shifts have been around productivity and expecting myself to be in constant action. These scripts have been ingrained since childhood, and I’ve started choosing to remind myself daily that “rest is necessary for creativity.”

Consider your social influences

We can also choose the people we hang out with, the news we watch or the content we consume. Maybe you’ve heard that “we are the sum of the five people we spend the most time with.” That is huge! Over these past two years, many of us have kept our social circle much smaller and perhaps this has impacted us even more than previous years. However, this is changing as we slowly feel safer with larger groups of people, so this may be a great time to take the opportunity to change your social influences.

The bottom line is that whatever is occupying your thoughts is your choice. You get to be the landlord and decide who lives there.

Back to the concept of autophagy, I’ve decided to create quiet brain time daily. I can allow time for peaceful space in my thoughts, and I can choose my focus and the thoughts that fill my mind. I invite you to join me - it’s a mission for inner peace and when we are individually at peace, we can start to change the world.

Dr. Brossfield is the founding physician of XO Health and medical director of Brain Performance Center, both in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 573.2761 or www.BrainCareRanchoMirage.com and on Facebook @XOHealth.

There is No Shame in Struggle

Continued from page 4

There is no group (ethnic, sexual identity, gender, socio-economic, age, etc.) that has escaped the recent onslaught. Children as young as 11 years old are self-harming and others are afraid to return to school. The overwhelming frequency of cyberbullying has paralyzed some children with depressive and anxiety symptoms. Many adults in our intensive outpatient programs have chosen to attend virtually, as we slowly coax them out of the perceived safety of their homes into our offices. Similar to 2008, many of the seniors in our intensive outpatient programs for mental health were emotionally high functioning prior to the pandemic, but now need significant support.

So, if you are struggling, know that you are not alone. There is no shame in any disease whether emotional, physical or mental; recognizing the signs and seeking help are key.

Fortunately, insurance is now covering mental health issues due to parity of care, as science has recognized that the brain is actually a bodily organ, just like the liver. As insurance covers the cost of a brain tumor, it now covers the cost of other disorders of the brain, with no shame attached. We don’t tell people with brain tumors to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” so we should do the same with those suffering with anxiety, depression and the like.

If you or someone you know is suffering with mental health, I urge you to seek treatment as suffering is an unnecessary option. Insurance companies have case managers who can advocate and assist you in getting timely care, and many centers offer low-cost treatment based upon ability to pay.

Kelly Lewallen is a licensed marriage and family therapist practicing in Palm Desert (#37832) and a member of Desert Doctors. She can be reached at (760) 777.7720. For more information visit www.desertmarriagefamily.com or www.DesertDoctors.org.



## “Team Freedom” Supports Life Without Limits

By Calista Vassios

United Cerebral Palsy of the Inland Empire (UCPIE) has been creating smiles, freedom and belonging since 2012 with their adaptive bike program and Team Freedom at Tour de Palm Springs.

Each bike is custom made to support the rider’s abilities and helps them meet their physical therapy goals. Riders discover a newfound freedom on their bike and also partake in a larger community, from family bike rides and taking off with friends, to many special events where riders experience a sense of accomplishment and connection.



UCPIE Donor Development Manager Calista Vassios with Rhea and Stori Hoffman at the Tour de Palm Springs

Each year, Team Freedom walks and rides in the Tour de Palm Springs, one of the largest cycling charity events of its kind in America. This past February, UCPIE’s Team Freedom had over 70 participants, both on location and virtually in their neighborhoods and communities, as part of the 24th annual Tour de Palm Springs.



Team Freedom participant at the park on his custom adaptive bike

“After being apart for so long, it’s amazing to see the unity of a community to support, not only local non-profits, but health and wellness as a whole,” said Rhea Hoffman, first time Tour de Palm Springs participant who walked with her daughter at the event as part of Team Freedom.

Team Freedom also had riders participate in the Tour’s 10-mile and 51-mile rides, many of them on their adaptive bikes. With celebratory bands and cheerleaders at the start and finish, along with concerts and delicious food throughout the course, there was much to be enjoyed by riders and their accompanying friends and family.

As many in the UCPIE family are still practicing social distancing, numerous Team Freedom participants rode their adaptive bikes around their neighborhoods and through local parks wearing their Team Freedom shirts. They were all brought together on social media where virtual team members and their families shared photos and videos using the hashtags #ucpie #teamfreedom2022 and #tourdepalmsprings. A highlight of the day was the delivery of their Tour de Palm Springs medals by DJ Paul and UCPIE staff.

Lori Enroth shares her family’s experience: “While we are still quarantining to protect Andy, our medically fragile son, we got to show our team spirit and be part of the Tour de Palm Springs by walking in our backyard. Thanks to all of our friends and family who supported UCPIE!”



The Enroth Family walked their Tour de Palm Springs in their backyard.

The team was able to raise \$52,000 this year thanks to generous sponsors: Contour Dermatology, Shottenkirk Desert Lexus, Palm Springs Subaru, and IEHP, along with pledges from friends and family. Money raised by Team Freedom helps UCPIE fund life-changing programs and services for many special needs families throughout the Inland Empire.

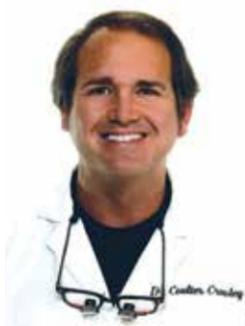
UCPIE looks forward to adding new riders to Team Freedom next year with the addition of several custom adaptive bikes and a handcycle. Individuals with mobility disabilities and their families are encouraged to fill out a bike application at [www.ucpie.org](http://www.ucpie.org) to be considered for the gift of an adaptive bike.

For more information about UCPIE, please visit [www.ucpie.org](http://www.ucpie.org) or contact Calista at (760) 321.8184 x101 or [calista@ucpie.org](mailto:calista@ucpie.org). For more information about Tour de Palm Springs visit [www.tourdepalmsprings.com](http://www.tourdepalmsprings.com).

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## Improve Our World with Random Acts of Kindness

By Susan Murphy, PhD

What if kindness were a muscle? How could you strengthen your kindness muscle? Muscles develop through repetitious exercise that is focused and disciplined.

Can you imagine the world if everyone exercised their kindness muscles daily? Our homes would be more joyful, marriages would be thriving, workplaces would be more collaborative and engaging. Even the news headlines would be more positive.

The good news is that you can start transforming saggy kindness muscles into powerful muscle mass today. After all, being kind is a strength, not a weakness. It allows us to get out of our own heads and focus on someone else. You may ask, "Where is the kindness muscle located?" I bet your kindness muscle is located right next to your heart.

It is foundational that people want to feel they are seen and heard by others. We want to matter. Receiving thoughtful words and deeds from others can fulfill this human need to be visible. Mother Teresa said, "One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody."

Kindness reaps great benefits for the giver. Research at Mayo Clinic shows that it can increase self-esteem, empathy, compassion, improve your mood and even help you live longer. Kindness can increase your sense of connectivity with others, lessen loneliness and enhance relationships. It can positively change your brain by increasing levels of dopamine and serotonin which give you pleasure, satisfaction and a sense of well-being. When the recipient of your kindness responds and smiles, your brain increases the "love hormone" oxytocin that adds even more pleasure. These studies reinforce what we've heard since childhood: it is better to give than to receive.

Is being nice the same as being kind? No! People often mistakenly use nice and kind synonymously. The dictionary defines nice as "pleasing, agreeable, satisfactory," in other words polite. Kind means "having, showing, or proceeding from benevolence." Kindness is the quality of being generous and considerate. Being kind is doing voluntary, intentional acts without expecting anything in return.

Your acts of kindness can produce the butterfly effect as your kind behavior triggers more throughout the world. Kindness can be contagious and impacts the person receiving it, those observing it, and you, as you feel benevolent and want to repeat that positive, loving feeling.

Gym exercises for your kindness muscle include these random acts of kindness:

- When you see someone alone at a networking event or meeting, approach him or her and introduce yourself. After a short conversation, invite that person to join you in meeting others. Together, go find a new group and then introduce both of you. Your new friend will be forever grateful.
- Seek opportunities to support colleagues and friends even when they aren't present. Share credit with them, compliment them behind their back, text them to say how much you admire something they said in a meeting. Nominate someone for an award.
- Be kind to yourself, too. You can't pour from an empty cup so practice self-care, speak kindly to yourself, and nourish your spirit. Smile when you see your image in the mirror.
- Defend the person being interrupted in a meeting. Say something like, "It sounds like Tiffany was making a good point. I'd appreciate hearing where she was going with her comment."
- When someone needs to talk, be silent and let them. An anagram for "Listen" is "Silent."
- Call people by name. Using someone's name makes them feel recognized. In a restaurant, try using the name of your server. The positive impact can be immediate. Then tip an extra dollar for the great service.
- Carry breakfast bars in your car console and distribute them when passing homeless people on street corners.
- Give a big smile to everyone you meet. Hold the door open. Let someone else have that parking place. Give your seat to someone in need. Call a lonely person.
- Give an honest compliment such as, "Your presentation was phenomenal. I learned a lot" or "It is such a pleasure to see you today" or "You always light up a room when you enter."
- Be intentional with your random acts of kindness. As I've shared before with *Desert Health* readers, I love that my friend, Shari, begins everyday with 10 dimes in her left pocket. Whenever she is kind throughout the day, she transfers a dime to her right pocket. She leaves a trail of kindness everywhere she goes.

Posted in my office is the reminder: "What I do today is important because I'm exchanging a day of my life for it." It is impossible to know the true impact you can make on those around you. You may never know how much someone needed that smile, word of encouragement or tight squeeze. One sincere compliment can raise the self-esteem of the recipient. Plus, it can make the giver of the compliment feel good too.

Go ahead and astound someone with your random act of kindness today. As the Dalai Lama says, "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." After all, we become kinder with practice. So, flex your kindness muscle and together let's improve our world!

Dr. Murphy is a best-selling author, business consultant and speaker specializing in relationships, conflict, leadership, and goal-achievement. She is co-author of *LifeQ: How To Make Your Life Your Most Important Business* and *In the Company of Women*. She can be reached at [Susan@DrSusanMurphy.com](mailto:Susan@DrSusanMurphy.com). (Article originally appeared on *Forbes.com* November 2021).



What if we each flexed our kindness muscle daily?





# You Are Not Your Trauma

By Dipika Patel, CHHC

Do you find yourself repeating past hurts, habits and hang-ups? Maybe they only show up in some areas of your life, or maybe they are showing up in all areas. Maybe you think that it's everyone else's fault, and you did not create the experience you are having. Do you feel down and heavy because life is just too difficult and other people are not compliant with your requests?

I am asking you these poignant questions as only you know the depths of your pain, guilt, shame and lack of forgiveness; only you can be honest with yourself to either limit yourself or to let yourself be free.

Having worked with a variety of men and women over the years, I have noticed that one size does not fit all. Each experience, for each human being, is different. Everything said and heard is filtered in a way that the person can comprehend it. This, however, does not mean that the pain experienced will always be there and never go away. In truth, erasing it is not possible; the experience happened, but how you felt about it and how you feel about you now, may be holding you back from your best self.



Does your past interfere with moving forward?

"Trauma is not what happens to you; trauma is what happens inside you as a result of what happened to you," says author and family physician Gabor Maté, MD who specializes in childhood development and trauma. Thoughts and perceptions about your current situation are influenced by your past; however, in this immediate moment, whatever is happening within you has nothing to do with what is happening outside of you.

If this sounds familiar, I empathize with you and can understand how many people have tried to embrace the idea that they are not their trauma, yet continue to struggle in the present moment due to the short comings of their past.

Over the years, I have examined the common factors of these struggles through others and myself, and often see people live a very distracted life as a means of coping versus living "in the now." Everyone wants to live a genuine and authentic life, however, when we are living with past trauma, our current life is often distorted by fear. This can hold you back from being your true self; a you that is full of love and gratitude knowing you are everything and have everything you need. This is a place of completely accepting yourself as you are; you, not your trauma.

As Dr. Mate says, "We may not be responsible for the world that created our minds, but we can take responsibility for the mind with which we create our world."

Dipika is a Crossroads Specialist, Holistic Health & Lifestyle Coach, who empowers her clients to activate a balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. She can be reached at [health@LoveYourLifeHealthy.com](mailto:health@LoveYourLifeHealthy.com) or [www.loveyourlifehealthy.com](http://www.loveyourlifehealthy.com).

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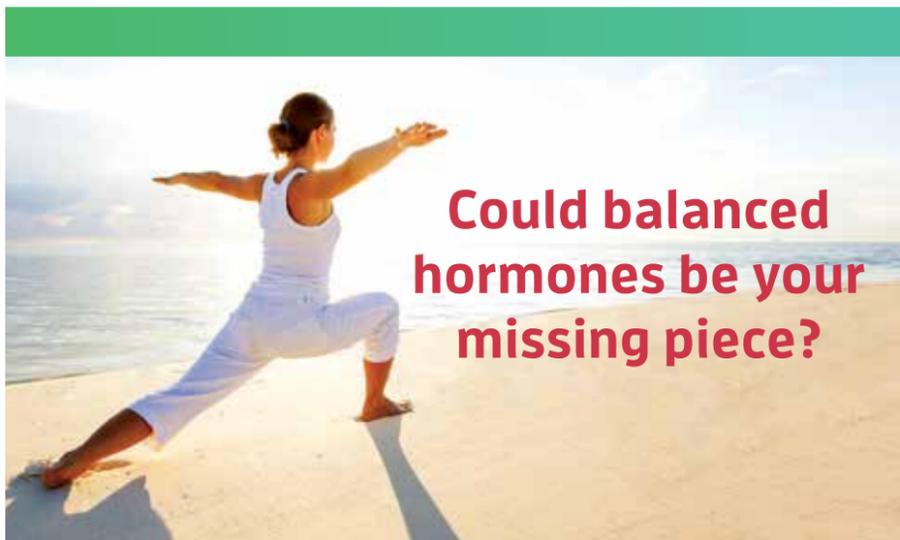


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## Do You Know Your Qi?

By Diane Sheppard, PhD, LAc

Most people understand qi (chi) to be "oxygen creating life force energy," or simply breath. But did you know there are many types of qi that help our body function properly? Knowing how they work helps traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioners, and each of us, correlate symptoms with deficiencies.

In traditional Chinese medicine, radiant health comes from oxygenating the body and healthy circulation. Qi and blood work together to nourish our systems and when both flow well, we are in balanced homeostasis.

The qi cycle begins at birth when yuan qi is created. When we begin eating, gu qi is activated and sent to the heart and lungs creating zong qi. This turns into zheng qi before dividing into ying (nutritive) qi and wei (defensive) qi to nourish our blood and strengthen our immune system.

Yuan qi (original qi) is the dynamic force that motivates the functionality of internal organs and is the foundation of our vitality.

Gu qi (food qi) is the first stage of qi transformation from food. Consumed food is digested and sent through the spleen to the lungs where it combines with air and transforms into zong qi (gathering qi) and blood. Cold hands and feet are a sign that zong qi is weak. This qi also influences speech and the strength and tone of our voice, so when our voice is weak, it is considered a lung and zong qi deficiency. If compromised for too long, we may experience impaired immunity.

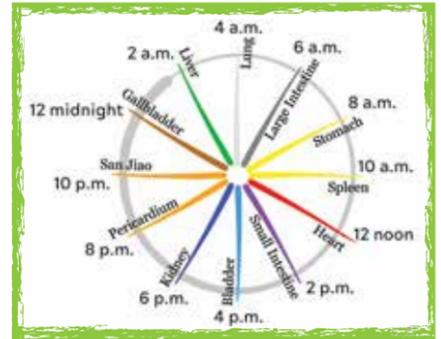
Zheng qi (normal qi) is the final stage of qi transformation and has two different forms: ying qi and wei qi. Ying qi (nutritive qi) nourishes the entire body and travels deep inside to reach our internal organs. It is closely related to our meridians and blood circulation. This is the qi activated by the insertion of acupuncture needles.

Every two hours the ying qi moves into and nourishes different organs in a specific sequence as demonstrated on the Chinese medicine organ clock pictured here. For example, 3 a.m. - 5 a.m. is the peak of lung qi revitalization. Buddhist monks meditate during this time to maximize their lung energy. The peak of liver qi revitalization is 1 a.m. - 3 a.m. People who enjoy alcohol may find it easy to fall asleep, but often wake up during this time as alcohol interferes with the nourishing process.

Finally, there is wei qi, our protective qi which defends us from external forces like pathogens, wind, cold, heat and damp. It is located on the exterior of the skin and pores (considered a third lung in TCM) and travels in and out of our meridians, opening and closing pores and protecting us from cold and flu. It is controlled by the lungs, and when one is deficient in wei qi, it can lead to spontaneous sweating.

What's the best thing we can do for our qi? Eat foods that nourish, rest to revitalize and breathe clean, fresh air to oxygenate.

Diane Sheppard is a licensed acupuncturist and doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. She is the owner of AcQpoint Wellness Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 345.2200 or visit [www.AcQPoint.com](http://www.AcQPoint.com).



The Chinese medicine organ clock

## Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco



### The Circle of Life

A circle is both an image and metaphor of wholeness and bondedness. The more we see circular patterns in the architecture of our lives, the more we realize that we are drawn to forms conveying round, soft-curving lines of connection. At first glance these symbols appear to be nothing more than circles; yet the shape refers to the beginning, middle and end of all things - the circle of life and the interconnectedness surrounding us.

During a recent hike, I was attracted to a circle of pinyon pine needles. Crafted by nature, it resembled a brush stroke of "enso," the Japanese word for circle. I gifted it to my mother who placed it on a painted canvas, and indeed, it looked like a Japanese brushed enso. In Zen Buddhism, monks and nuns meditate many months with extreme discipline and then draw a circle in one solid stroke. The circle is not designed to be perfect, but rather a perfect reflection of the painter's state of mind. This enso is remarkably simple and beautiful, symbolizing emptiness within fullness.

Finding an enso in nature wasn't a one-time stroke of luck for me. To commemorate my 50th birthday, I retreated to a cabin in Idyllwild and upon entering was greeted by a large circular window. The window framed a serene magical forest densely carpeted in leaves among the stately trees. Once again, I was reminded to find my inner enso in that moment. I again realized our lives are not linear, and growth is never straight. For me, this circle stood for the completion of many cycles and transitions. It symbolized the natural order and progression of life.

In Robert Fulghum's book on rituals, *From Beginning to End*, he states that between our first inhale at birth and the last exhale at death are a series of little deaths and revivals. We grow up, go off to school, marry, have children and experience health issues; yet, one thing remains constant, all of our exits may become entrances and our entrances become exits. Fulghum notes, "Whatever the name, however large or small the act, the urge to reassemble the fragments of our lives into a whole is the same."

In our Western culture we are rushing to keep things whole by filling something, doing something, making something, fixing something or saying something. The symbolism of the enso circle reminds us to live freely in each moment as each is a part of the larger circle of life. These lessons of the circle helped me embrace a milestone birthday and gifted me with positive takeaways. I see my 50th year more as an entrance into a dynamic new cycle and less as a step over a finish line.

If we want to move towards long-lasting health and healing, we must view our vitality as a never-ending circle. As you reflect on the circle of life, sit still and listen to what an enso means to you.

Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at [www.coachellabellaboho.com](http://www.coachellabellaboho.com).



A circle of pine needles resembles a Japanese enso, the imperfect circle of life.



# The Effect of Resonance

By Betty McDonald, LAc

What exactly is resonance? You may be familiar with a demonstration that features a vocalist singing a particular note where upon a crystal wine glass breaks into pieces. What actually happens is that the atoms in the glass begin vibrating at a frequency identical to the frequency of the note sung by the vocalist. This is resonance.

If you pluck the G string on a violin, the G string of another violin across the room will vibrate. If you place your finger on the string of the second violin and the first G string is plucked, the frequency is interrupted and will not vibrate.

In terms of resonance and the human body, every single cell, tissue and organ has a resonant frequency. The interruptions of frequencies cause the human body to experience pain and dysfunction, which can now be treated with frequency specific microcurrent (FSM).

The history of FSM began in 1997 when a list of frequencies was found in the drawer of an osteopath who sold his practice in 1946. Along with the frequencies was a single channel microcurrent made in 1922. The microcurrent unit currently used has an A and B channel. The A is for the condition and the B channel sends the frequency to the affected tissue.

Twenty-five years and 40,000 treatments later, Carolyn McMakin, DC, a Portland, Oregon chiropractor has developed resonance protocols utilizing the frequencies to treat numerous physical conditions. Forty-five protocols are available to treat a broad scope of conditions such as fibromyalgia, PTSD, musculo-skeletal pain and injuries along with somatic and visceral conditions. It is theorized that when the frequency resonates with a particular tissue, cell signaling is changed and the pathology is neutralized.

FSM is conducted with graphite gloves wrapped in moist towels and placed on the area of injury. The patient rarely feels anything as the current is below 500 microamps. Treatment times vary from 10 minutes to two hours.

An important aspect of FSM therapy is correct diagnosis of the condition and tissue involved, requiring a thorough examination and patient history. The frequencies will only resonate with the exact condition and tissue at hand, as both must be specific to be effective. If the patient presents with muscle pain and inflammation, and the exact cause is coming from the nerve, the frequency for muscle tissue will not be effective; the frequency for the nerve must be substituted.

Of particular interest are the studies conducted by Dr. McMakin and addressed in her book, Non-pharmacologic Treatment of Shingles, where it was found that only one pair of frequencies can be used for shingles. That frequency, 230 hertz on Channel A and 430 on Channel B, does something to the virus to stop the pain and prevent the blisters from breaking out. If the blisters have already appeared, the frequencies stop the pain and the blisters dry up, disappearing within 24 - 48 hours.<sup>1</sup>

FSM works by increasing production of ATP, the major source of energy for all cellular reactions in the body. Because FSM can increase the amount of ATP by as much as 500 percent, treatment time is greatly reduced and recovery is much quicker.

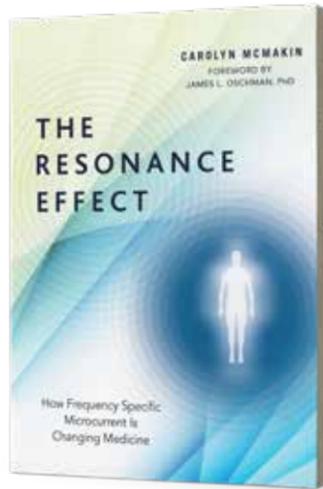
Since 2003, the use of FSM has been well received by leading health institutes. Of particular interest is the work doctors from Children's Hospital at the Cleveland Clinic are doing for children with cystic fibrosis. For some time, FSM therapy has been included in the rehabilitation of these children with much success.<sup>2</sup>

Also, a study was conducted at the Walter Reed pain clinic for three wounded warriors. FSM was applied resulting in more-rapid reduction of pain and associated symptoms, including memory problems, mental sluggishness and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup>

Many patients with ongoing FSM treatable conditions can continue treatment at home, when necessary, with a home unit programmed by the practitioner and updated as needed to reflect changes in condition. However, the protocols should be used as an adjunct following a proper medical evaluation by a qualified practitioner.

Betty McDonald is a licensed acupuncturist and functional medicine practitioner. She is owner of The Wellness Place and can be reached at (760) 766.6223. For more information visit [www.BettyMcDonald.com](http://www.BettyMcDonald.com).

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**Calming the Storm**

*Myofascial release for fibromyalgia*

By Gina Malloy, PT, MS

A client recently described fibromyalgia as “widespread pain throughout my body which feels like my nerves are on fire.” She further stated, “Myofascial release seems to send a message to my nervous system that says, ‘You are safe.’”

Fibromyalgia is a chronic, debilitating condition that affects approximately four million adults per year. It is more prevalent in women but may affect anyone with a family history of the disease, a mood disorder such as anxiety or depression, PTSD, or any other chronic inflammatory disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. The most common symptoms include diffuse musculoskeletal pain and tenderness, hypersensitivity to touch, fatigue, sleep disturbances including insomnia and restless leg syndrome, digestive issues such as irritable bowel syndrome, mood swings, brain fog, and impaired memory.

Over time, fibromyalgia may significantly interfere with a person’s ability to perform self-care tasks, manage a household, go to work or participate in leisure activities. The pervasive nature of the disease tends to strain interpersonal relationships as the fibromyalgia sufferer withdraws and isolates as a means of coping.

Fibromyalgia is usually triggered by physical or emotional trauma, surgery, or chronic inflammation. All these events can cause the body’s fascial system, the strong connective web of tissue throughout the body, to powerfully tighten around pain-sensitive structures such as bones, muscles, nerves, blood and lymphatic vessels and internal organs. Fascia forms the largest system in the body arranged as a three dimensional web suspended in a fluid substrate called “the ground substance.” Trauma solidifies the ground substance which has the capacity to deliver crushing pressure of up to 2,000 pounds per square inch on pain-sensitive structures.

The above referenced client also reported that she constantly feels as though she is “on alert.” Fibromyalgia may particularly affect the autonomic nervous system (the sympathetic and parasympathetic) which is responsible for modulating basic survival functions such as heart rate, body temperature, respiratory rate and digestion. When the fascia tightens around the fibers of the sympathetic nervous system, it triggers an emergency response and the person enters a chronic state of “fight or flight.” This is not intended to be a long-term response and this state of hyperarousal places profound stress on all systems in the body.

Clients with fibromyalgia often report an inability to tolerate massage, manual therapy, and other forms of body work because it may increase their pain and exacerbate their symptoms. John Barnes Myofascial Release is a gentle, manual therapy approach in which sustained pressure is delivered to tissues that appear “hot, hard, or tender.” The fascial system is never forced, but is allowed to release slowly over a period of at least five to eight minutes or longer as needed. As a result, the crushing pressures are removed from pain-sensitive structures. Pain is decreased or eliminated, normal circulation is reestablished and mobility is restored.

Because the fascial system is continuous from head to toe three-dimensionally, it is possible to treat an area remote from the site of most intense pain and still result in fascial releases in the painful area. If the client is experiencing an episode of intense pain and hypersensitivity, it is also possible to perform off-the-body energy work to promote healing until hands-on therapy can be tolerated.

The gentle, non-traumatic nature of myofascial release may bring hope to clients who have tried multiple forms of therapeutic interventions and medications to manage fibromyalgia symptoms.

*Gina Malloy is a physical therapist and owner of MFRx Myofascial Release in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 895.5145 or [ginaoh10@gmail.com](mailto:ginaoh10@gmail.com).*

**Lowering Blood Pressure Naturally**

By Jessica Needle, ND

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and worldwide. While heart disease may be asymptomatic until a heart attack strikes, there is often an early warning sign that shouldn’t be ignored—elevated blood pressure.

Blood pressure consists of two numbers. The first is called systolic blood pressure, which measures the amount of pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts. It is reported in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg), a holdover from the days when an inflatable cuff was attached to a device similar to old-fashioned thermometer. Systolic blood pressure should be less than 120 mm Hg. The second number is called diastolic, and reflects the amount of pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats. This number should be below 80 mm Hg.

There is a common misconception that 120/80 is a satisfactory reading, when it is actually the top of the normal range. Systolic pressure between 120 and 129 is considered elevated by the American Heart Association. Stage 1 hypertension occurs when systolic pressure is 130 - 139 and/or diastolic pressure is 80 - 89. Stage 2 hypertension occurs when blood pressure rises to 140/90 and above. A hypertensive crisis occurs when systolic blood pressure reaches 180 and requires immediate medical attention.

If you have stage 1 hypertension, you have a good chance of reducing your blood pressure through diet and lifestyle changes and are unlikely to need pharmaceuticals. There are many ways to get your blood pressure down before elevated pressure causes lasting damage to your arteries.

**Lose weight, if necessary.** Body mass index (BMI) is a quick calculation using your height and weight to determine whether your body mass is putting you at risk for health problems such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. A normal BMI is 18.5 - 24.9. Unfortunately, most Americans have a BMI of 29 or greater. To move BMI back to the normal range, women need to lose an average of 14 pounds and men 18 pounds. Each pound you lose translates into a 1 mm Hg reduction in blood pressure. A BMI calculator can be found at [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov).

**Exercise.** Physical activity is highly effective in reducing blood pressure, especially aerobic exercise wherein your pulse increases to 60 - 75 percent of your maximum capacity and is sustained for 30 minutes. This forces blood vessels to expand and contract, keeping them flexible. Doing 150 minutes of aerobic activity weekly can lower blood pressure 5 to 8 mm Hg. Resistance training has the potential to lower blood pressure 4 to 5 mm Hg.

**Less sodium, more potassium.** Daily intake of sodium should be limited to 2,300 mg to prevent elevated blood pressure, and lowered to 1,500 mg per day if you already have hypertension. Sodium intake in the United States greatly exceeds these levels at 3,400 mg per day. A diet high in processed food contains too much sodium and too little potassium, which results in cells retaining water. The excess

*Continued on page 19*



## Living Life with Intention

By Tracy J. Smith

We all have the ability to create the life we wish through the words we speak, the emotions we feel and the energy we put into them. That energy can be spearheaded by intentions –affirmative statements of what you would like to experience in life.

Whereas goals are specific things you wish to achieve, intentions are focused statements that notify the universe of your desires and the direction you'd like to go, or outcome you would like to experience. Living intentionally empowers your decisions and choices to create the life you desire.

**Strong intentions have three important aspects that empower them:**

**In the now.** Intentions should always be phrased in the present, not the past or future. The power to create is always in the now. For example, instead of saying, "My intention is to start eating healthier tomorrow," state, "My intention is to make food choices that support and nourish my body." The first statement sets a goal and focuses on a time in the future which may or may not happen; the second statement sets the universal energetic field of creation into motion NOW.

**Positive and precise.** Intentions create focus and should always state what you want, not what you don't want (since we don't want to focus on that). So, instead of stating, "My intention is not to get sick," state, "My intention is I make choices that promote my health and well-being." The intention stated in the positive is focused on what you do want to experience. Remember, the universe matches the energy of the words used in the intention. So, positive output equals positive results.

**You are at the center.** Intentions should be based on the qualities you wish to experience, not on a specific outcome or response from another person. For example, let's say you need to have a difficult conversation with your boss. Instead of saying, "My intention is to be heard clearly and get what I want," you could say, "My intention is to stand in my strength, communicate clearly and respectfully, and to remain open to mutually beneficial solutions." This creates a mindset for positive communications and opens a space for opportunities of resolution for all involved.

Living intentionally requires practice, and often patience, but the rewards are fulfilling and can often be magical. Set the intention of living a life of intention with clarity, confidence and courage.

Tracy Smith is a certified energy life coach, rapid transformation hypnotherapist and energy and sound therapist with Blissful Release Now. She can be reached at (760) 409.9289 or [tracy.blissfulrelease@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.blissfulrelease@gmail.com). For more information visit [www.blissfulreleasenow.com](http://www.blissfulreleasenow.com).



Living life with intentions takes practice, but the rewards can be life changing.

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## Lighting the Way to Healing

*Photomedicine for pain and inflammation*

By Jeffrey Gaal

Photomedicine Therapy (PMT), more specifically Low Level Light Therapy (LLLT), is the application of red and near infrared light to areas of the body to assist recover from injury or damage.

LLLT is different from natural light in that it is one precise color; it is also coherent (travels in a straight line), monochromatic (single wavelength) and polarized (concentrates its beam in a defined location or spot).

These properties allow laser light to penetrate the surface of the skin with no heating effect, no damage to the skin and no known side effects. Rather, laser light directs biostimulative light energy to the body's cells enabling the cells to convert it into chemical energy to promote natural healing and pain relief.

Since its development in the '60s, PMT therapy has been practiced in many countries and has made great strides in gaining recognition from authorities in medical schools and scholarly journals, as well as with medical practitioners and therapists worldwide.

As one ages, the energy in our cells, known as adenosine triphosphate (ATP), decreases, much like your cell phone battery. When this happens, it takes longer to heal, energy levels are reduced, muscle mass declines and there is more opportunity for disease. LLLT recharges the cells and increases ATP, offering the following benefits:

- Reduces inflammation
- Relieves acute and chronic pain
- Stimulates immune system
- Stimulates nerve function
- Increases blood supply
- Develops collagen and muscle tissue
- Helps generate new and healthy cells and tissue
- Promotes faster wound healing



Light therapy is a non-invasive natural treatment.

This non-invasive treatment, conducted by a state-certified technician, includes the use of a medical device featuring lasers- located within tiles. Each tile contains 24 lasers and there are six tiles to each strand, which can be placed anywhere on the body in need of healing. During the 15-30-minute treatment, the tiles are applied to a combination of acupuncture points, damaged areas and muscle groups. As the patient relaxes, the tiles warm up and work their magic.

What is actually happening is that billions of non-thermal photons of light are radiated from the lasers and pass through various layers of the skin to reach deep into tissue structures. The laser light is then absorbed by the proteins in the mitochondria and interacts with the elements in the cell that are light sensitive. The cell absorbs this light and begins a series of events that transform the light energy into chemical or physical energy to normalize damaged tissue.

Low Level Light Therapy is a non-invasive, natural treatment which can enhance well-being and brighten overall health.

Jeffrey Gaal is a quantum practitioner and president of LUZwave, a holistic medical clinic in Palm Desert. He can be reached at (760)537.3300. For more information, visit [www.LUZwavePalmDesert.com](http://www.LUZwavePalmDesert.com).

## Trouble Returning to Normalcy?

By Michelle Brilee, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

"Return to normalcy" was a campaign slogan used by President Harding in 1920 after World War I and the Spanish Flu; both he felt had altered the perspective of humanity. The phrase was used again in the 2020 presidential campaign when the goal was to address the COVID-19 pandemic and end divisiveness between people.

But, how do individuals who have experienced illness, loss, and at times family divisiveness, return to a feeling of normalcy? People are still feeling stunned and avoidant while integrating back into social gatherings and returning to in-person work environments. Common experiences are comprised of a variety of altered behaviors, physical symptoms, and/or thoughts and may include:

- Memories that feel intrusive, are repetitive, disrupt sleep or eating and cause one's heart to feel it is beating too fast, sweating of the skin and or chest pain.
- Loud noises such as sirens, disinfectants smells, feeling that you cannot breathe while wearing a mask.
- Physical symptoms of COVID-19 may cause a flood of memories that create anxiety, fear, sadness or worry.
- Disagreements with family, colleagues or friends over differences of how to manage or protect oneself from illness may cause feelings of isolation, abandonment or loss of engagement with others.

There are several ways to return to what normal felt like before COVID, starting with defining what normalcy is. Not all individuals will find this easy to do; some will have support of family and friends, while others will benefit from seeking professional assistance. Some individuals will be resilient, while others will learn how to adapt to their new normal. Things to consider as one returns to normalcy:

- Grief of any loss takes time and there is no set timeframe as to when it will be completed.
- A routine of healthy eating, exercise and regular sleep will help with destressing thoughts and creating feelings of normalcy.
- Major life changes can cause an increase in anxiety and stress and retrigger feelings of prior loss, so be thoughtful in your choices.
- Not everyone is emotionally equipped to listen to your experience. Identify your support system, reach out to people who can empathize and consider mental health services if necessary.

There are several ways to connect with mental health services:

- Your insurance carrier offers mental health services and can assist you in finding available options for therapy or medication management for current symptoms.

*Continued on page 19*



## Nature Wants Us to Be Fat

A Review by Joseph E. Scherger MD, MPH

We are all survivors of food scarcity as our ancestors lived through multiple periods of famine. We survive by storing body fat.

Richard J. Johnson, MD, of the University of Colorado, is a leading physician and scientist who studies fat storage as the "survival switch" to protect us from starvation. He shares his findings in his new book *Nature Wants Us to Be Fat: The Surprising Science Behind Why We Gain Weight and How We Can Prevent-and Reverse-It*.

Much of the book discusses sugar, which we all know leads to fat storage. However, Johnson further explains that the sugar which most leads to fat storage is fructose (versus glucose) as noted in a recent discovery. While the body uses glucose for energy, fructose goes to the liver to trigger making fat for storage. Table sugar is called sucrose, consisting of glucose and fructose in equal amounts. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS), the most common sweetener used today, is about 65 percent fructose and 35 percent glucose. This is why HFCS, used in sodas, salad dressings and many other processed foods, leads to more fat storage causing today's epidemic of fatty liver, overweight and obesity.

Starchy foods like potatoes and rice have a carbohydrate called glycogen that is chains of glucose molecules and no fructose. These foods are called "safe starches" and do not readily lead to more body fat.

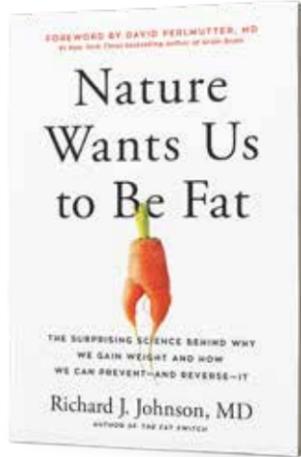
As Johnson discusses in this educational book, fruits are high in fructose and among the most fattening of foods. Bears consume tens of thousands of berries to acquire enough fat to survive a winter of hibernation. The author studies many mammals besides humans and describes this biological survival switch among the animal kingdom.

Another part of the survival switch is to rapidly accumulate fat once it is lost. A cruel part of having excess body fat is that the body will adjust its metabolism to accumulate more fat than in a person who has been lean.

Losing weight requires burning body fat through low carbohydrate nutrition, especially low fructose. To remain at a healthy weight, a person needs to follow a low carbohydrate nutrition plan - as a lifestyle - including limiting fruit to no more than two to three servings daily and consuming fruits that are less glycemic such as berries, kiwi and avocados. Periods of fasting, or time restricted eating, of more than 12 hours daily also helps in burning fat for energy and avoiding a trigger of the fat storage survival switch.

*Nature Wants Us to Be Fat* is a great addition to understanding the science behind overweight and obesity. The language is easy for anyone to understand. I no longer look at fruit in the same way and am conscious of limiting my intake every day.

Dr. Scherger is founder of Restore Health in Indian Wells, a clinic dedicated to weight loss and reversing disease. For more information, visit [www.restorehealth.me](http://www.restorehealth.me) or call (760) 898.9663.



## How to Stay on Your Path After Rehab

By Darby Foster, MSW, CADC-III, CFRC

For people in early recovery, the journey out of rehab and into the world can be draining, but it can also be full of wonder and opportunity. Leaving the comfort of rehab, a place where healing and inner work was done, can be scary and overwhelming at first; however, staying spiritually fit can help maintain that comfort and can instill a sense of empowerment many of us did not have when we were in our disease.

Spiritual self-care is as important as physical and emotional self-care, although it is very often overlooked. Below are ways people in early recovery can connect with their spirit and stay spiritually fit after leaving the bubble of rehab:

### Make connections

Whether it's finding a home group that makes you feel comfortable or joining a gym to be around like-minded people, it is essential to your spiritual health to connect with those around you. People are meant to connect with one another, and recovery programs offer a unique opportunity to do just that. Young peoples' meetings, refuge recovery, celebrate recovery, wellbriety and gender specific meetings are all great places to connect with people who can support you in your spiritual journey in recovery.

### Meditate daily

Taking time to be still and reflect gives the opportunity to connect with yourself and your higher power. Download an app such as Calm that provides meditation exercises and guided imagery. Practice mindfulness and be mindful of your thoughts, words and intentions. When you notice something you wish to correct, take that moment to pause and do so.

### Be in nature

It is very often the case that while using drugs or alcohol, people do not participate in recreational activities or spend much time appreciating the natural beauty around us. Now is the time to get outside, go hiking, swim, explore the batting cages or round up friends to play soccer in the park. Participate in the holistic practice of "earthing," by standing in the grass barefoot, connecting with the earth. Just imagine how peaceful - and how easy - that can be.

### Keep a journal

Creative expression is a great way to connect with your higher power and your spirit. Keep a theme-specific journal or just let the words flow; write to yourself or the cosmos. Whatever it is you decide to write about, you will be connecting to your spirit and higher power with every pen stroke.

Congratulate yourself for putting in the hard work and enjoy the path to nurturing your spiritual self. Your mind, body and spirit will thank you.

Darby Foster earned a master's degree in social work (MSW) from California Baptist University, is a certified alcohol and drug counselor (CADC- III), a certified first responder counselor (CFRC) and personally understands the recovery journey. She is executive director of Palo Verde Wellness Center in Palm Springs and can be reached at [dfoster@paloverdewellness.com](mailto:dfoster@paloverdewellness.com). For more information, visit [www.paloverdewellness.com](http://www.paloverdewellness.com).



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**I Won't Grow Up!**

*Allowing your inner child to thrive*

By Amy Austin, PSYD, LMFT

When my sons were teenagers, they would ask me to talk in my "baby voice," which I usually did on a moment's notice just to make them giggle like when they were little. You see, this baby voice was like a *Saturday Night Live* bit. She was one foul-mouthed, pissed off baby. For a few moments, Mom transcended into her spontaneous, playful self, relinquishing all parental responsibilities and ideals. They wanted play and they were going to get it. They even introduced their friends to this wildcard character saying, "Mom! Do the baby voice for my friends!" The looks on their friends' faces was priceless with, "That's pretty cool," or a chuckle, "Your mom's pretty strange."

Now that my kids are grown and have children of their own, my baby voice has now been introduced to my grandchildren, minus the foul-mouth part of course. The complete unadulterated silliness that comes over me when we are playing "Monster" gets squeals of joy from the little ones, but puzzled looks from their parents. My inner child is one happy camper because my emotionally healthy inner child is alive and well.

Let's explore the other side of the spectrum. A child who grows up with trauma from primary caregivers dealing with addiction, domestic violence, and/or neglect can lose their childhood innocence. What once was the healthy, fun-loving inner child can morph into a fearful, emotionally hypervigilant kid called the wounded inner child. The childlike, in-the-moment joy-filled spontaneity can often be replaced with a sense of primal survival. The child might be wondering if they were bad, wrong, not good or smart enough and asking themselves, "What did I do wrong?" The child might also subconsciously wonder what will happen to them. Since a young child, age six to approximately 11, is in the 'concrete' stage of development, they cannot yet grasp abstract thought or thinking outside the box. So, everything is perceived as black and white, all or nothing.

Fast forward to adulthood. The wounded inner child lives on. This is the 40-year-old person with a sad, angry, resentful, hurt, and lonely child within that yearns to be noticed, loved, attended to, and comforted. So, what does this wounded inner child do? She wreaks havoc in her adult relationships. She wasn't valued, prized or loved so she's going to let everyone know about it. Her mantra is, "I won't grow up, and I'm not going to let my adult self grow up either; not if I have anything to do about it!"

And my therapeutic mantra? You either become it or marry it, unless you explore it.

How can you quiet the wounded inner child so that you have a chance to be happy, purposeful and content? How can you make your adult relationships thrive?

First, notice the child within. She's there waiting for your acknowledgement. It might appear silly, but we all have a child within. You can then be her new, emotionally healthy parent; the parent she yearned for all along - someone loving, affirming and safe. Speak softly with her, tell her you're there for her and that you love her and will never leave her. Tell her she doesn't have to cause conflict in your life. She can just be a kid now. And, let her jump on in - right next to your heart where she can remain safe and cherished.

And, once she becomes accustomed to this new state of being, feel free to introduce her to your playful (and maybe pissy) baby voice where silly laughter can become the norm.

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.

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Visiting the farm is a treat and all are encouraged to do so. The unassuming entrance presents a winding, paver drive lined with serene native landscaping and bright white fencing. You'll pass an authentically built thatched ceremony hut and sculptures honoring times gone by. At the end, you are greeted by a viewing platform overlooking the property and featuring seven feather sculptures representing the current tribal council members. A beautiful foot path leads to the adobe market and cultural center.

Temalpakh (Te-MAL-pak) is the Cahuilla word for "from the earth," which is one of the many things you'll learn on a tour with Tribal Educator and Developer Specialist Nicholas Rajen. His passion for the history and knowledge of Indigenous and organic farming is both fascinating and inspiring. What the Tribe has done with the land, from clean up to re-engineering the soil, to creating an environment that works seamlessly with nature, is heartening.

Continued from page 1



A canopy of native palo verde trees leads to the pollinator corridor.

"Regenerative agriculture (a 2022 Global Wellness Trend) has its roots in Indigenous agriculture," explained Nic, who introduced me to The Three Sisters, or the milpa system.

"You plant corn and allow that to grow. Then you plant beans around the corn which acts as a trellis for the beans. The beans tie the corn roots down in the soil and as legumes, balance nitrogen and enrich the soil." He adds that honey and screwbean mesquite (native bean pod-producing trees) are also nitrogen fixers and Cahuilla ancestors would selectively utilize soil from around mesquite trees for their gardens. "After the beans take root, you plant calabazas (gourds and or squash) which act as a pest deterrent and protect all three crops. You then have integrative pest management and are feeding people highly-dense nutritious food." This philosophy is the basis for the farm which features garlic, peppers, lettuces, eggplant, kale, carrots, celery and more.

Another secret ingredient is the brightly colored pollinator corridor, one of the first elements constructed to attract lady bugs, bees, dragonflies and spiders, to balance pollination and insect control naturally. A strolling path allows you to observe the magic of it all at work.

"One of the narratives we are building to educate youth and adults in our community is the seed-to-stomach story," adds Nic. "To have truly healthy soil is to have 'living soil.' Dirt is rich in minerals that support a complex life of bacteria, fungi and microscopic beings all the way up to birds and humans. When you eat food that the seed has produced, you are also supporting organisms in your own body, your microbiome, so it all starts with healthy, living soil." Plans for their youth education program include microscopes to view and compare organisms in the soil.

**The market**

The market features fresh seasonal produce from their fields and other regional organic farms, a few locally made products, fresh ground coffee and a tasty smoothie bar. Décor includes an artful display of woven baskets representing a variety of Tribes

Continued on page 21



An artful display of woven baskets honors tribes nationally.



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## Navigating Parkinson's Disease Dementia

By Patricia Riley, MBA

While Alzheimer's is the leading form of dementia, cognitive impairments in Parkinson's disease dementia (PDD), combined with the movement symptoms of the disease, produce a greater impact on social and occupational functioning. Whether you are newly diagnosed with Parkinson's, have lived with the condition for a while, or are a caregiver, educating yourself about the disease can help to manage the symptoms.

**Incidence of Parkinson's and PDD.** Parkinson's disease (PD) is a fairly common neurological disorder in older adults, estimated to affect nearly two percent of those over age 65. According to the National Parkinson's Foundation, one million Americans are living with PD and 60,000 new cases will be diagnosed this year alone. Age is the biggest risk factor for developing the disease and nearly 50 percent more males are affected than females.

PD symptoms usually start out mild and progressively get much worse. The first signs are often so subtle that many people don't immediately seek medical attention. While PD presents differently in each patient, common symptoms include tremors that affect the face, jaw, legs, arms and hands, slow, stiff walking and balance issues. Eventually, the symptoms worsen and can include: mood changes such as depression, problems with urination, trouble chewing and swallowing, memory loss and hallucinations. Recent studies following people with Parkinson's over the entire course of their illness estimate that 50 to 80 percent of those with the disease may experience dementia, which includes Lewy body dementia.

The Weill Institute for Neurosciences estimates the average time from onset of movement problems in PD to developing PDD is approximately 10 years. The most common symptoms of PDD include: increased mood swings, confusion,

delusions, paranoia, inability to concentrate, inability to apply reasoning and judgment, increased anxiety and sleep disturbances.

As PDD progresses, there are several steps caregivers can take to manage their loved one's disorientation, confusion and impulsivity. These steps include:

**Patience and calm.** It is not usually helpful to try to reason or argue with someone experiencing a hallucination or delusion. Stay calm and be patient. If your loved one is frightened by the hallucination or delusion, try to redirect their attention to something else. You may find acknowledging what the person is seeing, even if you do not see it, can help reduce stress.

**Slow directive.** Speak slowly and at eye level; use simple sentences. Ask one question at a time and wait for an answer.

**Consider causes.** Is your loved one's disruptive behavior due to hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, loneliness or maybe boredom?

No single drug or treatment can cure PDD. Currently, physicians focus on a treatment plan that helps relieve the symptoms of the disease including lifestyle changes: regular exercise, quality sleep, stress management and attention to heart health and medications. In addition, participating in a support group can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Talking openly and honestly with other individuals who are experiencing similar issues, as well as to health care professionals, can help to improve your skills in coping with the challenges you are facing.

*Patricia Riley is a board member of Alzheimers Coachella Valley, a community resource for dementia support and education which offers programs for PDD. For more information, call (760) 776.3100 or visit [www.cvalzheimers.org](http://www.cvalzheimers.org).*

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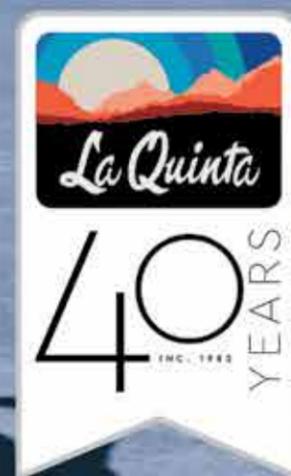


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# Why Do You Want to Lose Weight?

By Roger Moore

As we head into summer, my phone rings off the hook from people who made New Year's resolutions to lose weight. They joined a gym and went for a few weeks but haven't been back for a couple of months. Now, warm weather is upon us, and coats and sweaters are making way for shorts and swimsuits. Sadly, they often say they weigh more now than they did on January 1.

One question I usually ask is, "Why do you want to lose weight?" People are often startled by this and stumped for an answer. "Because I should," "For my health," "To look better in a swimsuit." With further conversation, they admit they never really thought about *why*. As a result, they don't have a real goal with a genuine commitment.

### If you want to lose weight, are you clear as to why?

As I listened to Gerry in a weight loss hypnosis session, it became clear that he had no idea where he was going. He sounded lost. When I pushed him for clarity, he couldn't tell me what life might be like at his goal weight, or why he wanted the change. When I asked if he ever just left for vacation with no destination in mind, he made it clear that he's an obsessive planner and didn't allow any unscheduled side trips. Yet, he told me how he'd noticed more unconscious eating and lack of focus lately.

So, I put two dots on my white board. One dot was Palm Springs and the other Seattle. I told him that when I recently flew from Seattle to Palm Springs, turbulence kept blowing us off course and the pilot had to make continuous course corrections. If he hadn't, we might have ended up in Oklahoma City instead of Palm Springs. As with life, there is turbulence. There are relationship changes, job changes, holidays, birthdays and other bumps in the road. All too often, people never make course corrections; they never get to Palm Springs. I encouraged Gerry to think of his eating in the same way he plans the rest of his life. Be intentional. Understand why you eat what you do.

Another client, Patty, told me she had no idea what it would be like to be at her ideal weight. In the past, she had dieted and lost a lot of weight rapidly, only to discover that all her life's challenges were still there. "Do you believe people can really change?" she asked. "Yes," I replied, "but you must know what you want, and you really have to want it. And keep reminding yourself of those reasons."

Client Brenda asked how to deal with life's turbulences, so I asked her what it would be like for her to be a Principled Leader of Her Self. "What would it be like to be a cause rather than an effect; to no longer be a victim in your life?" When you have a clear plan for your life, you can then be that Leader of Self. You take back your power from food, people, work, events, life and circumstances.

So, I challenge you to take some time in the next few days to write, draw or paint a realistic picture of what your Palm Springs – your destination – would be like for you. My hope is you'll come up with detailed and compelling reasons for reaching your goal weight.

Letting go of weight, whether 20 or 150 pounds, can be daunting. Staying focused on just the next two pounds makes it more doable.

I remember years ago, I set out to climb Mount Rainier – all 14,410 feet of it! We climbed to base camp carrying heavy packs, then set up our tents on a glacier. After a few sleepless hours on a bed of ice, we were up at midnight to begin the ascent. At 8 a.m., I looked toward the summit. It loomed massively in front of us. We still had hours to go, and I was exhausted and discouraged. I wondered why I'd thought

### Lowering Blood Pressure Naturally

Continued from page 12

fluid causes pressure to build up, and accounts for the use of diuretics to help people with hypertension excrete more water via urination.

To change the balance of potassium to sodium in your diet, focus on eating fewer packaged goods and more fresh, whole foods. Foods that are particularly high in potassium include vegetables (especially leafy greens, tomatoes, potatoes, and sweet potatoes); fruit including melons, bananas, avocados, oranges, and apricots; tuna and salmon; nuts, seeds and beans.

**Celery for lower blood pressure.** Celery contains organic compounds called phthalides, which relax the artery walls to increase blood flow and reduce blood pressure. Celery juice has become a trendy drink, and while it has benefits, eating the whole food is better. In addition to phthalides, you also get fiber, magnesium and potassium to help regulate blood pressure. The vitamin C and beta-carotene in celery decrease oxidative damage, meaning that bad cholesterol is less likely to stick to the arteries. Try to eat four to six stalks of celery per day.

**Benefit from beets.** Both raw beet juice and cooked beets are effective at lowering blood pressure and decreasing inflammation. Nitrates from dietary sources like beets and leafy green vegetables are converted to nitric oxide within the body. Nitric oxide then relaxes blood vessels and dilates them, which helps the blood flow more easily. In one study, systolic pressure fell four to five points. Researchers say the drop may seem small, but on a public health level it equates to a 10 percent reduction in deaths due to heart disease.<sup>2</sup> If you don't like the taste of beets, you can mix three parts beet juice with one part apple juice.

Other nutrients and supplements that help maintain healthy blood pressure are vitamin C, magnesium, garlic, and fish oil.<sup>3</sup> Consult your health care practitioner regarding which of these choices are right for you.

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

References: 1) <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/sodium.htm>; 2) <https://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/news/20121212/beetroot-juice-blood-pressure>; 3) <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/supplements-lower-blood-pressure#c=1323517041194#The-bottom-line>

### Trouble Returning to Normalcy?

Continued from page 14

- Crisis Text Line is a global nonprofit organization offering free mental health texting through confidential crisis interventions 24/7 (text to 741741).
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free 24/7 confidential support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources in their area. Call (800) 273.8255 or, after July of this year, text to 988.
- Disaster distress hotline for immediate crisis counseling related to disasters 24/7 (800) 985.5990.
- Resource database for substance abuse and mental health services: [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)
- Resource for alcohol treatment options from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: [www.alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov)

Michelle Brilee is a board-certified family and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and a member of Desert Doctors. She can be reached at Achieve Medical Center in Palm Desert (858) 427.5060. Visit [www.DesertDoctors.org](http://www.DesertDoctors.org).



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this was a great idea. At that moment, the fun was gone. I just wanted to sit down and tell my fellow climbers I'd be right there when they came down. I wanted to quit.

Then I recognized that I was at the moment in life when I always quit, when things got really tough. I was having the exact same feelings and thoughts. Feelings that had held me back in most areas of my life—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

So, I stopped thinking about the hours ahead of me to reach the summit and focused on my next step, and then the next and the next. And finally, there before me was the crater on the summit. It was a beautiful, warm, sunny day and I could see forever. By taking one step at a time, I made it. I share this experience with clients as a metaphor for focusing on releasing two pounds each week.



The journey starts by putting one foot in front of the other, says author Moore who lost over 100 pounds.

I urge you to find your own metaphor to represent your weight loss journey, and whatever it is, take the first step toward your goal. And then another.

Roger Moore is a certified counselor and medical hypnotherapist with Palm Desert Hypnosis. For more on this topic, visit [www.HypnosisHealthInfo.com](http://www.HypnosisHealthInfo.com), or call (760) 219.8079. All sessions are online telehealth. His book, *Becoming the Greatest Expression of You*, is now available on Amazon.com.

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## Medicare Terminology Made Simple

By Randy Foulds

Medicare can be very confusing. Plan types, names and acronyms make for a labyrinth of terminology. Here are some simple definitions that may help make sense of Medicare coverage.

**Traditional Medicare:** This is the federal program that includes Medicare Part A and Part B. Most people start here at age 65, unless they have group benefits from an employer, spouse's employer, or a retiree plan.

**Medicare Part A:** Hospital coverage only; in most cases there is no monthly premium, but it does have a large deductible that increases each year. Medicare Part A is part of traditional Medicare.

**Medicare Part B:** Medical services only; also part of traditional Medicare. It provides coverage for doctors or other providers, lab work, imaging, etc. This also covers some specialized medication, especially infusion therapies. Part B has a smaller deductible (\$233 in 2022) and a large co-insurance of 20 percent with no maximum. Patients are responsible for this 20 percent unless they carry other coverage.

**Medicare Supplement:** Also known as Medigap plans, these private insurance plans are through major insurers that pay the deductibles and co-insurances of traditional Medicare. These are known by standardized letter-named plans, such as Plan F, Plan G, Plan N, etc. Note that supplements use the term "Plan" not "Part,"

like traditional Medicare. Many Medicare beneficiaries have these plans in addition to traditional Medicare.

**Medicare Part D:** These are stand-alone drug coverage plans also known as PDP. While administered by private insurance companies, the costs are actually paid by Medicare and the private insurer.

**Medicare Advantage Plan:** Most Advantage plans also include drug coverage and are referred to as Medicare Advantage with Part D, or MAPD. These are private plans that replace your traditional Medicare. When enrolling in MAPD, Medicare benefits are assigned to a private plan, which in theory will deliver as good or better coverage. These plans greatly reduce health care expenses but also limit choices in providers.

It is far more important to know the type of plan you have, rather than the insurer brand name. The coverage and network of providers varies greatly depending on whether it's traditional Medicare plus a Medicare supplement, or a Medicare Advantage plan, even if they are from the same company. For example, both a Medicare supplement F plan and most MAPD/HMO plans will allow for a primary care or specialist visit at no cost-no deductible, no copay. But the MAPD requires use of an in-network provider or wait for approval, while the F plan does not. Because the Medicare Supplement F plan is secondary coverage, it allows one to see any provider anywhere in the country, as long as they accept the patient's primary coverage, which is their traditional Medicare.

Randy Foulds is a Medicare specialist and owner of Foulds Health Insurance Agency in La Quinta. He is an independent broker representing clients first (license #0G69218) and can be reached at (760) 346.6565.

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## YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®



### The Block Party: The Game of Crypto

When I was a kid, I loved our annual block party; lots of food, fun and games. Some years multiple blocks would participate. One year we had a huge scavenger hunt where each family had a set of clues for the items to collect. The clues were extremely sophisticated, puzzle-type questions that needed to be solved consecutively, and within a limited time, so the families on the block teamed up to conquer the quest.

In addition to solving the puzzle, the results also had to be verified. The block teams could go to any pre-designated neighbors for validation. The assigned validators had their own competition to see who received the most clues in the fastest time. The one who verified the most blocks in the game was rewarded with a token gift. The first neighbor to validate a team would also get the honor of issuing the next clue.

The game started with the first family of each block team trying to solve the clue before the next block team, then get it to an available neighbor for verification to receive a subsequent clue to pass on to the next team member. Every clue depended on some information from the previous one, enticing families to work together and race to be the first to get to the next clue.

Sound complicated? It is, but if you could follow it, you are on your way to understanding how cryptocurrency works (the above game was actually for illustrative purposes only).

A cryptocurrency is a digital asset that can circulate without the need for a central monetary authority such as a government or bank.

The Game: Trading cryptocurrency by the consumer, investor or transactor.

The Family: A block with limited data capacity. Once full (the puzzle solved), a new family joins the team.

The Block Team: Made up of each family and linked together by certain data, forming a blockchain.

Designated Neighbor: The cryptocurrency miner; computers all around the world validating transactions by solving extremely sophisticated calculations. The miners are competing to be the first to solve the computations for the right to issue new blocks and receive crypto tokens.

Many know cryptocurrency as Bitcoin, however just as we've substitute brand names for common items such as Kleenex for tissue, Bitcoin has become the mainstream name of cryptocurrency – and for good reason. Bitcoin was the first cryptoasset created anonymously in 2008, with the first coin minted in 2009. According to CoinMarketCap, there were over 18,000 cryptocurrencies in existence as of March 2022. There are also numerous trading platforms for the digital currencies such as Coinbase, Robinhood, and Gemini to name a few.

Cryptocurrency is still a fairly new and highly speculative investment. If you are considering investing in cryptocurrency, as always, the most important thing to do is your homework and consider if it fits into your overall financial plan. For more information on the intriguing world of cryptocurrency, I recommend reading the CFA Institute guide *Understanding Cryptocurrency and Crypto Trading*.

Michele Sarna is a certified financial planner™ with Beacon Pointe Advisors and can be reached at (760) 932.0930 or msarna@beaconpointe.com.

Sources available upon request.

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# Eat, Drink and Be Healthy

Substitutes you'll savor by Lauren Del Sarto

## Are Plant-Based Burgers Healthier?

For years, we've been told to cut back on red meat to improve health and reduce greenhouse emissions, and to eat more plants instead. For those of us who have, the one thing we can still crave is a big, juicy burger. How excited were we when Beyond Beef and Impossible Burgers hit the shelves?

But are they truly healthier and is one better than the other? My friend Lexi asked, so I told her I'd investigate, and I really learn a lot.

Both products are highly processed, and for that reason alone, should be avoided or eaten in moderation - just like red meat. But, I love Impossible Burgers for their juicy texture and satisfying taste, and now I know why.

Turns out the secret ingredient is heme ("heem"), an iron-containing molecule found in humans and plants that makes meat juicy and tasty. "If you were to eat meat raw, that bloody flavor you get, that's heme," says Impossible Foods Principal Scientist Rachel Fraser. "All the flavors that you get when you cook meat are catalyzed by heme as well." She adds that a craving for meat is really a craving for heme and the iron and protein it represents in our diets. Interestingly, Impossible Foods made this discovery and FDA approval of heme as a food and color additive is even newer than their products.

Impossible's primary source of protein is genetically modified (GMO) soy and potatoes; their source of heme is soy leghemoglobin, found in the root of the plant and fermented in a lab as a scalable means of production. Beyond Beef's source of protein is peas, mung bean and rice. Beet juice extract provides the red, juicy hue and coconut oil and cocoa butter provide the marbled texture; apple extract is added to help the burgers cook like real meat.

That makes Beyond Burger higher in healthier plant ingredients, non-GMO and soy-free. Their nutrition profiles are similar, although Beyond is six grams lower in carbs and two grams lower in saturated fat per serving; both have about the same amount of protein (and sodium) as ground beef, are free of gluten and nuts, and are halal-and kosher-certified.

After researching, I think I'll return to actual veggie burgers which contain real ingredients like peas, beans, peppers, spinach, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, coconut oil, flax, sunflower and chia seeds. I know I won't crave them as much, but I'll feel satisfied in knowing that I am making the healthier choice.

Lauren Del Sarto is founder/publisher of Desert Health and can be reached at [Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com](mailto:Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com). Share your savory substitutes with us online!

Sources: 1) <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/impossible-burger-vs-beyond-burger#nutrition-profile>; 2) <https://medium.com/impossible-foods/setting-the-record-straight-more-lies-from-anti-gmo-activist-group-center-for-food-safety-9b6d8b6ed21>; 3) <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/how-healthy-is-the-new-meatless-beyond-burger>

From the Earth. For the People.

Continued from page 16

nationally, inlaid medallions by Yucca Valley artist Cory Hamilton and colorful murals by Frank Lemus of Coachella.

The variety and abundance of produce will change with the seasons, and the Tribe hopes to remain open year-round. The smoothies are a refreshing natural treat and reason enough to visit. The Palm Tree Brew with dates, unsweetened almond milk, mesquite powder, banana and coffee (optional) is recommended, while the PB&J (blueberries, peanut butter, apple juice, spinach, banana, honey and dates) is reminiscent of childhood. None of the creative combinations disappoint. Temalpakh also offers an organic Farm Box pickup program throughout the year with availability noted on their website.



Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians' Mary Ann Martin



Pollinators and insect predators provide organic pest control.

### Viewing platform

A spiral path leads you to a viewing platform from which you can see the produce fields, date palm grove, solar farm and beyond. What the tribe has done to turn this land, once a dumping ground, into this hidden gem of history and health for our community, is very impressive. Each element was thoughtfully created, especially the seven towering features which honor the current tribal elders.

"As a poetic and beautifying gesture, the current council approved for the statues to be made out of old tires collected from the property cleanup as a sign of restoring the land and restoring the people," says Nic.

At first glance, you would never imagine the material of this colorful art to be repurposed tires, but a closer look reveals a potpourri of treads made into honorable symbols by artist Blake McFarland. Enjoy your smoothie while strolling around and taking it all in.

In reading about the Cahuilla, I learned that industriousness was a highly valued characteristic; they admired people who worked "steadily, carefully and productively." Another valued behavior was reciprocity, giving as much or more in return than you receive.<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that these commendable values live on today.



Seven feather statues made of recycled tires represent restoring the land and its people.

Temalpakh Farm is located at 1 Roberta Way in Coachella (Van Buren Street south of Avenue 54). Current hours of operation are Monday - Thursday and Saturday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. For tours, educational events and to confirm hours of operation, please call (760) 391.9576. For more information, visit [www.temalpakhfarm.com](http://www.temalpakhfarm.com). Editorial by Desert Health Publisher Lauren Del Sarto.

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**9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**  
**WOMEN WHO RULE**  
*Awards and Scholarship Luncheon*

Presented by  
**SBEMP**  
 ATTORNEYS

**FRIDAY, MAY 6**  
 Classic Club • 11am-2pm  
 Champagne Welcome • Raffle Prizes • YWL Students

<b>Mary T. Roche Award</b>	<b>Visionary Award</b>	<b>Visionary Award</b>	<b>Inspiration Award</b>	<b>WLF Man of the Year Award</b>
<i>Debbie Espinosa</i> President and CEO FIND Food Bank	<i>Calista Vassios</i> Co-Founder Vaccinate Inland Empire (VAXIE)	<i>Rhea Hoffman</i> Co-Founder Vaccinate Inland Empire (VAXIE)	<i>Haley Clawson</i> Chief Meteorologist KESQ News Channel 3	<i>Tim Leiweke</i> President and CEO Oak View Group

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## Honoring Leaders and Young Stars

### WLF recognizes those rising above

Women Leaders Forum of the Coachella Valley (WLF) will celebrate outstanding professionals and aspiring young women in our community at the 9th Annual Women Who Rule! Awards and Scholarship Fundraiser taking place May 6, at the Classic Club in Palm Desert.

Four extraordinary Coachella Valley women and one visionary "Man of the Year" will be honored for their leadership, public service and entrepreneurship, while high school girls who have completed WLF's Young Women Leaders program will be awarded college scholarships.

The luncheon, presented by the prestigious law firm SBEMP, will be hosted by KESQ News Channel 3's Laurilie Jackson and the City of Indio's Brooke Bearre. The event begins at 11 a.m. with an elegant champagne reception followed by the awards program and luncheon at noon.

This year's outstanding honorees include:

**Debbie Espinosa**, CEO of FIND Food Bank of the Coachella Valley, who will receive the Mary T. Roche Community Leadership Award. Espinosa has served in the nonprofit sector for 30 years and has led the way in safely feeding our hungry neighbors during the pandemic and beyond. Her tireless work and community leadership is well known throughout the Coachella Valley.

**Calista Vassios and Rhea Hoffman**, founders of Vaccinate Inland Empire ("Vaxie"), will receive the WLF Visionary Award. What started as two friends concerned about their most at-risk neighbors has turned into a growing organization of over 25 volunteers that has helped more than 78,000 individuals get vaccinated since February 2021.

**Haley Clawson**, Chief Meteorologist, KESQ News Channel 3, will receive the WLF Inspiration Award. Beyond her on-air presence, Clawson is a passionate proponent of education. Her non-profit raises scholarship funds for young women interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) as an avenue to success.

**Tim Leiweke**, CEO of Oakview Group, will receive WLF's Man of the Year Award. Leiweke is co-founder of the Oakview Group, which is bringing the new Acrisure Arena to the Coachella Valley. Leiweke is a longtime leader with over 40 years in the sports and entertainment industry. The Oakview Group is well known for its commitment to hiring women and the Acrisure Arena is leading the way with many Coachella Valley women executives and team members on board.

"All of our selected honorees serve as role models for our accomplished members of WLF and the young women we mentor," states WLF President Jenell VanDenBos.

Proceeds raised at the luncheon directly fund college scholarships for the best and brightest enrolled in WLF's Young Women Leaders Program with up to a \$30,000 matched from OneFuture Coachella Valley. This year, longtime WLF member Charissa Farley-Hay has also pledged to match up to \$5,000 of donations made through the organization's website at [www.wlfdesert.org](http://www.wlfdesert.org).

Leadership sponsors include Desert Health; CV Strategies; Iris Event Planning; Blanke Schein Wealth Management; The Practice CPAs; KESQ News Channel 3; buzzbox premium cocktails; Jenell VanDenBos & Assoc. Real Estate; Desert Care Network; Solowitz CPA; Chase Bank; Classic Club; and Wildest Restaurant + Bar.

Founded in 2001 by former Indian Wells Mayor and Councilmember, Mary T. Roche, WLF has mentored hundreds of young women and raised more than \$700,000 in college scholarships.

Please join us May 6, or consider an online contribution to next year's scholarship recipients. Luncheon tickets are \$95 for members and \$125 for non-members.

For tickets and more information about WLF membership, programs and events, or to make a scholarship donation, visit [www.wlfdesert.org](http://www.wlfdesert.org).

### A Special Thank You to Our Sponsors



## Managing Wellness in the Workplace

### HARC helps employers navigate changing times

Wellness in the workplace is more important today than ever before. To assist local companies and organizations in keeping employees and staff happy, safe and well, Coachella Valley's HARC (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is hosting their annual Workplace Wellness Symposium on June 24, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. via Zoom.

In 2016, HARC inaugurated their annual Workplace Wellness Awards to recognize exemplary organizations in the Coachella Valley that prioritize employee health and wellness and encourage others to do the same. Since the pandemic, HARC has shifted their awards ceremony to a virtual symposium which aims to inform employers, managers and management teams how to cope with the changes that the pandemic has brought to the workplace.

Research shows that having a healthy workplace benefits both employees and the employer. Such benefits include increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, enhanced morale, decreased health care costs, reduced stress levels, improved long-term retention and overall improved employee happiness and health.



This year's Workplace Wellness Symposium topic is, "We're all in this together - Navigating Through Changing Times." Recognizing that workplaces have significantly changed in the past two years and acknowledging "The Great Resignation," this year's event will address topics such as diversity and inclusion in today's workplace, strategies to release stress in the workplace, managing boundaries at work, and more.

Management teams from all types of organizations - non-profits, for-profit, corporations, schools, governmental agencies - are encouraged to join this two-hour interactive symposium with inspirational speakers, prizes for participation and networking opportunities.

The event is free to attend, however, registration is required and the first 50 people to register will receive a bag with gifts from HARC and their sponsors. For registration to the event and additional information visit [www.HARCdata.org/award](http://www.HARCdata.org/award).

For more information and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Amairani Ramos at [aramos@harcdata.org](mailto:aramos@harcdata.org).

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