



# Desert Health<sup>®</sup>

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

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## what's inside

### 8 Medical News

Coping with Holiday Blues

### 17 Natural Options

Naturopathic Medical Residencies

### 18 Integrative Medicine

LDL: Not Always Bad and HDL: Not Always Good

### 20 Financial Health

Do's and Don'ts of Medicare

### 21 Through the Generations

ACV Opens Screening Center For Memory Issues

### 22 Desert Events

Desert Health's CSUSB OLLI Speaker Series

### 23 Eat, Drink & Be Healthy

Healthy Ho Ho Holiday Appetizers

### 23 Fresh Cuisine

Guiltless Apple Caramel Tart



The holidays are here! Time to gather with friends and family, toast traditions, savor bountiful meals, swap gifts, share stories and be together. Just like the good old days. How happy are we?

The more important question may be, how grateful are we? We made it through two seasons of foregoing traditions, avoiding gatherings, being alone, managing anxiety and learning to pivot. While we may have scars from a time in our lives we will never forget, we have arrived on the other side.

Hopefully, one of the things we gained was a heart full of gratitude for all we may have previously taken for granted. While sequestered at home, we dreamed of today, of a return to normalcy, of all we have right now. Let's not take one moment, one hug, one shared table for granted.

It's beautiful to see so many living life again - traveling the world, planning celebrations and crowding local eateries. This unimaginable time

has motivated many to take that trip they've been planning, to say 'yes' instead of 'no' and to realize long-awaited dreams. Be proud of yourself for finding the courage, and cherish every moment.

Many others, however, still have trepidation. This new normal is not exactly how it used to be, and reasons for caution still exist. Anxiety, fears and health concerns still keep some from stepping out, and two years of isolation and loss have enhanced the loneliness crisis in America. Not everyone has found their happy place.

Remember, we are all here together. So, let's embrace the spirit of the season and lead with kindness. You never know just how much someone may need your acknowledgement. One small compliment, a smile to a stranger or a random act of kindness can generate an abundance of gratitude for them - and for you.

And gratitude is the key to embracing today... and every day.

## Prescribing Nature Leaders changing medicine

By Lauren Del Sarto



In September, I was honored to attend The Plantrician Project's Plant-Based Nutrition Healthcare Conference. It was inspiring to be among so many practitioners from around the world stepping beyond conventional medicine to learn about incorporating nutrition and lifestyle into their practices.

The goal of the annual event, now in its 10th year, is to educate practitioners on the mounting science of food as medicine; equip them with practical tools for successful business models; and to share proven strategies that empower clients to make changes in their day-to-day lives.

This is no small task for most medical doctors. The information is far beyond the limited nutrition they learned in medical school and the conventional system is not touting *this* science. Plus, there are no reimbursement codes for discussing lifestyle changes with patients, so they are not financially compensated. But many in this group are working to change that.

The conference featured lifestyle medicine pioneers including Dean Ornish, MD, whose intervention diet for coronary disease is now reimbursable by Medicare and many private insurers; T. Colin Campbell whose 2004 book *The China Study*

propelled much of the conversation on what and what not to eat; the Cleveland Clinic's Caldwell Esselstyn, MD whose decades of work on reversing disease has been highly decorated; Hans Diehl, DrHSc, founder of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute who, as the Clinical Professor of Lifestyle Medicine at Loma Linda University's School of Medicine, is teaching the next generation; and many more.

We heard the latest on reversing cognitive decline from leading doctors Ayesha and Dean Sherzai, reversing and preventing heart disease from Koushik R. Reddy, MD, breast cancer prevention from Kristi Funk, MD, orthopedic pain and degeneration management from Stephan Esser, MD and pediatric care and equality through lifestyle medicine from Howard University's David Bowman, MD, to name a few.

Those attending the conference don't want to simply live their own lives, said Ocean Robbins, CEO and Co-founder of Food Revolution Network, but to "step outside of the status quo, and to do the right thing because they know something better exists."

Driven by passion and his own personal experience, Robbins is on the forefront of systematic change. He is the best-selling author of *31-Day Food Revolution: Heal Your Body, Feel Great, and Transform Your*

Continued on page 6

If you take care of the minutes, the years will take care of themselves.

- Rick Hanson, PhD



## Stroke Care

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## Living Life

I love this time of year! Especially in our desert where the weather has cooled and life seems amplified. Social opportunities abound as we move outdoors to bask in our perfect weather. It's time to celebrate the season - and the reasons we live here.

We celebrate much in this edition: ideas for happy, healthy holidays (p.11), appetizers to steal the show (p.23) and lessons in gratitude throughout. We share tips for better sleep (p.16), testing your memory (p.21) and analyzing your sugar plum dreams (p.17).

We also share compassion as the joy we feel this time of year isn't shared by all. Today I mourn the loss of an old friend, decorated for her accomplishments. Her pain was unimaginable and those of us who shared her friendship honor her by promising to keep in closer contact in the years to come.

As the season brings us together again, let's remember that true interest in the wellbeing of others is a blessing we can easily share. "How are you doing?" goes a long way when you truly mean it, and can make a significant difference.

A very special thank you to Jeralyn Brossfield, MD whose column, "The Paradigm in Medicine Today," (p.10) has been an integral part of *Desert Health* for the past eight years. We thank her for her inspiring contributions and will continue to follow her impressive work as a leading functional medicine doctor in our valley.

Wishing you peace, love and happy holidays ~

*Lauren*

Lauren Del Sarto  
Founder/Publisher

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# The Value of a Second Opinion

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

Your doctor walks into the room with your test results. She looks concerned. The symptoms you've been worried about indicate a serious problem and she wants you to start a regimen immediately. You can't think, your heart is racing and your first instinct is just to follow orders.

On the contrary, consider this: your doctor bounces into the room smiling. The test results are normal. No need to worry about those symptoms that have you so concerned. She writes you a prescription and schedules you for a follow-up in six months. Whew! Yet...why do you feel uneasy?

Both scenarios require the same action: a second opinion. A second opinion is when another doctor (in addition to your regular doctor) gives their view about your health problem and how it should be treated.

Before you start to worry about asking for a second opinion, consider the following: a 2015 study showed a second opinion resulted in treatment changes for nearly 37% of patients and diagnosis changes for 15%.<sup>2</sup> That's a 1-in-3 chance that your doctor's recommendation may not be your best option!

You deserve to know all options before choosing the best care plan for a serious condition. Besides, your doctor consults their colleagues every day - it's a common practice in medicine. Their Code of Medical Ethics<sup>3</sup> includes assuring patients they may seek a second opinion and not terminating you just because you seek care from another professional. A second opinion may just confirm your doctor's recommendation and it's not a waste of time. Wouldn't you rather start treatment knowing you have explored all options and have two (or three) doctors concurring? A second doctor may just be able to explain the plan in a better way for you to understand, and you are free to return to your original doctor for treatment. If your doctor becomes angry or offended, that is not someone you want on your medical team. Remember - it's your health, not your doctor's. Here are answers to some common questions:

### How do I get a second opinion?

First, you do not need your doctor's permission. However, asking them to refer you (outside of their group/organization) makes it easier to transfer records to your new doctor. To start the conversation, consider this: "Before we start treatment, I'd like to get a second opinion. Will you help me with that?" Or, "I think I'd like to talk with another doctor to be sure I have all my bases covered." Don't worry about your doctor influencing the second opinion, receiving doctors know it is their job to reevaluate all the information and often order some additional testing. A good doctor will help you find an expert and get you an appointment ASAP.

### Will insurance cover this?

Most insurance plans, including Medicare, cover second opinions. Contact your insurance provider first so you follow their protocol as some require prior authorization and/or use of a provider in their network. Medicare (with Part B and Original Medicare) will not only pay for a second opinion but also a third if the first and second differ.<sup>1</sup> If the

planned tests/treatments are medically necessary, Medicare pays 80% and you pay 20% after your deductible. Medicare Advantage plans assure you the right to a second or third opinion but may require a referral from your doctor. Contact your plan for more information.

### Meeting with the second doctor

A specialist does not know you as well as your doctor. Be clear and specific about your intentions and avoid generally stating "I want to see what you have to offer." Before your appointment, call ahead and make sure they have received all your records. Prepare in advance with a list of questions, and take all your medications and any recent summary sheets from doctor visits or hospital stays with you. Do not go alone! Take your health advocate, family or friend to listen and take notes. Consider these questions:

- Could there be a different explanation for my symptoms?
- What are your recommendations?
- Are there other treatments I should consider?
- Any additional testing I need?
- What are the risks/side effects of my treatment options?
- What if I do not choose to move forward with this plan?
- What are the costs?
- What does recovery look like?
- What research studies or professional guidelines are they following?
- Is this what you would recommend for your family member?
- What is the outcome expected for each option?

After you have met with your second (or third) doctor, make an appointment to see your original doctor and see if all the doctors reviewed or will review the recommendations together. Going into treatment confidently, knowing you have considered all options, can assure a better outcome, even if the original treatment plan stays the same.

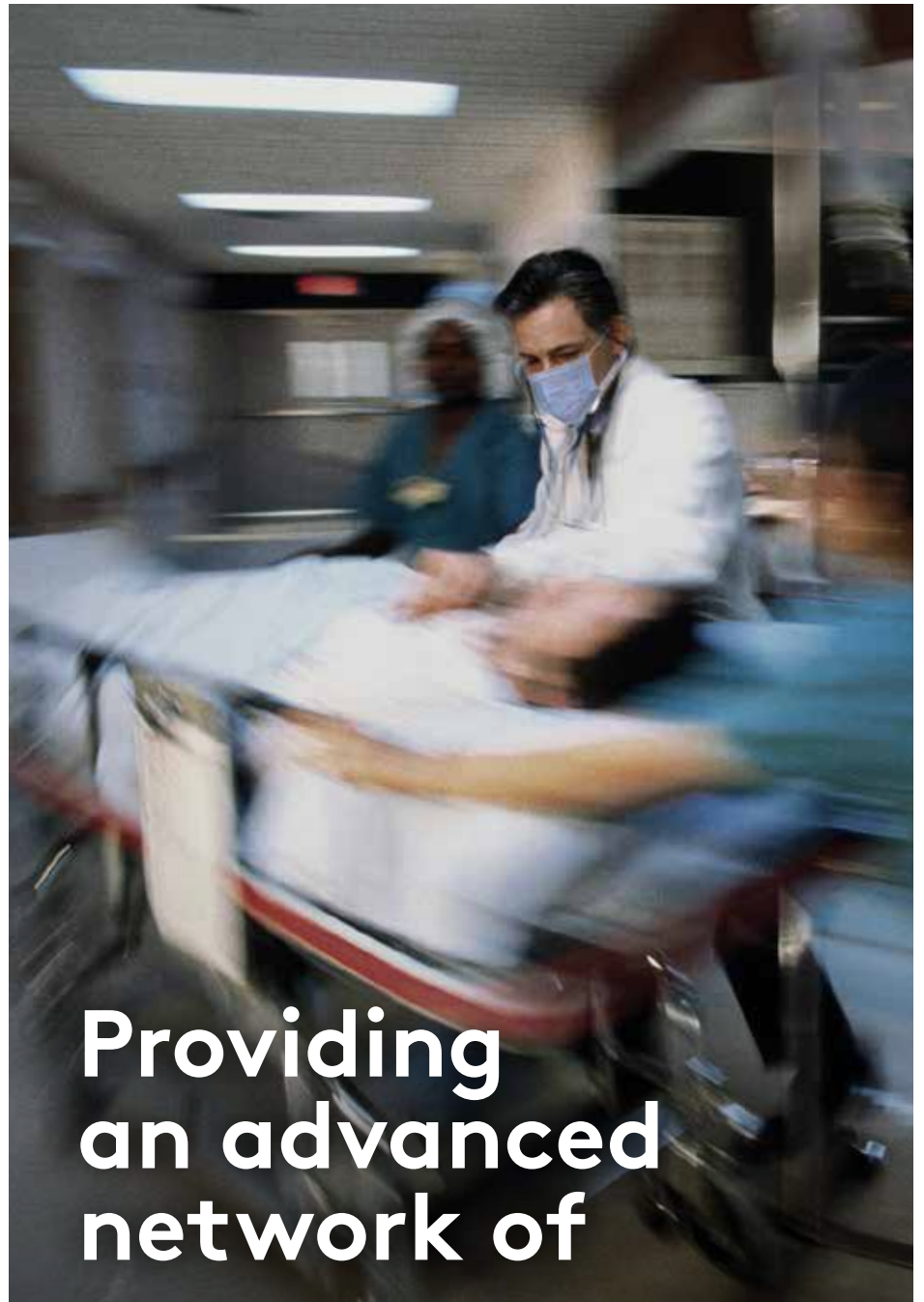
Important: do not wait for a second opinion if you require emergency surgery for conditions such as appendicitis, blood clots/aneurysms and accidental injuries.

Dr. Porter is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert. She is an experienced health care professional with 30 years of nursing practice dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of health care processes and advocating for patients, families and caregivers. Immediate assistance is available by calling (760) 851.4116. [www.myhealthmyadvocate.com](http://www.myhealthmyadvocate.com).

Sources: 1) Medicare-Getting a Second Opinion Before Surgery. <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/02173-Getting-a-Second-Opinion-Before-Surgery.pdf>; 2) Evaluation of Outcomes From a National Patient-Initiated Second-opinion Program [https://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343\(15\)00369-1/fulltext](https://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343(15)00369-1/fulltext); 3) AMA Code of Medical Ethics Opinion <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/ethics/consultation-referral-second-opinions>.



Seeking a second opinion is common practice and should always be considered.



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## Controlling Chronic Pain by Controlling the Mind

By Kevin Richardson, PhD, CHt

You're in pain and call your doctor's office. They recommend you go to the nearest emergency room and hours later you receive a shot which controls the pain for some time. What if you could learn techniques to control your pain instantaneously without medication and the associated side effects? Hypnotherapy techniques can do just that: control your pain by controlling your mind.<sup>6,8,10</sup>

Pain is standardly categorized as either acute or chronic.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Acute pain is usually defined as pain that lasts less than three months.<sup>10</sup> It is a result of some sort of accident, medical procedure or natural process. After a period of healing, the pain will typically resolve itself. It is important to point out that pain is necessary for our survival. Without experiencing pain, we would not identify when we have suffered trauma. People who are unable to experience acute pain repeatedly end up with burns, injuries and broken bones.<sup>10</sup>



*The mind prefers homeostasis and can be a powerful tool in pain management.*

Chronic pain is usually defined as pain that persists for three months or more, following initial onset.<sup>9</sup> With time, chronic pain can compound requiring progressively increased pain medication and physical assistance. It can also lead to depression, sleep problems and long and short-term disability.<sup>4,8,9</sup>

Unfortunately, as many as 37% of individuals in developed countries and 41% of individuals in developing countries report having had chronic pain in the previous 12 months, according to research scientist Mark P. Jensen, PhD, University of Washington vice chair for research in rehabilitation medicine.<sup>9</sup> If not controlled, chronic pain can perpetuate creating a cycle of more pain, disability and impairment.<sup>7,9</sup>

### How do we turn this around?

Many in medicine believe that pain is more than simply a physical ailment, but rather a complex interaction between biologic, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social factors.<sup>7,9</sup> As such, Dr. Jensen adds, a key underlying principle in chronic pain treatment is patient empowerment.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to understand that the mind prefers homeostasis; it wants to keep the status quo and can be a powerful tool in chronic pain management, thus adding a psychologist and or clinical hypnotherapist to your pain management team can be beneficial.<sup>8,9,12</sup> Whereas a physician can assess pain and identify physical treatments to aid in relieving pain, a psychologist can assist in identifying possible psychosocial causes and/or psych-related traumas that may trigger chronic pain.<sup>4,7,8</sup> This is especially true when physical exams, x-rays, MRI or CT scans are unable to identify a cause, as this does not mean the pain is not real.<sup>1,7,12,13</sup>

A clinical hypnotherapist uses techniques from various theories to help train clients how to use the mind to manage chronic pain.<sup>4,5,12,13</sup> Each technique uses custom-designed suggestions to meet the specific needs of each client. Two basic theories include the mind/body connection and pain gate theory.<sup>3,6,8</sup> The mind/body connection recognizes that the subconscious controls the entire body: our heartbeat, blood pressure and all the systems necessary to keep us alive. It is believed that the mind controls our body's responses to stressors and toxins, and by learning how to control the mind, we are able to control our bodies.<sup>2,5,11</sup> By learning how to change our minds, we can change our bodies and the body's responses.<sup>2,5,6</sup>

The pain gate theory basically states we are able to change our response to pain by "closing" the pain gate located in the neuro system.<sup>9,12,13</sup> It recognizes that nerve fibers transmit signals up the spinal cord to the base of the brain. The thalamus, which sits at the base of the brain, then acts as a clearing house sending those signals to four areas of the brain. These areas then create the body's response, attaching a specific quality to the signal. For instance, one area says the stimulus is a 10 out of 10 pain level. Another area says the stimulus is a burning or stabbing pain.<sup>9,12,13</sup> Another area says the stimulus is located in a specific body part.<sup>9</sup> Then finally, the fourth area attaches an emotional response such as anxiety, stress, etc.<sup>7,9</sup> The hypnotherapist is able to use various techniques to focus on changing the mind's interpretation of the signal by addressing the different parts of the mind that construct the body's response - changing the mind's interpretation, and hence, the response.<sup>1,8,9,12,13</sup>

### What is the hypnotherapy process?

The hypnotherapy process begins with a thorough evaluation designed to identify the unique needs of each client. The client and hypnotherapist then work as a team to build a custom treatment program focused on increasing comfort and functional independence. Sessions can be completed in office, via zoom or even in the comfort of your home. The number of sessions is based on individual needs and determined following the initial evaluation. After each session, the client receives an audio recording enabling them to use the recording in between sessions. The recording helps anchor the suggestions enabling control of the pain. At no time does the client lose control. Clinical hypnosis does not make someone do something that is against their will, ethics or moral code. Many people describe "waking" from hypnosis as feeling refreshed and revitalized.

Hypnotherapy assists clients in reformatting their understanding and perception of pain. In my practice, I have witnessed chronic pain clients regain control of their comfort and return to a productive society. Hypnotherapy has allowed them to resume caring for themselves and to participate in living life once again.

*Dr. Richardson has worked in the rehabilitation sector of health care for more than 40 years. He is a certified hypnotherapist and proud member of Desert Doctors. He practices at Pit Stop Health Center in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 636.4365 or [kevinrichardsontherapy@gmail.com](mailto:kevinrichardsontherapy@gmail.com). For more information visit [www.kevinrichardsontherapy.com](http://www.kevinrichardsontherapy.com).*

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# Salivating for Good Health

By Sarah Khoshniyati, DDS

Saliva plays a huge role for oral health, yet remains one of the most neglected factors considered in overall health. You may ask, how does it affect my overall health?

Saliva is an extracellular fluid carrying essential enzymes that aid in the break down of food particles in the first stages of digestion. It is produced by multiple salivary glands in the mouth, and its composition is 98% water with the remaining amounts made up of electrolytes, enzymes, minerals and mucous. The major salivary glands include the submandibular, sublingual and the parotid glands. Average daily production of saliva is about 2-4 pints a day.

### Why is saliva important?

Saliva aids in digestion by binding to food particles as you chew, allowing for easy entry into the esophagus, as well as assisting in breaking down food particles for proper digestion. As saliva flows in the mouth, it helps clear away small particles of food to prevent bacteria from adhering to the tooth structure. Saliva also acts to lubricate the surfaces of the mouth which helps to prevent dry mouth, also known as xerostomia. Xerostomia can be caused by certain diseases such as Sjogren's syndrome and diabetes, salivary duct obstructions, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, dehydration, smoking and certain medications. Lubrication from saliva also assists in speech, as dry mouth can cause issues while speaking.

From a dental perspective, saliva plays a huge role in defending against tooth decay and periodontal disease as it protects the enamel surfaces of the tooth. It neutralizes harmful acids in the mouth that break down tooth enamel. With proper flow, saliva repairs the enamel with its mineral contents, which ultimately aids in keeping the surfaces of the teeth healthy and resistant to decay.

In addition to keeping teeth and oral surfaces healthy, proteins found in saliva act as indicators of health concerns as well. The use of saliva to detect and diagnose certain conditions and diseases is continuously being studied. Saliva has been used to detect oral cancers, viruses, allergies, gum disease and viruses including hepatitis and HIV.

### How do you sustain healthy saliva?

- **Practice proper oral hygiene:** Flossing, brushing, and cleaning the tongue. Water flossers are also a helpful addition to maintain great oral hygiene.
- **Stay well hydrated:** By drinking enough water throughout the day, the salivary glands will have proper flow, allowing for a healthy amount of saliva to protect against harmful bacteria and keep the mouth lubricated.
- **Avoid acidic mouthwashes:** Many mouthwashes contain alcohol which dries out the mouth. If using mouthwash at home, make sure to look for those that are alcohol-free.
- **Opt for sugar-free gum and mints:** This can help increase salivary production.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol:** These can dry out the mouth.
- **See your dentist on a regular basis:** Get routine check-ups and professional cleanings.

Sarah Khoshniyati ("Dr. Sarah") is a dentist with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602.



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## Keep Breathing

By Roger Moore

Keep breathing. Sounds so simple, doesn't it? And yet, so profound. Last summer we were blessed with the opportunity to spend six weeks in our travel trailer visiting family and friends in Washington State. In an RV park near Seattle, I noticed a gentleman sitting on a rock wall every morning as I walked our dog. His name was Earl, and he loved to talk to everyone who passed by.

One morning, I noticed balloons tied to his car and I had to ask him about them. It was his 101st birthday (and yes, he still drove his car)! I wished him a happy birthday and as we chatted, I just had to ask him his secret to a long life. "Keep breathing," he responded. "Just keep breathing."

I was dumbstruck with his philosophical response.

I have given considerable consideration to his secret and am reminded of the Zen story of the man who was climbing the mountain to seek enlightenment. On his way up, he met a Master coming down. He stopped the Master and asked, "What is the secret to enlightenment?" The Master replied, "Chop wood and carry water." The man then asked, "What comes after enlightenment?" "Chop wood and carry water," answered the Master.

"Keep breathing." "Chop wood and carry water." Both mandates are reminders of the importance of daily practice. Just as it's not enough to breathe only once, or to chop wood and carry water only once, it's not enough to exercise the habits that make us better only once.

The daily practice of successful habits requires a disciplined commitment to yourself. That's why for most people, diets don't work. People will drink the magic weight-loss potion or follow the latest fad diet for a while - maybe even achieve their goal weight, but then they go right back to the old habits that made them unhealthy in the first place.



Exercise is an excellent example of daily practice. It's not enough to just buy the gym membership. It's not enough to lift weights for a few weeks and then think you're done for the rest of your life. That's wishful thinking. Strength training and fitness maintenance is a life-long pursuit. You can't quit and stay fit.

*Changing behaviors requires consistent practice and focused intention.*

Daily practice is a reflection on your focus and your intention. Daily practice is being mindful. When you become distracted (mindless) and get caught up in the daily stress of life and the myriad of to-dos on your list, you are not focused on being your "Best Self" or on accomplishing your goals. You are focused on your fears and most likely have forgotten to breathe deeply; your breath has become short and shallow in the chest almost as if you've stopped breathing.

I've often said that we are always in trance, and mindfulness tools such as meditation and self-hypnosis are all about taking control of the trance you are in. In my experience, most people are caught in the daily practice of mindless trances of fear, anger, hurt and sadness. If that describes you, you can change this daily practice to one of focused intention on love and wellness.

It is not enough to temporarily change behavior to lose weight or to accomplish other goals only to return to the old behaviors. Changing behaviors, thoughts and emotions requires a consistent practice and focused intention to "keep breathing" and to "chop wood and carry water."

Roger Moore is a certified counselor and medical hypnotherapist with Palm Desert Hypnosis and can be reached at Roger@HypnosisHealthInfo.com or (760) 219.8079. He is the author of *Becoming the Greatest Expression of You*. For more information, visit [www.hypnosishealthinfo.com/medical-hypnosis](http://www.hypnosishealthinfo.com/medical-hypnosis). All sessions are online telehealth.

Prescribing Nature

Continued from page 1

World, and is effectively working with others to add more nutrition to medical school curriculums, as well as to make prescribing fruits and vegetables a profitable venture for all involved.

"We live in a toxic food culture, and we see the results of this everywhere. Diet is fueling 11 million deaths a year worldwide," he stated, referring to the healing crisis we are facing as an opportunity. "We are here to usher forth that possibility for human life on this planet. And that is a profound responsibility - and opportunity."

Ocean was raised by influencers and shared his story. His grandfather, Irv, started Baskin-Robbins and his father, John, who grew up with an ice cream cone-shaped swimming pool and 31 flavors in the freezer, was groomed to take over the family business. However, in his early 20s, John walked away from it all to make his own "rocky road" (Ocean jests) moving with his wife to an island off the coast of British Columbia. They built a small log cabin, grew most of their own food, practiced yoga and meditation daily and named their son Ocean. The family moved to California in the mid-80s, and John started researching nutrition. In 1987, he authored *Diet for a New America* which sold millions of copies and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. It opened people's eyes to the welfare of animals and the environment, and John became a leader in the plant-based movement. He is now co-founder of Food Revolution Network - along with his son.

Irv, however, was challenged with weight issues, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. He lost his brother-in-law and business partner, Burt Baskin to heart disease at 54. And in his late 60s, Irv's doctors told him he didn't have long unless he changed his ways. They handed him a copy of his son's book, and while he hadn't read the signed copy John gave him, he did read the copy given to him by his doctor. Irv changed his diet significantly - cutting down on animal products, giving up sugar (including ice cream) and increasing his intake of vegetables, nuts and seeds. He lost weight, reversed his diabetes and heart disease and lived another 19 healthy and happy years.

"In my family, we've seen what happens when you follow the Standard American Diet; you get the standard American diseases, and we have seen what can happen when you make a change."

Changing communities

Through Food Revolution Network, which is committed to healthy, ethical, and sustainable food for all, John and Ocean Robbins aim to empower individuals, build community and transform food systems to support healthy people and a healthy planet. With more than 700,000 members and the collaboration of many top food revolutionary leaders, they have developed more than 1,000 blog articles, an online

Continued on page 9




**Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry**  
**MENTORING THE FUTURE**  
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## Public Health Youth Corps Coming to the Desert

Sixty health academy students at Coachella Valley High School (CVHS) are piloting the launch of a Public Health Youth Corps for our region with the hope that many more students in academies across the valley will join next year. These students are part of a statewide Public Health Youth Corps, thanks to a partnership between OneFuture Coachella Valley's Behavioral Health Alignment Team, FACES for the Future Coalition and the Safely Opening Schools mission.

The program focuses on youth peer education during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase vaccine, testing and prevention awareness in key California communities. Overall, the program builds on the existing FACES Public Health Youth Corps model and will activate more than 100 unduplicated youth as "COVID-19 and public health ambassadors" at the middle school and high school levels across the state.



Future Public Health Corps leaders at CVHS

Coachella Valley's Public Health Youth Corps students will take their regular health academy courses and receive additional instruction in Public Health 101, COVID-19 Vaccine Basics, Motivational Interviewing, De-escalation Skills for Challenging Conversations and Case Scenario Practice: Addressing COVID-19 Concerns. They also will certify in CPR/First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Stop the Bleed and Opioid Overdose Intervention training.

This fall, each student will interview three community members about their understanding of COVID-19 and its impact on their lives. They also will coordinate two community-based presentations and data collected will be used to inform statewide COVID-19 youth outreach and awareness campaigns.

Jodie Capper, RN, mental and behavioral health instructor for the CVHS Health Academy, is leading the pilot implementation on behalf of our region. She is embedding the PHYC training elements within her Med II (2nd year) academy class, and all students in her Psych II course will also receive the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) certification.

MHFA is a training developed by the National Council for Behavioral Health to teach individuals how to recognize the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to a person who may be experiencing a mental health challenge. It also teaches how to refer someone to appropriate professional support and services.

MHFA certification has just been approved for students under 18 years old, so this is an exciting addition to the program, and by December, 120 junior and senior students on the CVHS campus will have been trained to support their peers.

For more information or to help fund this program in 2023, contact Kim McNulty at [kim@onefuturecv.org](mailto:kim@onefuturecv.org).

**JOIN ME DEC. 13!**  
 See p. 22 for more

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## Coping with Holiday Blues

By Manish Sheth, MD, PhD, and Sahil Sheth, MS

The holidays are here, and we are all looking forward to a “normal” season after two years of pandemic. Holidays remind us of spending time with family, enjoying good food and being merry. But that isn’t always the case for everyone.

This time of year, nearly 10% of Americans report seasonal affective disorder and many more experience tiredness, lack of motivation and generally feeling down. If not addressed, this can lead to clinical depression. Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce the risk of holiday blues:

**Limit Alcohol.** We know it's easy to “just have a few drinks,” but alcohol will intensify negative feelings and leave you feeling physically ill. Limit yourself to only one to two drinks a day and only in social settings.

**Savor sleep.** Keeping a consistent sleep schedule is essential to staying emotionally and physically sound. It may get more challenging if you travel to different time zones during holidays. If you have trouble sleeping, try using either valerian root extract, melatonin, aromatherapy, lavender or essential oils in recommended doses.

**Enjoy exercise.** Exercise can be a chore, especially with the sun setting earlier, but do something fun and just get your body moving. Go for a run, ride your bike or take a walk in the sunshine to get your vitamin D.

**Eat healthfully.** Eat balanced meals, including proteins, and limit sugars. Many holiday meals like turkey have tryptophan that synthesizes serotonin and helps with sleep and mood. Try to avoid holiday sweets by planning ahead in social situations.

**Find support.** For some of us, holidays mean being alone, but they don't have to. Ask your work or school friends about their holiday events, and it is likely you may get an invitation. It is important to surround yourself positive company during holidays.

**Make new traditions.** Regardless of what makes you feel down, try something new. Activities like volunteering for community programs to serve the underprivileged bring a sense of gratitude and self-reflection. These experiences create positive memories that you will want to repeat every holiday season.

**Practice self-care.** It is always a great idea to start self-care practices, such as meditation or yoga. It is relatively easy to get started in your own space, and while it may take some getting used to, these activities may help you long-term.

**Acceptance.** The process of acceptance allows us to embrace and accept the present without the burden of the past and stress of the future. Acceptance relieves us of the pressure to stay in control.

**Connect with your therapist.** For many people, holidays bring memories of their loved ones or past trauma. It is important that you stay connected or start with a therapist.

It can be difficult to navigate how you are feeling and that's okay. Try some of these strategies and if needed, reach out and get help; you are not alone.

Manish Sheth is a psychiatrist affiliated with Sokya Health, a group of mental health and well care clinicians serving the Coachella Valley. He is also a member of Desert Doctors and can be reached at (866) 65.SOKYA or [www.sokyahealth.com](http://www.sokyahealth.com).



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**Prescribing Nature**

Continued from page 6

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**Changing what is taught in medical schools**

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) administers the board exams for doctors, and schools teach to those tests. Robbins explained that there are about 1,000 questions on the mandatory bank of the exams and 12,000 in the larger pool, and almost none are related to whole food, plant-based nutrition or lifestyle medicine in general.

Robbins started a petition backed by leading doctors in the movement calling on the NBME to make at least 5% of the exams about whole food, plant-based nutrition and lifestyle medicine. Working with the American College of Lifestyle Medicine as the liaison, they connected with the NBME who asked them to develop the proposed questions. They raised funds and hired qualified professionals to come up with 1,000 questions.

“We are now identifying a leverage point at which we think we can change the practice of medicine by changing what is taught to medical school students,” Robbins said.



Ocean and John Robbins

**Incorporating “produce prescriptions”**

The Food Revolution Network team is also working to change the reimbursement model so doctors are compensated for discussing nutrition. One of their initiatives allows doctors to prescribe fruits and vegetables which are then covered by Medicare or insurance companies. Tufts University conducted a study on this and found that fruits and vegetables were an effective intervention strategy for reversing diabetes, heart disease and several other conditions. They determined it was more cost-effective than things already covered, and of course, “the only side effects are good ones.” Working with Wholesome Wave, they are taking it to Washington, DC in an attempt to advance it nationally.

**“Double Up Bucks” program**

Another initiative Ocean is focusing on with Wholesome Wave is doubling the value of food stamps when they are used to purchase fruits and vegetables. Fifty million Americans rely on these to feed their families and the FDA has launched a pilot program with 500,000 Americans currently participating.

“What they are finding is that those who receive the value are buying and eating more fruits and vegetables and are healthier because of it,” stated Robbins. “If we can get this institutionalized on a national level, we will see food deserts turn into food oases. We will see more 7-11’s stocking fruits and vegetables because we have increased the purchasing power in the very communities that need it most.”

“We must change the economic forces so it becomes more profitable to do the right thing instead of doing the wrong thing.”

**Investing in the next generation**

In October, The Plantrician Project launched their legacy initiative, Plantrician University (“Plant U”), described as a comprehensive learning and community platform created to empower health care students around the world with the scientific knowledge and clinical understanding of whole food, plant-based nutrition. Due to generous funding, the program is free to all medical education students.

“We are investing heavily in this next generation because I believe they will usher in a new age of lifestyle medicine in health care,” says Plantrician Project Founder Scott Stoll, MD.

The online platform features content created specifically for Plant U in addition to “the extensive breadth of evidence-based lectures by renowned experts and resources produced by the Plantrician Project over the past decade.” In Phase Two, students will enjoy regularly hosted live lectures, Q&A sessions, open discussion, networking opportunities and even a mentoring program.

Any currently active medical profession student training to be a physician, physician assistant, nurse, registered dietitian, dentist, chiropractor, or other allied health professional, as well as faculty, is invited to enroll at [www.plantricianuniveristy.org](http://www.plantricianuniveristy.org).

The Plantrician Project has many educational and practical resources available to help individuals, providers and their patients start on a path of healthier nutrition. Their standards are simple: maximize the intake of whole, plant-based foods and minimize the intake of processed and animal-derived foods. Consumption of meat, dairy products and eggs, as well as highly refined foods like bleached flour, refined sugar and extracted oils are minimized or eliminated. Their 11th annual conference returns to the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort in Palm Desert in 2023.

The lifestyle medicine movement is quickly growing, and we commend those advancing change. As Robbins eloquently said, “Sometimes pain is what pushes us; other times we are pulled by vision.”

For more information visit [www.plantricianproject.org](http://www.plantricianproject.org). Editorial by Desert Health Founder/Publisher Lauren Del Sarto. [Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com](mailto:Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com).



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**THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today**  
 By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD



**Sorting Through Conflicting Dietary Advice**

**JOIN ME NOV. 15!**  
 See p. 22 for more

Does it seem like the advice on how and what to eat swings from one extreme to another? One perspective says avoid fat, the other says fat won't hurt you. A headline warns about the dangers of red meat and another says you need more protein. Unfortunately, this confusing barrage is likely to continue, and we are left to decipher what is best for us. How do you make decisions amidst all the conflicting information?

The first question I ask is - where is the common ground? For instance, if you are comparing keto-style eating to vegetarian, both approaches proclaim the benefits of consuming non-starchy vegetables. Plants are the clear peacemakers when it comes to dietary conflict; they are considered good for you in most approaches except a strict carnivorous diet.

Secondly, there is no debate that keeping blood sugar stable is the way to reduce inflammation and disease. Whichever dietary approach you would like to try, it is always important to eat a "low-glycemic" diet - in other words, choosing or combining foods that pair fat and fiber with higher-starch foods, helping to lower insulin and inflammation. Another tactic that supports stable blood sugar is to start your meal with your vegetables - this coats your digestive tract with a cellulose layer that slows the absorption of starch in the later part of the meal.

Another question to ask yourself is whether the diet you are considering is high in whole foods and low in processed foods. In all the perspectives about diet, there is no question that processed foods are harmful to our health. So, no matter what you choose, whole foods are clearly best.

The next test is to consider the source. Is the entity pushing a certain product or dietary approach going to benefit financially from your decision? The principles of healthy eating do not depend on you buying the latest, greatest pill to counteract a food you eat. If you don't tolerate lactose, you should avoid it and only use a pill for the occasional accidental ingestion. If you want to eat beans, pressure cook them or eat them from a BPA-free can - then you don't need to take an anti-lectin supplement.

When choosing whether to eat high-or-low fat, gluten or not, meat or plant-based, Mediterranean or Keto, you will want to take your own health condition into consideration. For most people lowering processed foods, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, choosing the highest quality of dairy or meat options and keeping starchy foods in balance with higher protein or fiber at a meal, will lead to better health. For further specifics, it is wise to discuss your plans with a trusted health expert.

I have been honored to share my health journey and perspectives about the evolution of medicine with you. This column will be my last for a while as I focus on new health initiatives from my practice at XO Health and the Braincare Performance Center. Thank you for your readership and I wish you extra-ordinary health!

*Dr. Brossfield is the founding physician of XO Health and medical director of Brain Performance Center and can be reached at (760) 573.2761.*



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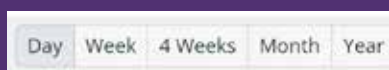
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## 5 Tips for Healthy Happy Holidays

By Jennifer Yockey

Do you remember last holiday season? Did you get to January and swear that you were going to do things differently next year? Well, here we are...

It has been a bumpy road over the last couple of years, and this may be the year that you do a little bit more...or after last year, you might be considering doing a little bit less. Whatever you choose to do, or not do, here are a few tips to make it to January happy and healthy:



### Practice Mindfulness

What does that mean exactly? In this case, it means making mindful decisions. It's ok to pause before accepting an invitation; whether you take a few deep breaths, tell the person you need to consult your calendar or wait 24 hours to answer the text or emails, your joy and sanity will be dependent on your pause and mindful decision making.

### Practice Presence

Whatever you choose to do and whomever you choose to be with, BE THERE. Put away the phone, be present for conversations and experiences. I am not suggesting you skip taking photos, but perhaps set an amount of time that you do that, and then put the phone away. Sometimes, the best memories are the ones that we hold in our minds.

### Practice Gratitude

It's easy to get caught up in "the things." It wasn't that long ago that we weren't able to see friends and family due to the pandemic. So, focus on what is good, precious and positive rather than what you don't have, where you didn't go or what you didn't get invited to. Science says the more you focus on what is good, true and soul filling, the more of those things you will notice and experience. Do give yourself a break as the brain's default is to focus on the negative; that is the reason for the word "practice."

### Practice Patience

The holidays can be stressful for a myriad of reasons: expectations, loss, financial stress and the list goes on and on. Be patient; not only with others but especially with yourself. The more patient, compassionate and grace that you show yourself, the more you will be able to give others. If you are feeling overwhelmed, snippy and unhappy, take time to step back and check in with yourself. Personal reflection and inquiry will usually provide some insight in to your perceptions, expectations and reactions.

### Practice YOU

Peace begins with each of us, individually. So, in order to put our best foot forward this holiday season and beyond, it's important to take care of ourselves. Walking, reading, yoga, pilates, meditation, quiet music, a bath... all of these are not indulgences but required maintenance of our mental and physical health and well-being.

Jennifer Yockey is owner of Gather Yoga & Wellness, author of Gathered Truths and host of The Gathered Truths Podcast. She is an E-RYT yoga/meditation teacher and wellness coach and can be reached at (760) 219.7953, jennifer@gatherlaquinta.com. For more information visit www.gatherlaquinta.com.

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NOV. 8!  
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## Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco

### Let's Kneipp!

Imagine if public parks had a water therapy feature where citizens could walk barefoot in cool water. If one could practice earthing as they traverse through water troughs lined with pebbles to stimulate the feet, it would encourage circulation.



Imagine if hospitals in our country, as part of therapy for respiratory illness and rheumatic conditions, prescribed baths and wraps using hot and cold-water therapy with moist and dry heat. Imagine if there was a cooperative relationship with public golf courses on rainy days where individuals could partake in "dew walking." These experiences do exist and are all forms of Kneipp Therapy.

Kneipp Therapy was founded by a German priest in the mid-1800s. This Bavarian holistic caretaker arrived at these practices by experimenting with regular bathing in the icy Danube River. His treatments helped his tuberculosis and strengthened his body. He went on to treat ailing members of his village parish with water cures and was known as the "water doctor." To this day, his natural cures are instilled as part of the collective identity of German people.

This summer, as I rode my bike past a hike trailhead, I was greeted by Kneipp offerings in the middle of the forest. Cold spring water filled a large treading basin with handrails to walk back and forth multiple times to receive help from the effect of external water applications. The use of icy water on a warm body provides the initial action of diverting blood flow from the exterior to the interior. It strengthens the immune system and improves blood flow and lymph circulation. After a hike or a physical pursuit there is immediate relief. There are approximately 100 different Kneipp water treatments in the form of compresses, steam baths, inhalations and baths.

Practices from the past travel full circle and once again become relevant in the present. There is a resurgence of interest in water therapy and cold exposure utilizing breathwork, nature and community.

The Dutch extreme athlete Wim Hoff is an iceman who has climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in shorts and has broken a number of records related to cold exposure. He now teaches others how to control breathing, heart rate and blood circulation using drastic temperatures. His method is the extreme; he approaches healing utilizing "water cures" and his practices of cold-water immersion have turned many into believers.

There is an accessible approach in our desert climate to experience the immediate benefit from cold therapy. Perhaps during an upcoming outdoor adventure such as biking, hiking or time at the park, you could prepare a cooler with ice and water. Finish an outdoor jaunt by submerging your feet in a cold igloo bath. We can experience "kneipping" without a great deal of time or expense. "Kneipping" is good for the sole and soul!

Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at www.coachellabellaboho.com.



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## Pulsenergy for Diagnosis

By Diane Sheppard, PhD, LAc

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), pulse diagnosis dates back thousands of years. It is a means of identifying and differentiating diseases by feeling pulses in the radial wrists. It is one of the four major assessments in TCM along with inspections (general observation of patient), auscultation (listening), olfaction (smelling) and questioning (obtaining medical history and symptoms). "Pulsenergy" is a term my mentor Jimmy Wei Chang, PhD, LAc coined for this technique which can take years to master. It is considered the most difficult tool in a TCM practitioner's tool box, but it is essential for prescribing Chinese herbs.



Some TCM practitioners can diagnose wellness through in-depth pulse analysis.

In western medicine, it is considered somewhat subjective, but there are some similarities. Allopathic medicine palpates the pulse to measure the rate of your heart beat - normal, fast (tachycardia), slow (bradycardia) - as well as the strength of the vessel, the feel (hard or soft) and the change in rhythm or intensity (weak or pounding). TCM takes that much further and is an intricate system of touch and sensations. The pulse is not only taken at the styloid process of the right and left radial wrists, but may also be checked in the neck, carotid artery, ankles and medial aspect of the elbow to confirm other findings.

A complete pulse requires the following:

**JUMP:** Pulsation aspect of what makes up a pulse (velocity, strength, resistance, amplitude).

**SHAPE:** Structural aspects of what makes up a pulse (straight, convex and concave pulses).

**LEVEL:** The depth of which the pulse is felt (superficial, deep).

After feeling and palpating these areas, a practitioner checks for dark, purple, red or green veins in the wrists, forearms or elbow crease to check for blood stagnation and or deficiency. Considering a patient's age, sex, medical history, etc., we also check blood pressure and analyze according to the eight principles (excess, deficiency, heat/cold, etc.).

Here are examples of findings and treatments that follow: If systolic and diastolic are high (i.e. 140/90), this indicated excess heat, and acupuncture would focus on cooling the heat and calming the sympathetic nervous system. If systolic is low (>95) and diastolic high (>60) with a slow heart rate, it indicates deficiency and cold. Treatment focuses on warming the body through foods, herbs and external heat. Other measurements may indicate blood stagnation, yin deficiency, anemia, dehydration and more.

Seasons also intertwine in diagnosis. For example, fall tends to be dry in the five elements, and it is time of metal, thus people may suffer from dry coughs, sadness and elimination issues this time of year. Try to eat foods that generate fluid and moisten the lungs such as peas, apples, snow ear fungus, persimmons, figs, pumpkins, nuts and seeds. One of my favorite fall lung recipes is to core a pear, fill it with fresh ginger and honey and boil in water. Drink the liquid and eat the pear! If you have a cough, you may add a few apricot kernels to dry phlegm.

If you're not feeling up to par, it is always a good idea to check your blood pressure and consult with your health care practitioner. The diagnosis and solutions may be simpler than you think!

Dr. 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).

## Life is Full of Obstacle Illusions

By Dipika Patel, CHHC

"The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge."  
 - Author and Historian Daniel J. Boorstin

In recent months, I discovered an underlying notion that I need to be heard by my family. An old belief of not being heard nor valued by my mother and father was reawakened from within, triggered by a recent, innocent conversation with my father that went from 0 - 60 in no time flat. My emotions bubbled, and I saw a glimpse of that 16-year-old little me. I felt disappointment, hurt and the feeling of not being valued, as well as my own judgements, which I did not like. I observed myself pushing old illusions onto my father in the current moment, making matters hurt even deeper from within. The illusion became stronger, and my world did not feel safe anymore.

I stopped myself and took in a slow deep breath, pausing to see what I was feeling so deeply. This allowed me to feel what had arisen from within. At that moment, I had an epiphany: the conversation I was having with my father was only him sharing his side of "his-tory." I had nothing to defend, nothing to hold onto. I had done deep work, yet I was trapped by my own illusions that something else was happening in that moment. It was the feeling of an old hurt, like it was happening all over again.

I reminded myself to practice self-care. In the past, these situations had led to self-destruction; through the distortion, I created my own obstacles in life - an illusion that it is about me, when in fact it has nothing to do with me at all. The epiphany gave me hope and healing on a deeper level. I was feeling everything with a newfound intensity. I found the ability to share and acknowledge the illusion and now see the truth which previously I was unable to see.

The illusion starts in the mind. It is a difficult reality to accept at times, as the story our minds create is often inaccurate and can create obstacles in our life. Your reality is the way you choose to see it, feel it and live it.

As I live through the process, I ask myself these questions when obstacles arise. You may find them helpful by following them in sequence: What am I making this situation mean? Why are my thoughts going there? What reality am I creating in this moment with that awareness? The final, simple question I ask myself is, what am I making this obstacle illusion mean about me?

There are so many ways to see life. Give yourself the gift of precious time to value and see that you are living a human experience and remind yourself to return to love.

Dipika is a crossroads specialist and a holistic health and 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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## Adequate Daily Protein is Vital to Longevity

By Regina Basterrechea, MS, FNLP



Discussions around muscle usually revolve around "fitness" level and not health. However, muscle is vital for survival and built and maintained by amino acids from protein, so nutrition and muscle maintenance are worth a discussion.

Up until our mid-30s, hormones accelerate our growth. Yet as we age, we rely more on amino acids and require significantly more of them. Due to this shift, we notice changes like more fat around our waist or increased blood pressure unless we change our eating habits.

Amino acids are extracted from animal proteins more efficiently than from plant sources. Plants use amino acids for structural support intertwined with fiber, making them less efficiently absorbed (95% absorption for animal protein vs. 60-70% for plant sources). Therefore, we need to eat more plant protein than animal to meet our daily amino acid requirements.

Our bodies have specific requirements for nine essential amino acids. Muscle is the primary site of carbohydrate and fat metabolism to produce energy to move, however, many lesser-known metabolic roles require amino acids and increase our needs. Donald Layman, PhD, a biochemist and international protein expert, states, "Each amino acid has one or more additional metabolic roles, and the success of these roles depends on consuming more protein than the minimum recommended dietary allowance (RDA). Some of these include the need for the amino acid arginine to produce nitric oxide to regulate blood pressure, methionine to create creatine that regulates muscle energy, size and strength and leucine to build muscle."

Based on his research and that of others, Dr. Layman recommends that the dietary protein requirement necessary to optimize the metabolic roles associated with each amino acid is approximately 1.6 grams/kilogram body weight (0.72 grams/pound) or twice the minimum RDA of 0.8grams/kilogram (0.36grams/pound).<sup>1</sup>

While we sleep, we lose muscle to supply amino acids to vital organs. To stop this process, the first meal of the day for adults age 35+ must contain at least 3 grams of the amino acid Leucine found in ~30 grams of protein. One cup of Greek yogurt, ½ cup of fruit, 2 tablespoons of almonds and a tablespoon of hemp seeds, or a protein shake with 23 grams of undenatured whey, or 30 grams of pea protein, meet this requirement.

Get started by calculating and do your best to ingest your daily protein gram goal, especially the initial 30 in the morning. Most adults need 90-160 grams daily, depending on body weight. Analyze your body composition using a scale that will give you a baseline of how much lean muscle you have, often labeled as FFM or Fat Free Mass, and check for changes. Meeting our daily amino acid requirements is a challenge. We all have unique needs, so make gradual, deliberate adjustments and keep a journal to ensure the changes work for you.

As adults, acute periods of illness, injury, or prolonged bedrest cause steep declines in skeletal muscle that are difficult to rebuild, making it crucial that we maintain what we have. Muscle is a metabolic organ that, when trained and maintained, gives you the confidence and independence to rebound from whatever life throws at you.

Regina Basterrechea is a functional nutrition and lifestyle practitioner and can be reached at (760) 799.6550. For an individualized protein goal, visit the tools section of Dr. Layman's site at [www.metabolicsTransformation.com](http://www.metabolicsTransformation.com).

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## CBN: The Sleep Inducing Cannabinoid

By Lauren Del Sarto

Sleep can be challenging at any age, but an estimated 40-70% of older adults have chronic sleep issues.<sup>1</sup> Busy mind, fluctuating hormones, medical conditions, pain and stress may be to blame, and those suffering have usually tried an array of sleep aids, including me.

My symptoms may sound familiar: night sweats, need to urinate, busy brain. I prefer natural products; however, valerian root and melatonin have not worked well. Magnesium does help, and I take 800mg of magnesium glycinate most nights, but sometimes I need more.

In the medical marijuana field, there is a new star touted as a very effective sleep aid. It's not CBD or THC, but CBN (cannabinol).

CBN is one of over 100 cannabinoids found in cannabis plants, as are THC and CBD. These cannabinoids interact with our body's endocannabinoid system and can influence the biochemical and physiological balance.<sup>2</sup> While THC is known for its psychoactive properties, CBD and CBN are non-psychoactive and lauded for their therapeutic benefits. CBD has proven beneficial in treating anxiety, depression and pain and is FDA approved for use in treating epilepsy.<sup>3</sup> Studies on CBN are in the infancy stage, but show promise in reducing symptoms of glaucoma, relieving muscle pain<sup>4</sup> and inducing more restful sleep. A study published this year by the Salk Institute found that CBN also protects neurons from oxidative stress and cell death, demonstrating potential for treating age-related neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.<sup>5</sup>

CBN forms when THC degrades due to exposure to heat, air and/or light,<sup>3</sup> but it does not retain the properties of THC that get you high. "At this point, CBN is the most

sedative, non-psychoactive cannabinoid that is currently in production," says Declan Reilly, general manager of operations at Bulldog Cannabis. "CBN helps you get past the initial sleep stages (N1-N3) and into REM sleep where your body is repairing itself, and your relaxed mind is doing what it should to help you get the rest you need."

While there are products containing only CBN (most derived from hemp), the majority do contain some THC for effectiveness. "The benefit of taking any form of cannabinoid in correlation to THC is that the presence of the THC activates more of the cannabinoid receptors throughout your body," explains Reilly. "This creates more open spaces active to receiving the CBN or CBD."

CBN products include edibles, oils, tinctures and more, and Reilly says customers of all ages are seeking them. "Younger clients are usually looking for something to quiet their brain, while many older clients are looking for products that also help with pain which is keeping them awake." For pain caused by arthritis or inflammation, he recommends products with CBD in addition to THC and CBN.

Finding what works best for you sometimes requires experimentation. I found an effective CBN/THC product and started with 5mg working my way up to the recommended 10mg dose. Within 30 minutes it induces sleepiness and a one-glass-of-wine style buzz. I fall right to sleep and if I wake, go right back to sleep. No grogginess in the morning, only relief at my restful slumber.

As always, we recommend checking with your health care practitioner before starting any new supplement or medication.

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

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## The Elemental Structure of Humans and Earth

By Candice Nicole

Have you ever stopped to think how much the composition of the human body and planet earth are the same? This realization gives deeper meaning to the phrase "you are what you eat." Fruits and vegetables grown in earth's bountiful soil are merely the method of delivering the many elements, minerals and microbes our bodies need to thrive and survive.

There are over 120 elements that make up the earth, many in minute traces. Approximately 20 are found in the human body; they make up our cells, DNA, organs and tissue. Approximately 98% of our bodies are comprised of six elements: calcium, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and phosphorus.

Many ancient practices, including Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine, teach that the human body also shares five fundamental elements of nature with our planet: earth, water, fire, air and space (ether). These five elements are believed to be the building blocks of the human system and by purifying and balancing them, we can transform the body towards ultimate wellbeing.

The five fundamental elements each have specific jobs in our body and differ in proportions: approximately 72% water, 12% earth, 6% air, 4% fire and 6% space. Maintaining this balance results in optimal wellbeing, while imbalance can result in disease as such:

**Air (6%)** is responsible for all movement including expansion, contraction, vibration and suppression. Imbalance of "air" element leads to skin dryness, blood pressure issues, bloating, constipation, dry coughs, lethargy, lung disorders, insomnia, muscular spasms and depression to name a few.

**Earth (12%)** forms solid structures such as teeth, nails, bones, muscles, skin, tissues and hair and gives strength and structure to the body. Imbalance of "earth" appears as a general weakness

in the body from loss of calcium in bones, obesity, cholesterol, weight gain, muscular diseases and more.

**Fire (4%)** forms hunger, thirst, sleep, vision and complexion of skin. Imbalance of "fire" appears as fever, skin diseases, inflammation, increased coldness or heat in the body, excessive sweating, hyper acidity, slow digestion and absorption of nutrients, toxicity and diabetes.

**Space (6%)** is the place where everything happens. In its most subtle form, it is the place before everything happens. Balancing the space element can offer your highest self-healing powers. The qualities of space reflect stillness: it lacks movement of wind and cold; it lacks heat/fire and dryness; it lacks moistness of water and light because it lacks the weight of earth. It is the place that is nowhere, so it is expansive, pervasive and has no center. Imbalance in "space" appears in the body as thyroid disorders, throat problems, speech disorders, epilepsy, madness and ear diseases to name a few.

**Water (72%)** forms saliva, urine, semen, blood and sweat. An imbalance of "water" element appears as excess mucus, a cold, sinusitis, swelling of glands, edema of tissues and blood thinning or clotting.

A central way to balance air, earth, fire, space and water inside the body is to practice yoga regularly. "Bhuta Shuddhi" is a yoga practice designed specifically to help purify internal elements. Another way is through healthy nutrition to ensure you receive the vital elements, minerals and microbes our planet has to offer.

Candice Nicole is a health advocate and founder of HUmineral food derived mineral nutrients. She can be reached at [info@humineral.com](mailto:info@humineral.com) or (888)765.0087. For more information visit [www.HUmineral.com](http://www.HUmineral.com).

Sources available upon request.





## Naturopathic Medical Residencies

By Sonja Fung, ND

Naturopathic doctors are trained at four-year, post-graduate, accredited medical institutions. In addition to a standard medical curriculum, a naturopathic doctor (ND) is required to complete four years of training in holistic and nontoxic approaches to treatment with a strong emphasis on disease prevention, such as nutrition and lifestyle modifications and in-depth lab testing and diagnosis.

Naturopathic doctors learn how to integrate the principles of naturopathic medicine into clinical practice through training that consists of a minimum of 4,100 hours, of which no less than 2,500 hours are academic training and 1,200 hours are supervised clinical training. They take rigorous national board exams (NPLEX) to be licensed by a state or jurisdiction as a primary care physician. Additionally, NDs are required 60 hours in continuing education to be eligible for each license renewal.

After licensure, NDs can choose to apply for the small number of residency positions available; typically a 1-2 year family medicine training at approved residency clinic sites. However, due to the lack of funding, there is a shortage of available residency positions, so most graduates either join an existing practice or start their own.

As Live Well Clinic has grown over the past 14 years, it was time to further support the naturopathic profession by bringing on residents. Through a partnership with INM Residency Consortium, our clinic applied and was approved as a residency site. We started accepting resident doctors in 2018. Because naturopathic residencies are not funded by Medicare/Medicaid dollars like conventional medical residencies, this limits availability of these positions, as many small clinics are not able to afford the cost associated with training and paying a resident.

Live Well Clinic recognizes the importance of supporting the next generation of naturopathic doctors through residency opportunities. The clinic is honored to be the first ND residency site in the Coachella Valley, giving new medical students opportunity to further their training as primary care doctors in our community.

This year, we welcome first-year resident Delaney Quick, ND who received her BS in biology at the University of Washington and a doctorate of naturopathic medicine at Bastyr University San Diego. Dr. Quick is excited to start her medical career in the Coachella Valley where she grew up visiting her grandmother and great-grandmother and has always felt at home. She started her journey as a patient of a naturopathic doctor and became enthralled with the simple, yet powerful healing tools utilized in the field, such as targeted treatment plans based on tangible lab results, diet and lifestyle interventions and the healing power of nature.

Quick's specific areas of interest are women's health and hormone management, metabolic conditions and prevention of their sequelae, mental and emotional wellness and opportunities for patient education and motivation. She looks forward to expanding her knowledge in integrative oncology and regenerative medicine. She is an avid hiker, has completed the 220-mile John Muir Trail in Eastern Sierra Nevada and has hiked extensively throughout Patagonia and New Zealand.

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

Sources available upon request.



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## Holiday Dreams of Sugar Plum Fairies

By Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

It is the holiday season once again. How might visions of sugar plum fairies dancing in our dreams during a blinding snowstorm be a healthy omen? Are gifts beneath an evergreen tree covered in icicles a precognitive message? And, what could the colors red, blue and green mean in your dream?

Dreams are often our subconscious speaking to us with signs, symbols, colors and numbers. Look at a dream's play on words for its underlying message. What is a sugar-plum fairy and is there a play on words?

A **sugar plum** is a round piece of candy made of boiled sugar, referred to in Old English as "sweetmeat."<sup>1</sup> It is anything and everything sweet and wonderful in the world, and the reason choreographer Lev Ivanov chose sugar plum fairies for Tchaikovsky's music in The Nutcracker Suite's Waltz of the Snowflakes.<sup>2</sup> Sugar plum is also a term of endearment like a sweetheart or darling.<sup>3</sup> According to Webster's Dictionary, a fairy is a small mythical being of folklore with magical powers,<sup>4</sup> like Peter Pan's Tinker Bell. So a sugar plum fairy might be considered a tiny flitting sweetheart.

**The snowstorm.** Water in dreams signifies purity, and snow is the change to a new beginning after hardship.<sup>5</sup> A snowstorm is water drops transformed into frozen crystal snowflakes dancing in the wind. Perhaps a dream about a snowstorm is a spiritual awakening of growth from pure inner awareness.

**The colors.** Our subconscious minds use color to express symbolic emotions, while our waking minds use it to convey meaning. Colors in dreams, like colorful ribbons, have strong meanings. Colorfully wrapped gifts may represent possibilities and happiness. Most holiday trees are evergreens, and icicles, like snowflakes, are transformed from water. Dreams of gifts under the Christmas tree just may be a positive omen for pure joy.

An evergreen is ever-alive, another play on words for "Tree of Life." As it does in our waking world, the color green symbolizes life in dreams, while red represents power and vitality, like healthy lifeblood. Although the color blue can express sadness (i.e. "She was blue"), it is also synonymous with soothing peace and tranquility. In dreams, blue may indicate times of rest. Winter, the hibernation season, is often depicted in shades of blue.

So during this holiday season, what might a dream of sugar plum fairies dancing through a blinding snowstorm around gifts wrapped in red ribbons beneath an evergreen tree covered in blue icicles mean? The fairy may symbolize a new relationship. It could point to someone or something endearing or magical dancing into your life in the form of "sweetmeat." (Oh, you must love that play on words.) Perhaps the dream is a positive omen of life's transformation, of endless possibilities for love that will gladden you during a time of peace and tranquility followed by health and vitality wrapped in beautiful red ribbons.

May all your holiday dreams be filled with sugar plum fairies!

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos of Rancho Mirage is a survivor, author, dream expert, speaker, TV/radio host/producer and has been featured on Dr. Oz and The Doctors. Her new book *Dreams That Can Save Your Life* is available now. For more information, visit [www.KathleenOKeefeKanavos.com](http://www.KathleenOKeefeKanavos.com).

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## LDL: Not Always Bad and HDL: Not Always Good

By Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH

A lipid panel has become a standard test in a health check-up. It measures total cholesterol, LDL lipoprotein, HDL lipoprotein and triglycerides. LDL is usually thought of as “bad” cholesterol and HDL is “good” cholesterol; triglycerides are circulating fat particles. Generally speaking, an abnormally high cholesterol is associated with heart attack and stroke. But let's take a closer look...

Lipoproteins are carrier molecules that take cholesterol to body tissues. Our brain is made up of mostly cholesterol. LDL are “low density” molecules and HDL are “high density” molecules. HDL and LDL make up the total cholesterol number, and the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL is useful at estimating risk; a ratio less than four (for the average American) is low risk and a ratio less than three is very low risk. The numbers associated with LDL and HDL are not the actual numbers of lipoprotein particles, but a measure of the volume these lipoproteins take up.

For most people, this simplistic interpretation holds up at estimating risk from high cholesterol. But there are nuances worth knowing about.

Women, especially before menopause, have ample estrogen that raises both total cholesterol and HDL. In women with a total cholesterol above the normal limit of 200, yet with a higher HDL ratio, may have a lower risk of heart disease (as HDL is the “good” cholesterol). I often see a woman with a total cholesterol of 240 including an HDL of 80 be healthier than her male counterpart with a total cholesterol of 180 and an HDL of 40. The woman has a ratio of three (low risk) while the man has a ratio of four and a half (high risk). Low body fat, especially in the abdomen, is also associated with healthier lipids.

In order to better understand the lipid panel, advanced lipid testing such as an NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) is recommended to provide the particle number and size of both LDL and HDL lipoproteins. Small LDL particles are more inflammatory causing artery plaque (atherosclerosis) compared with large LDL particles. So, small LDL will give a larger particle number than large LDL particles as there are more of them circulating.

The opposite is true for HDL lipoproteins. You want a higher particle number to see if your high HDL level is good or bad. Research has shown the people with heart disease may have a high HDL reading, but actually do not have a healthy high particle number.

To summarize, a high LDL cholesterol reading is usually bad, but not if your particles are large. A high HDL reading is usually good, but not if your particles are small.

To avoid this confusion, eat a healthy diet with lots of vegetables and keep lean and fit. Your lipid numbers will likely be healthy even if you or your family have some genetic risk of heart disease. Get advanced lipid testing if you want to get clarity about your cholesterol numbers.

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

## Taken Out of ConTEXT

By Amy Austin PsyD, LMFT

Texting. The good, bad and the really ugly. Ever had this digital exchange?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU THINK I'M YELLING. I'M JUST TRYING TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOU. WHAT DID I SAY TO MAKE YOU THINK I'M ANGRY? IF IT'S ABOUT LAST WEEK, I'M SORRY. HOW MANY TIMES CAN I APOLOGIZE? LEAVE IT TO YOU TO STAY MAD OVER THE TINIEST THINGS. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FORGIVE AND FORGET? Oops. I had the caps on. Sorrrry.

Or this:

“Are you there yet? I heard on the news there was an accident and traffic's bumper to bumper.” No response.

“Babe, are you okay?” Again, no reply.

“Did something happen? You should have been there already.” Still no reply.

Becoming frantic, he texts again. “WHAT HAPPENED????!!!”

Now he's all worked up and imagining the worst when several minutes later he gets a response, “Sorry, I left my phone in my car. I'm good.”

Or you've spent quite some time compiling a carefully thought-out text that is important to you and the response you receive is, “K.” Times like these really make me miss my princess phone.

Texting is fast, easy and often very satisfying, like placing a check mark on your to-do list when completing a task. As a text flies out into cyber-oblivion, I often get a feeling of contentment with one less thing in my brain on which to ruminate.

Most will agree, some texting applications have definitely improved our lives, such as communication with doctor's offices and those that offer support for at-risk or suicidal individuals in times of crisis. Texting may also allow introverted people an emotionally safe milieu for increased and more optimal communications, so long as it is used correctly.

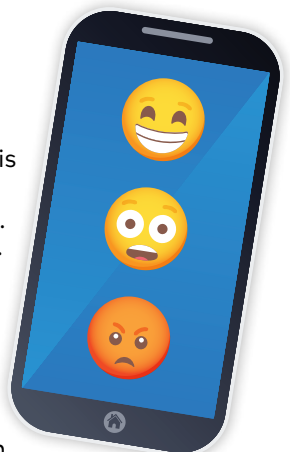
But haven't we lost something? Sherry Turkle, author of *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* posts, “The problem isn't that people have this new, interesting, intimate way of touching base... the trouble is what happens to face-to-face conversation if your phone is always there.” Because texting reduces conversation to words or photos on a screen that creates a brief, stilted fragmental communication pattern, no amount of emojis or exclamation points can make up for tone, effective listening, visual cues (like reading body language) and good old-fashioned in-person contact.

Texting is not a friend to our reactive and/or impulsive side. Without taking a more “thought-full” stance – taking a moment to pause, breathe and reflect on what we are saying and how our words might affect someone – we could reactively press send and the message is out there. As philosopher Bahya Ibn Pakuda said, “Days are scrolls. Write thereon only what you would like to have remembered about you.”

It is a widely known fact that the Lubavitcher Rebbe never called out to his wife when he wanted to communicate something. Rather, he would approach her and speak with her directly. Can you imagine the positive impact on all of us from this one small act?

Like the 70's AT&T jingle said, “Reach out and touch someone.” Put down your phone and touch someone's heart with loving words that come straight from your mouth.

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.





# Hyaluronic Acid for Interstitial Cystitis

By Betty McDonald, LAc

Hyaluronic acid (sodium hyaluronate) is a gooey, clear substance produced by the body and found in all connective tissue. It is well-known as a humectant that attracts and binds to moisture; one molecule can absorb up to 1,000 times its weight in water. It is an all-star in the beauty industry as applying it to skin plumps the tissue, making the skin appear younger and softer. Hyaluronic acid injections are also used in patients with osteoarthritis that no longer respond to pain medication. In both cases, it has been FDA approved.

But there is another lesser-known use for hyaluronic acid that is just as important (if not more). In the treatment for interstitial cystitis, hyaluronic acid is injected into the bladder to restore the glycosaminoglycans (GAG) layer which has been destroyed by infection or inflammation. When administered as such, patients can recover more quickly. A healthy GAG layer is very important because it inhibits the ability of bacteria to adhere to the bladder wall reducing the number of chronic urinary infections. Not surprisingly, doctors currently view interstitial cystitis as an incurable but manageable condition.

Interstitial cystitis is a defect in the protective lining of the bladder which allows toxic substances to irritate the bladder wall. It can be hereditary or caused by an autoimmune reaction. Those who suffer are plagued with pelvic pain, urinary urgency and insomnia caused by nocturia (awaking to urinate during the night). Affecting men and women of all ages, the condition not only impacts the patient's quality of life but can also lead to loss of work.

Hyaluronic acid is approved for use in the treatment of interstitial cystitis in Canada and England but not in the United States. Efforts have been made by major medical institutions like Michigan School of Medicine and University of California Irvine to use intravesical bladder instillations of heparin and chondroitin sulfate (two other components of the bladder wall), but use of hyaluronic acid is yet to be approved.

Thankfully, Americans who suffer from this debilitating condition can gain access to this precious substance in Mexico via American urologist Alejandro Lira Dale, MD who has been treating patients with much success. Fifty CC bottles of hyaluronic acid (Cystistat) are flown from Ireland to Mexico City and onto Tijuana. Patients are taught to use a tiny pediatric feeding catheter to instill the hyaluronic acid and retain it for a couple of hours. This is done every two weeks for three or four months, then twice a month and then finally, once a month. At \$250 a bottle (same price as the U.K.), it is quite expensive, however, it is a game changer for those suffering from interstitial cystitis and chronic UTIs.

Replenishing the GAG layer in the bladder is a cornerstone in the therapy of interstitial cystitis and also proven to be an effective treatment for overactive bladder, radiation cystitis and recurrent urinary infections. It should also be noted that the use of intravesical substances (placed in the bladder) extends to antibiotics as well, eliminating side effects and systemic toxicity.

Solutions to difficult medical issues are not dependent on international boundaries, and consumers can go wherever answers can be found.

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

Sources available upon request.



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## YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®

### Harvest the Season

Merriam-Webster's definition of harvest is to gather, remove or extract a crop or living cell. In the world of finance, it's the season to review your potential tax liability for the current year and harvest unrealized losses to offset any realized gains.

**Realized vs. unrealized.** A realized gain (or loss) occurs when an asset or investment position is sold. Based on the cost basis (cost of the investment), if the investment grew in value, you incurred a gain. If the investment declined in value, it's considered a loss. An unrealized gain or loss, however, is the value of an investment position on the date you are referencing, such as a monthly, quarterly or annual statement. The value of the investments at month's end will reflect whether your account grew in value or lost value. Since the investment has not yet been sold, a real gain or loss has not occurred nor been realized.

If an investment is held less than one year, it is a short-term gain or loss. If the investment is held longer than one year, it is considered long-term. Short-term losses and gains are netted against each other as are long-term. If there are both short- and long-term losses, the short-term losses are used first up to a limit.

Tax loss harvesting occurs when you deliberately sell investments that have declined in value from the date of purchase to offset a gain from another investment incurred in the same year. If the overall loss is greater than the gain, the balance, up to \$3,000 (married filing jointly), may be used to offset personal income or may be carried over into future years to help offset realized gains.

**Wash Sale.** If an investment is earmarked to be sold at a loss, the taxpayer may not buy or exchange a like position 30 days prior to the sale, nor can that investment or like investment be purchased 30 days after the sale or the IRS will disallow the loss. This is called the wash sale rule. If a wash sale occurs, the loss will not be allowed and will be added back to the cost basis of the new position; therefore, missing the opportunity to realize the loss for that particular year. It may be used in subsequent years if the opportunity is presented.

Tax loss harvesting may be a good strategy, however, it is important to work with both your tax and investment professionals to ensure it is executed appropriately to achieve the desired outcome.

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



*This is the time of year to review your tax liability.*

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## Do's and Don'ts of Medicare

By Randy Foulds

Whether you are turning 65 soon or already enrolled, there are some simple points to remember as you plan your Medicare coverage.

**Turning 65?** DO set up an online account with SSA.GOV. This will be your "mySSA" account. Register at least four months before your 65th birthday. Your Medicare effective date is the first day of your birthday month, unless you were born on the 1st, then the effective date is the month prior.

DO decide whether you will be accepting your Social Security benefits at age 65 or waiting until "full retirement age" or beyond. If you accept your Social Security benefit, you will also be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B. If not, you will need to proactively enroll in Medicare Parts A and B by logging in to your mySSA account and submitting your Medicare application online.

Do NOT assume your Medicare benefits are in place until you receive a Medicare benefit award letter or your Medicare card, showing both Part A and Part B effective dates. If you have any doubt, call or visit the Social Security Administration.

DO research the long term impact of your initial enrollment selection. What you choose for your coverage may severely limit your choices in the future. Start researching the different plans available, Supplements and Advantage plans, at least three months before your Medicare effective date.

Do NOT be overly concerned about Medicare Supplement insurer brand names as coverage type is far more important. Supplement plans are standardized by Medicare,

and there is little difference in plans between different insurers. Shop for the best rate and service, not brand name.

Do NOT focus on the ancillary benefits of an Advantage plan. While those may be attractive, be sure you know the doctor group you will be limited to, the referral process and prescription drug coverage. To most, these elements are far more important than discount gym memberships.

**Already enrolled in Medicare?** DO read the Annual Notice of Change you will receive from your drug plan or Advantage plan. It will highlight premium changes, coverage changes and may even tell you that your plan is being discontinued.

Do NOT assume that a benefit or drug coverage that your plan offered this year will remain the same next year.

DO use the Medicare.gov website or a licensed agent to review your plan options for next year.

Do NOT give your Medicare ID number to anyone over the phone, unless it is someone you personally know. There are many scam calls this time of year.

Remember, Medicare Supplements are NOT part of the Medicare Enrollment period. A Supplement is a private, secondary plan, and it's usually best to review that type of plan during your birthday window, a 60-day period following your birthday which allows you to make changes to your supplement coverage without having to pass any health screening.

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

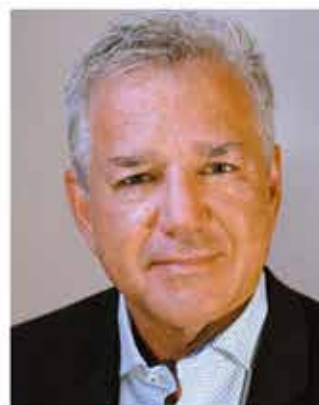
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## ACV Opens Screening Center for Memory Issues

*Compliments of Alzheimers Coachella Valley*

As a 501(c)3 organization, Alzheimers Coachella Valley (ACV) is dedicated to providing charitable services and support for persons with impaired cognition and their caregivers. It is in keeping with this mission that ACV is excited to announce the opening of a screening center for Alzheimer's and other dementias on November 1.

Staffed by a geriatric nurse practitioner and a master's prepared social worker, the ACV Screening Center helps promote early detection by sharing the patient's evidenced-based findings with their health care professionals to more effectively engage in the diagnoses process. This time-saving step provides primary care physicians, in particular, with information necessary to expedite a proper plan of care for their patients with cognitive impairment. In addition, the information collected from the assessment process will help determine how ACV can continue to serve as a resource for the person with dementia, their caregiver and family.

Using the information gathered from the patient and their caregiver, screening center staff will assess where modifiable factors can be changed or enhanced to benefit the patient and the caregiver; timely referrals for further diagnostics, follow-up medical care and treatment options will also be offered. Located in the ACV office in Palm Desert, the screening center features a welcoming environment with a separate entrance. Services are available on Fridays by appointment.

ACV was founded in 2017 with a focus on assisting Coachella Valley residents with cognitive impairment and their families by providing resources, up-to-date information, and most importantly, socialization. Cognitive impairment

includes all areas of dementia, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's dementia disease, vascular dementia and various other diagnoses. Ongoing programs and services support all those affected by helping to build needed skills, learning how to manage behaviors and preparing for the future. Many of the programs involve both the one who is diagnosed as well as their caregiver/family member. All programs are available at no charge, including the services provided by the ACV Screening Center.

The screening center is just one of the many programs offered by ACV. Other free services include:

- Support groups (online and in-person)
- 8-week social and educational program for both caregivers and the loved one with dementia
- Club Journey, a weekly program that includes music, exercise, games, conversation and lunch
- Breathing Space, a scholarship program for families to temporarily hire a licensed caregiver for their loved one with dementia
- Dementia caregiver training taught by a registered nurse where professional caregivers learn best practices to care for clients with dementia, while earning continuing education credits
- Meaningful Conversations, a two-part series that helps families, friends and caregivers prepare for positive conversational experiences, which helps to alleviate stress for both the person with the diagnosis and the visitor

*Alzheimers Coachella Valley is a community resource for dementia support and education. For more information call (760) 776.3100. [www.cvalzheimers.org](http://www.cvalzheimers.org).*

## We're Where We're Supposed to Be

*By Susan Murphy, PhD*

It was fall and my life was filled with chaos and fatigue. I was involved in building a medical center with constant demands from the corporate office, colleagues, employees and physicians. I had a busy social life, busy community service life and was desperate to find some peace. I felt like a 24/7 gas station filling everyone else's empty tank with my energy while my own tank was empty.

It was time for a getaway to center myself and nurture my spirit, so I registered for a weekend retreat - three days and two nights - and couldn't wait.

Upon arrival, I discovered I was to have a roommate (Darn, I didn't ask enough questions before registering!). A roommate was not what I needed, but I thought, "OK, I'll be pleasant to this person and there will still be a lot of time for peace, quiet and solitude."

I walked in silence to my room, took a deep breath, put my key in the lock and opened the door. My roommate had not yet arrived. However, within five minutes, someone burst into the room with, "Hi, I'm Cheryl. We're going to have a great time this weekend!" For three days and two nights, Cheryl kept talking and talking, barely taking a breath between sentences. No wonder she complained of a headache. She shadowed me wherever I wandered on the beautiful rose-covered grounds.

I came to learn she was getting a divorce and had two kids, one with Down syndrome. She sobbed and cried desperately, and my heart went out to her, but I needed some relief too! Didn't God understand that?

The retreat ended on Sunday evening, and I returned home - un-rested, un-nurtured, un-centered and even more stressed than before I left.

Three days later, Cheryl called my office at the medical center. "I have a malignant brain tumor," she blurted out when I picked up the phone. She went on to say, "I feel so close to you" and thanked me over and over for my kindness at the retreat.

At that moment, I was saddened and ashamed. My behavior may have been kind, but my thoughts certainly had not. Suddenly it all made sense - her headache, her lack of control, her fear, her tears, her clinginess. Why was I supposed to be at that retreat on that weekend? It was for Cheryl. And it was for me. Although my life continued to be chaotic, my own "stuff" didn't seem nearly as awful or overwhelming.

I called Cheryl twice a week after that - just a 5-minute call - for about a year. Then she told me that her treatments were over, and she was much better. I stopped calling and stopped thinking about her.

About two years later, I was having dinner with a friend at a restaurant. A lovely woman came to our table and asked if I was Susan. When I said "yes," she hugged me tightly and said, "I'm Cheryl. I'm cured, I'm alive and I'm happy...and you are the angel who helped me. Thank you."

I'm convinced it was no coincidence that Cheryl was assigned to my room that weekend. I was recruited as an unwilling volunteer "angel" to help Cheryl through a terrifying, painful and lonely ordeal. But the more I think about Cheryl, the more I realize how much I benefitted from befriending her. It opened my heart, helped me put my own problems in perspective and reminded me that everyone with whom I come in contact needs love and compassion. Oftentimes, when we're chosen to be the "angel," we receive more than the person we're helping.

*Dr. Susan 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).*



## Do you have CONCERNS?

The ACV Screening Center will offer no-cost screenings to those concerned with cognitive impairment or memory loss. Results will be reviewed with clients and if desired, with caregivers and referring physicians. ACV will provide families with the education and resources applicable to their lifestyle.

- Self-referral or Physician-referral
- Staffed by MSW and Geriatric Nurse Practitioner
- By Appointment
- No fee/No Insurance Needed
- Opening November 2022



(760) 776-3100 | [cvalzheimers.org](http://cvalzheimers.org)

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SCAN ME



## (( LET'S INTERACT ))

A SPEAKER SERIES

Mark your calendar for the first Thursday of each month to gather with the most amazing women of the Coachella Valley.

**December 1 – Dream Big. Sparkle More.**

Be inspired by *Desert Health* Founder **Lauren Del Sarto**. Nicole Trigg will emcee. Catering by Il Corso. Host location and sponsor: El Paseo Jewelers.



**EL PASEO JEWELERS**

**January 5 – Business Mindset**

Gain insight from three accomplished leaders: SunLine Transit CEO/General Manager **Lauren Skiver**, Desert Sun CEO/Executive Editor **Julie Makinen** and Fidelis Health Group COO and HR Advantage Founder **Norma Castaneda**. Held at the Classic Club.

**February 2 – The Power of Love**

Enhance social and professional relationships with award-winning author **Diana von Welanetz Wentworth** and cyber-dating expert **Julie Spira**. Held at the Classic Club. Sponsor Desert Care Network.





**WLF**  
Women Leaders Forum  
of the Coachella Valley

All events are from 5:30-7:30 pm and include dinner and a glass of wine.

**\$35 for members • \$55 for non-members**

For tickets and information, visit [wlfdesert.org](http://wlfdesert.org)

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Women Who Rule**  
May 5, 2023

*Connect • Engage • Imagine*

## Learn, Support, Gather and Play!

Desert Health® is proud to support these community events.

**NOV. 1-DEC. 13 • Your Best Health Now**

Join us!

Desert Health proudly presents this OLLI series exploring the variety of natural and allopathic health care options. Learn about functional medicine from Joseph Scherger, MD of Restore Health; naturopathic medicine from Optimal Health's Shannon Sinsheimer, ND; traditional Chinese medicine from AcQpoint Wellness Center's Diane Sheppard, PhD, LAC; and brain health from Jeralyn Brossfield, MD of Braincare Performance Center. Tamara Porter, DNP of My Health.My Advocate will discuss navigating the medical health care system, and Financial Advisor Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF® of Beacon Pointe Advisors will present financial health through the decades. Live and Zoom classes offered over six weeks; Tuesdays 1-3pm. Information/registration: [www.csusb.edu/olli](http://www.csusb.edu/olli); (909) 537.8270.



**NOV. 3**  
**WLF's Let's Interact: Give Thanks by Giving Back**

Join local personality Brooke Beare for an evening of gratitude and giving. Learn about the valley's many non-profit organizations and how you can give back. Tickets include dinner and a glass of wine. Classic Club 5:30-7:30p. \$25 for WLF members/\$35 for non-members; [www.WLFDesert.org](http://www.WLFDesert.org).

**NOV. 5**  
**YMCA of the Desert's 35th Annual Hoedown at Sundown**

Grab your hat and boots for an evening of old-fashioned comradery coupled with an elegant dinner, cocktails and silent and live auctions. Proceeds benefit the Y's many youth programs. Classic Club 5-9p. \$150; (760) 341.9622, [www.ymcaofthedesert.org](http://www.ymcaofthedesert.org).

**NOV. 11**  
**6th Annual VIMY Awards and WineLover's Auction**

Presented by Desert Care Network, this signature event features a wine reception and dinner to benefit Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine. Silent and live auctions feature unique wines, travel, entertainment and more. Thunderbird Country Club 5p. \$250; [www.wineloversauction.com](http://www.wineloversauction.com).

**DEC. 1**  
**WLF's Let's Interact: Dream Big. Sparkle More.**

Bring your ideas to life with inspiration from *Desert Health* Founder Lauren Del Sarto whose many accomplishments started simply as a passionate dream. Nicole Trigg to emcee with catering by Il Corso. Held at El Paseo Jewelers 5:30-7:30p. \$25 for WLF members/\$35 for non-members; [www.WLFDesert.org](http://www.WLFDesert.org).

**JAN. 5**  
**WLF's Let's Interact: Business Mindset**

Start the New Year with motivation from SunLine Transit CEO/General Manager Lauren Kiver, Desert Sun CEO/Executive Editor Julie Makinen and Fidelis Health Group COO and HR Advantage Founder Norma A. Castaneda. Classic Club 5:30-7:30p. \$25 for WLF members/\$35 for non-members; [www.WLFDesert.org](http://www.WLFDesert.org).

**JAN. 16-22**  
**The American Express**

Valley's PGA tournament returns to PGA WEST and La Quinta Country Club for three days of world-class golf, festive food and beverages and concerts by Gwen Stefani (Friday) and Darius Rucker (Saturday). Tickets start at \$50. [www.TheAmexGolf.com](http://www.TheAmexGolf.com).

# Celebrating 15 Years!



## DESERT WOMAN'S SHOW

A Marlo Productions Event

EMPOWER EDUCATE ENTERTAIN

Saturday, February 18th 10 am - 4 pm

presented by:  DESERT VEIN AND VASCULAR INSTITUTE

Tickets & Information: [DesertWomansShow.com](http://DesertWomansShow.com)

## Desert Woman's Show Celebrates 15 Years

One of our valley's favorite events returns Saturday, February 18, to the Classic Club in Palm Desert. A full day of shopping, fashion shows, guest speakers, chef demonstrations and the ever-popular Greater Palm Springs Food & Wine are sure to delight men and women alike.

Presented by Desert Vein & Vascular Institute, the festive event has expanded and will offer more shopping from local boutiques, three fashion shows on the main stage, wellness experts, fitness demonstrations and an eye-opening panel discussion, All About Cannabis presented by The Lighthouse Dispensary.

**Fashion forward.** The Fashion Marketplace will feature Chrissy's, Stephan Cori, Modern Oasis, Cambria Court Designs, City Lites, The Shops on San Pablo, Coco Rose, Gaby L's and Macy's, to name a few.

**Sip and savor.** The Greater Palm Spring Food & Wine tasting has been expanded to the golf course and will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. offering a cornucopia of tasty food, wine, craft beer, spirits, non-alcohol beverages and live music sponsored by buzzbox premium cocktails. Culinary presentations include the Wildest Wine Tasting featuring Napa favorites from Wildest Restaurant & Bar which will also be sampling savory 'plant-based' delights. Other valley notables include Mastro's Steakhouse, Wally's Desert Turtle, Stuft Pizza Bar & Grill, Pueblo Viejo Grill, Hangar 24 Brewery, Quintessential Wines, Fresh Juice Bar, Duckhorn Wines, Coachella Valley Coffee, Riboli Wines, buzzbox and more.

**Anyone for golf?** Last year's inaugural charity golf tournament raised \$28,000 for The Unforgettables Foundation, dedicated to helping families after the loss of a child. This year's tournament, open to men and women, features a hole-in-one contest and the chance to win a new Mercedes-Benz! The Saturday tournament is led by LPGA's Sydnee Michaels and includes lunch and a cocktail awards celebration. Golfers can shop and sip before the day is done! Registration is \$225/individual or \$800/foursome.

**Free tickets!** The first 500 to register online will receive their general admission ticket free courtesy of returning ticket sponsor Desert Care Network.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Desert Vein & Vascular Institute along with Desert Care Network, Hightower Financial, The Lighthouse Dispensary, *Desert Golf & Tennis Magazine*, *CV Weekly* and *Desert Health*. We hope to see you there!

For tickets and more information visit [www.DesertWomansShow.com](http://www.DesertWomansShow.com) or contact Diana Marlo at [Diana@MarloProductions.com](mailto:Diana@MarloProductions.com).





# Eat, Drink and Be Healthy

Substitutes you'll savor by Lauren Del Sarto

## Healthy Ho Ho Holiday Appetizers

You're invited to a holiday gathering and want to bring an easy awe-inspiring appetizer. You know most offerings will be more decadent than diet-conscious and are trying to stay on track through this busy social season. It's time to get creative!

If you can dream up a holiday scene, you can build it with fruits and veggies.

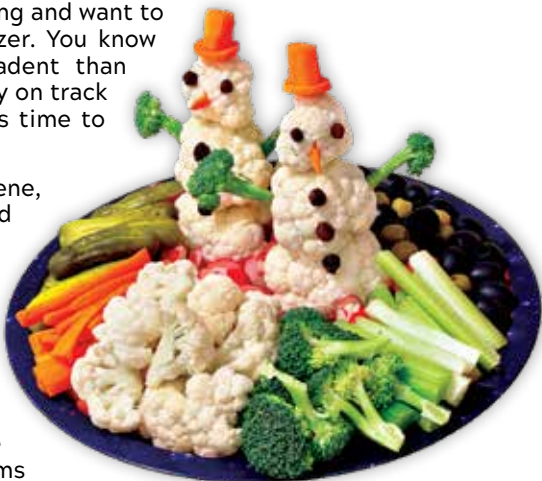
Consider colors that represent the season. For Thanksgiving, natural hues like dried fruits, apricots, nuts, seeds and sweet dates portray fall's harvest complemented by rich colored cranberries, blueberries and purple grapes. Honey comb and natural jams are delightful toppers, while whole walnuts and cinnamon sticks help set the stage for the "oohhs and aahhs."

Raw vegetables make a perfect fan-tailed turkey. Half circle of cucumbers, carrots, peppers and broccoli create the multi-colored tail topped with an apple body, walnut beak and peppercorn eyes. A more sophisticated option? Vegetables lightly grilled with salt, pepper and olive oil, served chilled.

Christmas colors call for strawberry, banana Santas, cauliflower snowmen and zucchini, broccoli or kiwi Christmas trees. Tri-color bell peppers and cranberries dazzle as décor, while rosemary makes a wonderful alpine blooming with tomatoes and cheese.

For individual bites, consider thinly sliced zucchini as a durable wrap for just about anything - from goat cheese and flavored sprouts, to red pepper strips and herbs. Garnish with red currants or cranberries for that extra holiday touch.

Staying on track starts at home. Sharing your nutritious lifestyle with friends is one creative mind away!



## Apple Caramel Tart

This simple treat from Young on Raw Food's Mimi Kirk is a satisfying alternative to sugary, high-carb holiday pies. No cooking and easy prep makes these four-inch delights perfect in a pinch and enjoyed as a single serving or shared with a friend.



### The crust:

- ½ cup raw almonds
- ½ cup Medjool dates
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Pulse almonds in a food processor. Add dates and vanilla and pulse until mixture sticks together when pinched between your fingers. Add a few drops of water if necessary. Press crust into 4-inch removable tart pan or ramekin and place in freezer.

### The filling:

- 1 heaping tablespoon almond butter
- 1 splash pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon liquid coconut oil
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 large apple, peeled (optional) and finely diced (save a few slices to garnish)

Whisk all ingredients together in a bowl until smooth. Place diced apple into the bowl and toss to coat. Remove tart pan from freezer and spoon in filling. Place in fridge.

### Caramel topping (honestly, it tastes like caramel!):

- 2 teaspoons liquid coconut
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Whisk together until smooth. Spoon mixture on top of refrigerated tart. Garnish with thinly sliced apples and a dash of cinnamon and refrigerate. Wait until all elements are chilled and remove tart pan to serve or enjoy straight from ramekin.

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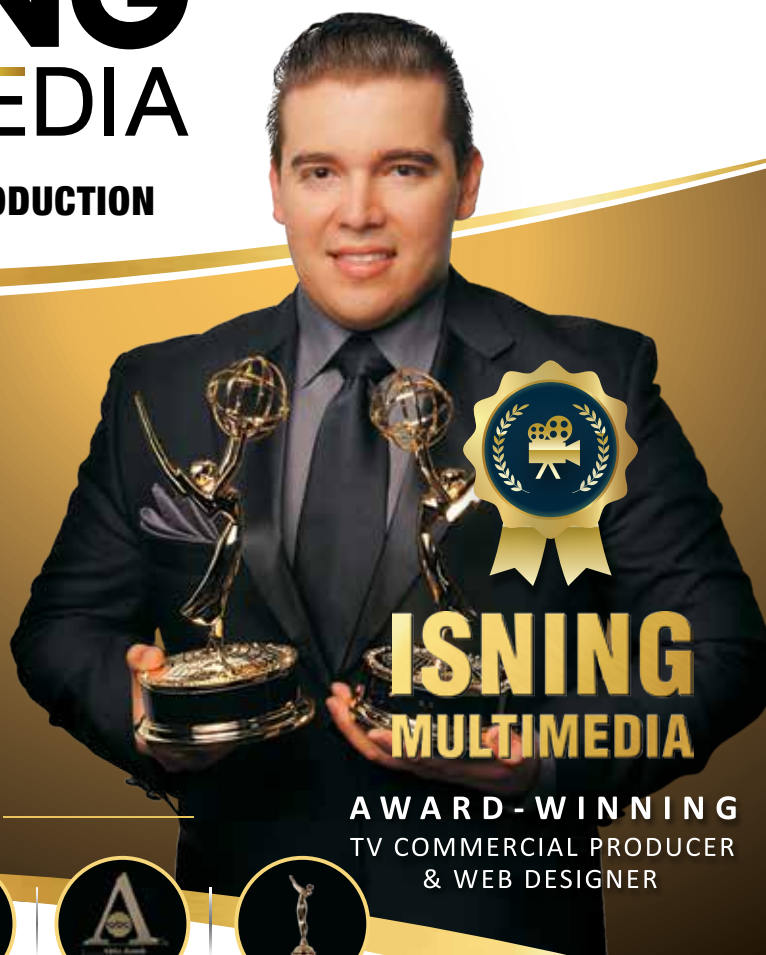
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