

# THE EDEEN



NOVEMBER 2022

## WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM

THE BODY AND SOUL OF THE  
FEMININE REVOLUTION  
IN IRAN

By Maryam  
Sayyad

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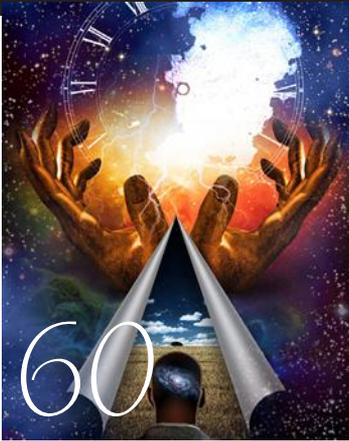
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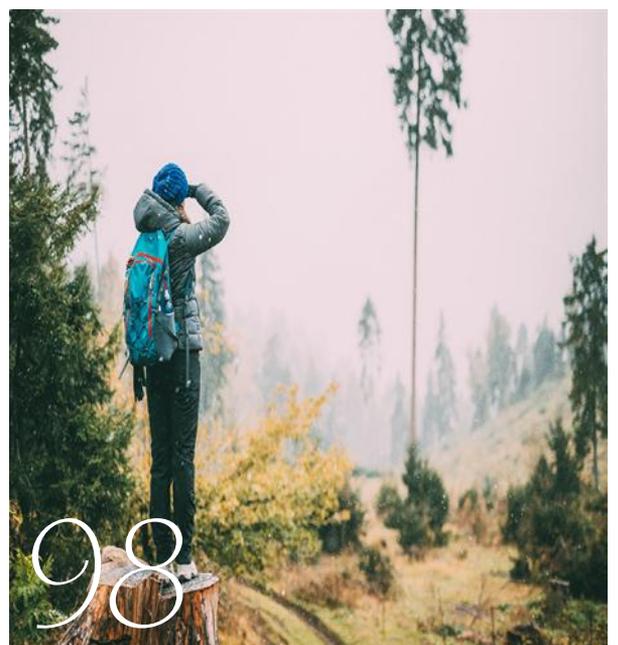
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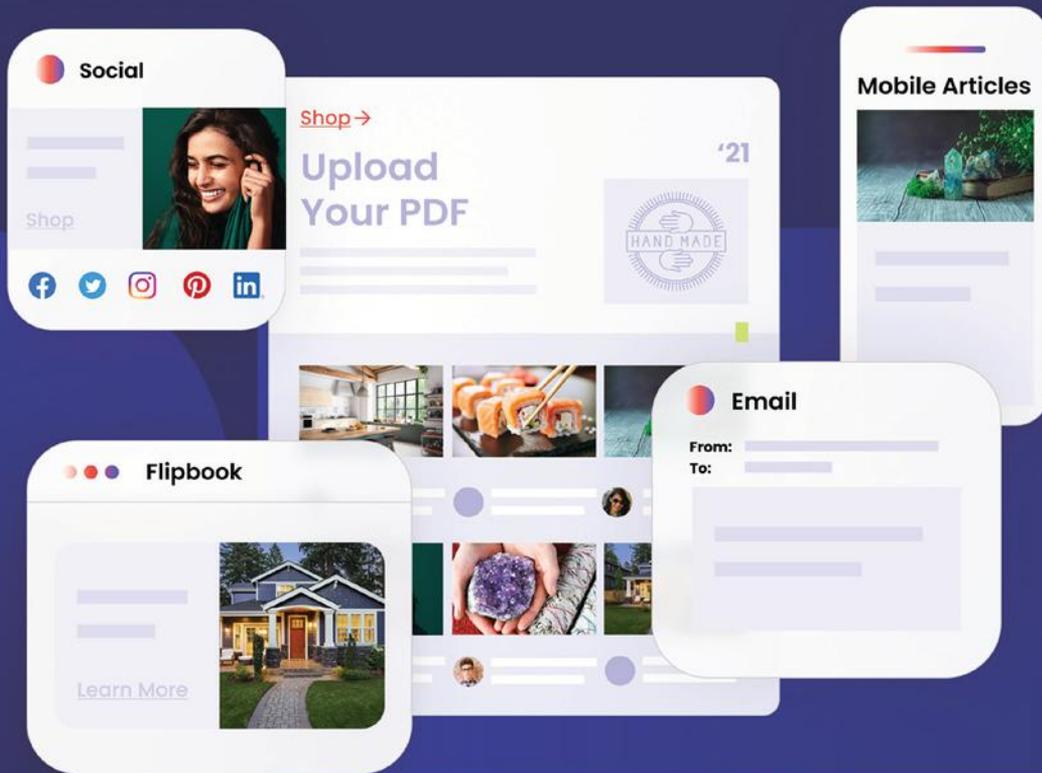
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# THE LIMINAL ODYSSEY

By Sande Hart

**T**he first time I heard the word liminal was from author Jean Shinoda Bolen, who describes it by its Latin root, "threshold," the space in-between crisis and action. In that space, we can interpret, examine, dream, and imagine possibilities for new creativity that is so necessary right now to move on from old problems, beliefs, and myths of who we are. The space in-between is the demarcation place of a paradigm shift. It occurs after the separation of what was and before what is and can determine what will be. However, one need not experience a crisis to drop into the liminal space. In fact, I find opportunities all day long.

Tokens, secret doorways, and pearls of wisdom fall at our feet on our life's journey. Yet, if we dismiss them as mundane or inconsequential, we may be forced onto a sometimes-arduous path until we can no longer step over them because they are ours to pick up. In a Liminal Odyssey, those gems become life-sized, and we can no longer ignore them.

The origin of the game Chutes and Ladders dates back to the 2nd Century AD, named Moksha Patam, translating to Snakes and Ladders. It is a game of chance where we find ourselves facing an opportunity to take a path to a higher level of awareness and meaning, or we may find ourselves on a seemingly easy

slide downhill but missing a potentially exciting game. Unlike this game of chance, we have a choice, and we can cultivate the skills and habits to choose the ladder with every breath. My personal ladders elevated me into hearty adventures that led me to a fortune at the bottom of a box of cigarettes and a Holocaust death camp.

According to the theories of The Hero's Journey, founded on the philosophies of Carl Jung and popularized by Joseph Campbell and Walt Disney, we move through a variety of stages, like building blocks, one stage preceding the other, in a seemingly predictable series of events and an obstacle course of rivers to traverse and tall buildings to climb, and sometimes, doing all of that in a hailstorm.

Just look at any fantasy movie. We can count on obvious and camouflaged wizards to point us in the right direction and always a number of antagonists and lovable yet mischievous pixies to trip us up. We experience a series of challenges and grow with more character and our true archetypal identity. Only after we have slain the dragons and learned from our stumbles do we get the happy ending, or not, but regardless, we made it to the end of our story. The plots are the same and apply whether our life's a mystery, comedy, action thriller, or courtroom drama.

*Imagine the outcome when we grow collectively by way of individual contribution into that cultural liminal space. It is crowd-sourcing change at its best and is the only way that is sustainable and resilient for this next era we are moving into, with or without us.*

These Journeys are illustrated in a straight line, a circle, or even a spiral, but respectfully, both the Hero's and Heroine's Journeys missed the mark for me. The same may be true for you. Indeed, these well-documented and challenged philosophies have merit. Both are necessary, and yet there's so much more, which is where we enter The Liminal Odyssey. It's time for a new template, a new model, and new solutions to old problems.

Yet, the Hero's Journey is important to understand so we can identify the signposts, as if they are county line markers confirming our coordinates in life, but they do not always show up in a linear fashion as found when looking down on a map. This is where we need a new structure, or better yet, drop the confines of what's predictable and start looking up for what wants to emerge as the new archetypal being co-creating a new myth. It is birthing in each of us right now.

Being willing to read the map to know where we are is affirming and can also be a lifeline. But, like any map, it never shows us the culture of the area we may be passing through. We could assume, based on topography, structures, and outward appearances, that it is definitely a place we want to race through or aspire to live in one day, but what if we were to miss a hidden goldmine or priceless piece of porcelain? It's up to us to pull into those spaces, walk up to a door and peek inside the cupboards.

Joseph's greatest advice is to follow your bliss. This was the very guidance I went looking for when I found The Hero's Journey years ago. As I looked back and charted my own journey thus far, I noticed patterns in

synchronicities that were evidence of something mystical, magical, and the stuff of which myths are made.

These moments of chance were far from the mundane experience I discounted them to be at the time. I discovered that those moments of insignificance were really in-significance.

]Indra's Net (Indra is King of the Heavens in Buddhist philosophy and derived from the Sanskrit word *indrajwala*) is of infinite proportions spanning the vastness of the universe. Comprised of universal geometric patterns, each meeting point is supported by a pearl of wisdom, a life lesson, and a luminous reflection. Its grace suspends in the space of our lives, and its threads, our storylines, are connected by droplets of nutrient-rich pools for us to reflect upon.

My greatest fear has been to live a safe and mundane life, failing to leave behind meaningful pearls in the shape of stories, accomplishments, and wild adventures my grandchildren can brag about, definitely be inspired by, and hopefully learn from.



Photo by jakkajee8082/AdobeStock

Maybe my stories will appear in their lives as a pearl on their net.

What if we expect each mundane situation or environment to be nothing more than an invitation, a challenge to be stretched beyond its outward appearance through simple curiosity that may create a pearl? What if we did not ignore the catalyzing sense of creativity, spontaneity, and action we feel in our body when that moment comes? Or maybe it just deserves a little gratitude to alchemize the gift it is. What matters most is paying attention to the Odyssey's gifts.

It is in that attention that we can begin to connect the threads and pearls of those experiences, yet the patterns will surprise you. The storyline of one's life often zigs and zags, seemingly with no sense of connectedness. That is, until we listen closely to the soundtrack in the background and follow the threads of the clues and tokens of wisdom along the path. Without fail, the threads connect. When the storyline is examined more closely, one will find a magical mystery tour complete with all the fixings of adventure, mayhem, trauma-induced growth, joy, heartache, and immeasurable blessings. It's messy. And therein lies the environment of *The Liminal Odyssey* (as well as any good Pixar film.)

Required for admission into that place is to surrender to the gifted treasures we were entrusted to nurture and protect with our body and our lives and not take a second of it for granted. Therefore, we must trust; just as a caterpillar trusts, it's time to cocoon with no expectation or promise of what's on the other side. Only then can she emerge in her highest and most glorious potential. The very act of struggling to climb out of her cocoon gives her

the authentic strength and power to do her butterfly work in the world. She must go through the process herself. Yet, unlike the journey of a caterpillar to butterfly, where no one can help her or she will die, we thrive with the support of our allies, those we can see and many we cannot.

We were all born with a life force. The invisible hand instructs our lungs to breathe us and our hearts to beat. It instilled the awareness that it was time for the butterfly to come out of her womb and spread her wings. It is in constant motion and manifests in a potentially adventurous journey, but only if the mind's eyes are looking carefully and we are willing to accept challenges and, when necessary, get out of our way, taking time to see the treasures and potentiality. Then we can say with authority that we have accepted the challenge and are on *The Liminal Odyssey*.

The adventure of the *Liminal Odyssey* is like the weaving of a web, like an Indra's Net. When we step back, we see a mandala with a sacred center. But look closer, and we will see the back and forth, the sacred geometry, and the support system of each new connection point. Each point is dependent upon the whole and required for a maximized lived life where nothing is left unopened, unexamined, or not stretched to its full potential. That point (or pearl) is where the nectar is. We know that each pearl is a bonding agent of stories, allies, and priceless lessons. It's where we grow with more wisdom to strengthen our path onward.

For me, accepting the challenge is not an option; it is a holy responsibility.

# The Liminal Odyssey

THE ALCHEMICAL POWER OF THE SPACES IN-BETWEEN



Foreword by Dr. Nina Meyerhof

Sande Hart



**Sande Hart** is an award-winning leader in the fields of women's empowerment and interfaith community building. She founded the women's interfaith international grassroots organization *S.A.R.A.H. (The Spiritual And Religious Alliance for Hope)* the morning of 9/11, an instinct to gather women of diverse faiths to protect all that they consider sacred, now in its 20th year. She founded and served as director of Charter for Compassion's Women and Girls sector, served as chair for the United Religions Initiative for North America and serves on the Women's Task Force for The Parliament of World's Religions. Hart is also the founder of *Compassionate California*. She is currently being inducted into the Women's Oral History Library of Claremont Colleges. For more information, please visit <https://www.liminalodyssey.com/>.

# THE BODY AND SOUL OF THE FEMININE REVOLUTION IN IRAN

By Maryam Sayyad

Iran is undergoing a fundamental and multi-layered transformation. One layer is political, and the other is mythological. One is a physical event, and the other is an event in the Iranian soul.

The Body of the Iranian Revolution: Let's not mince words: Iran is in the midst of a revolution, and women lead this revolution. No leader has yet emerged to provide a manifesto for the precise goals of the revolution. But much can be deciphered from contextualizing the symbols, slogans, actions, and images that emerge organically.

By removing their veils in public, Iranian women and girls are speaking out against compulsory *hijab*, a

state-imposed uniform for women based on the state's interpretation of Islamic ideology. It consists of a tunic to cover curves, a veil to cover the hair, and thick stockings or similar covering for the legs. But this is only the surface of their statement. The women say infinitely more in symbolic language. To remove one's hijab at this particular moment in Iran is to denounce not only compulsory hijab but, by extension, compulsory religion. Given that Iran is a religious dictatorship or theocracy, religion is compulsory. In other words, the government's interpretation of Islamic law is the state's law. And therefore, to reject compulsory religion is to reject the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is to revolt against the government.



Photo by Ali Karimboroujeni

The hijab is, unarguably, the most visible symbol of Iran's theocracy. So essential is it to the government that when the current president, Ebrahim Raisi, began a campaign of renewing Iran's commitment to fundamentalist Islamic ideology earlier this year, he immediately instituted stricter hijab rules and declared a new holiday devoted to the hijab. July 12 is now the National Day of Hijab and Chastity.

The stated intent of the hijab is to prevent tempting sexual desire in men. But, to the Western sensibility, it is clear that the law legitimizes a rape culture mentality. It overtly, officially, and legally blames women for the actions of men. Indeed when Khamenei felt it his duty to comment on the MeToo movement in the US, he said that what happened to those women was their fault because they didn't cover themselves. The fact is much of Iran has been under the spell of the old myth that views women as foul temptresses. And this fact is not lost on Iranian women and girls whose sensibilities are no different from ours in the West. This is especially true of those born in the 1980s, the generation vehemently protesting and being punished and even killed for their views **right now**.

The veil is not just a piece of cloth. Removing it is not just so women can show their hair—although it is their right to do so. Some argue it is the main pillar of the theocracy - remove your hijab, and the edifice will fall. Refuse the hijab, and you take authority out of the hands of the government. Removing one's hijab is a potent revolutionary move. To twirl it in the air is to take the dictator lightly, to laugh at him. To hang it on the end of a stick is to wave a flag of personal sovereignty. To throw it into the fire is to ritually enact the end of the regime, and to dance while it burns is to celebrate. Women lead this revolution because it is women who must take the powerful first step.



*How did the country formerly known as Iran become the Islamic Republic?*

The theocrats came to power following the revolution of 1978-79, when Marxists joined with Islamists to overthrow Iran's Shah (king), effectively ending a parliamentary monarchy. After an interim attempt at secular democracy, a referendum was called. The Islamists declared victory and immediately took all the power positions, casting off even the Marxists with whom they had joined forces. The revolution was immediately dubbed the Islamic revolution, and Iran's name was changed to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus began a now 43-year-old theocratic reign, rife with implications that are only today becoming apparent to the rest of the world. Many of those who participated in the 1978 revolution lived to regret their participation, even men and women who had earlier welcomed an Islamic government in the name of freedom from authoritarianism. Theirs are among the voices calling for an end to the tyrannous regime they unwittingly unleashed.



*We desire a significant change politically, economically, and ecologically but also culturally, philosophically—and mythologically. We are screaming for new gods.*

## *The main slogan of this revolution is a mantra of emancipation: "Woman, Life, Freedom."*

*Who is "the dictator"?*

The first "Supreme Leader" of the Islamic Republic was Ruhollah Khomeini, the cleric who seeded revolution from exile. While living in Iraq and then France, he voiced his objections about the Iranian government; foremost among them was that the Shah had expanded women's rights. In other words, he rode in on a flying carpet of misogyny. It is difficult to say how modern intellectual women who supported Khomeini overlooked this significant detail or were caught off-guard when one discriminatory law after another was instituted against them. By the time they protested, it was too late. As soon as they took power, the theocrats repealed the Family Protection Act of 1967 and 1975, which guaranteed women's rights in marriage. Since its repeal, Iranian women no longer have the right to divorce or child custody. The legal marriage age for girls is now nine. Compulsory hijab was introduced into the culture slowly before becoming a law six years after the revolution. The new patriarchs took misogyny to new heights and have been having a field day since.

Ali Khamenei is the second and current "supreme leader." When protesters scream for the dictator's death, some certainly want him executed for his many crimes. But the chant is mainly symbolic. The death of the dictator means the end of this dictatorial regime. Full stop. Slogans calling for someone's death are disturbing (for many of us, myself included) and resonate badly in Western ears. However, death of the old and birth of the new is the precise formula for transformation and regeneration. In European literature, the death of the old king and the coronation of the new regenerates the wasteland. Indeed, the Iranian land *has* been laid to waste on multiple levels, including the most literal. This government lacks prop-

er environmental management and imprisons and executes environmentalists even as the country runs out of drinking water. Co-founder of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Kavous Seyed Emami, was killed in prison in 2018. His colleague Morad Tahbaz and several others remain in prison on charges of espionage and "collaborating with the enemy state of the United States."

*The Fire This Time*

Dictatorships are pressure chambers. This is not the first time Iranians have exploded under pressure. Protests have sprung up continuously from the day the regime took over for causes ranging from women's rights, as noted above, to lack of drinking water. The last large-scale uprising was in 2009. Though dubbed the Green Revolution, it wasn't exactly a revolution. 2009 was an election year. Protestors maintained that the conservative sitting president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had committed election fraud and stolen the presidency from reformists. The stated goal of that movement was reform, not regime change. The Green movement was organized, centralized, had identifiable leaders, and asked for concessions from the government. They were peaceful, yet the government crushed the protests with all the murderous rage of a betrayed dictator. Fifteen hundred people were executed, and many more were arrested, tortured, and remain in prison. The 2019 protests were again crushed. The government first shut down the internet, then proceeded to kill hundreds and arrest many more. Iran's Evin prison is filled with political prisoners.

This time, though still unarmed, the protestors are less peaceful. Instead, they are angry, more passionate, and more courageous than ever—given they have learned just how ruthless their government is towards dissidents

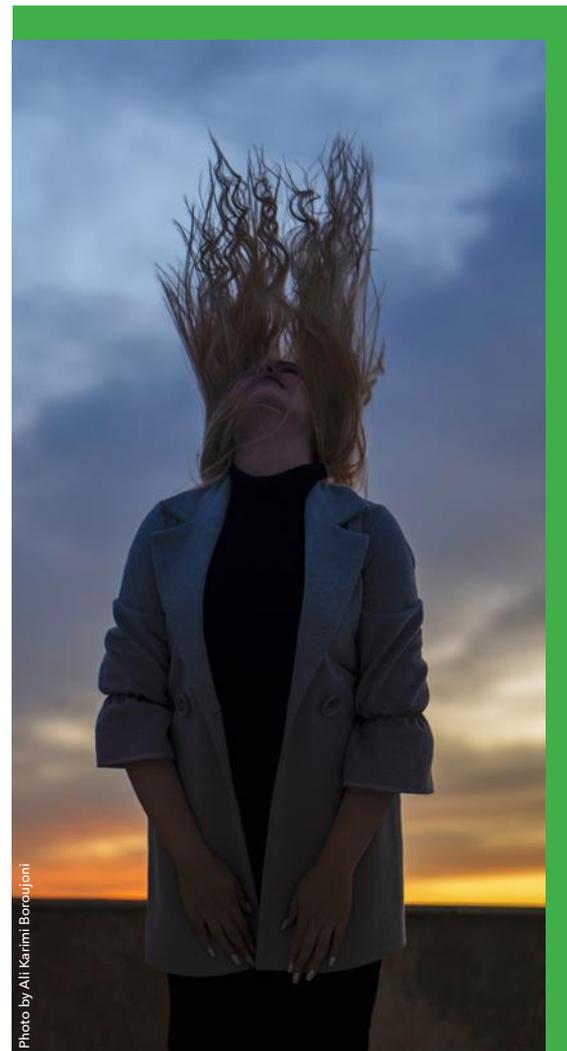


Photo by Ali Karimi Beroujeni

and what punishment awaits them should they get caught or their cause fail. This time, they don't seem open to reform. When they chant "Mullah, get lost," they no longer beg the clerics in government for a crust of freedom. When they chant "death to the dictator" and "death to the Islamic Republic," they intend to topple them off the throne. The main slogan of this revolution is a mantra of emancipation: "Woman, Life, Freedom." This mantra is the well-known slogan of the Kurds, an ethnic group in Iran who have never accepted the authority of this religious dictatorship or stopped fighting for their rights.

Once again, the government is responding violently to the protests - killing, beating, arresting, and torturing as they did before. When writing this article, 24 children under 18 have lost their lives in the protests. Even though the internet was shut down days into the uprising, the government is aware that hackers have access to the internet and are showing their violence to the world. Yet crackdowns increase daily. The Islamic Republic has learned there are no serious international repercussions: not for gender apartheid, not for executing political and environmentalist prisoners, not for executing homosexuals, not for funding terrorism abroad, and not for killing protestors. This time, the international community is more enlightened and Iranian dissidents are openly promising repercussions themselves.

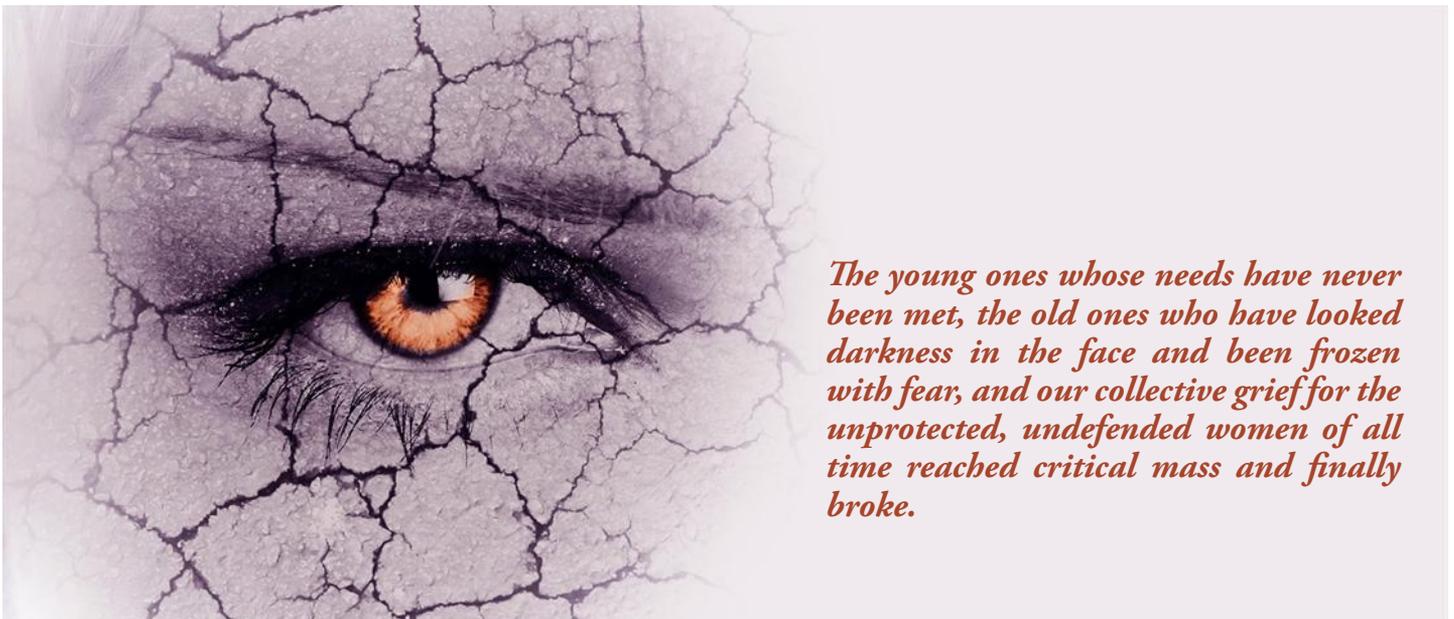
#### *Happiness this Time*

The heart of this revolution is very young. Many of those pushing it forward were born after 2000. The revolution began on the street, spread to universities, and has now spread to high schools. The youth of Iran know that it is up to them to save themselves, their country, and their future. To save themselves, they have to step over a cliff and wish.

So far, I've discussed what the revolutionaries are fighting against. Shervin Hajipour wrote a soulful and melancholy song called *Baraye*. It translates simply as "For," meaning those causes **for** which the people are fighting. His song reached 40 million views before being removed from his account. Hajipour was arrested. As a result, the song became more meaningful and more ubiquitous. It is heard in the cafes of Iran. People lip-sync, repost it on their social media accounts (when they can hack the internet), and sing along with it at protests inside and outside Iran.

"For" lists the wishes of young revolutionaries. Hajipour sourced his list of wishes from social media comments posted during the first days of the protests. The song makes no ideological statements. It is not a marching song but a lament and a prayer for the most natural and basic wants, needs, and feelings of a human being. It reveals just how unnatural life under this regime has been and how the joyful, life-generating desires of the young have been denied and vilified.

His first wish is to dance in the street, and the second is to kiss without fear (romance outside marriage is strictly prohibited by law). He goes on: we are doing it for your sister and mine, for clean air, healthy trees, animal rights, our desperate poverty, and the shame it brings. We are doing it for manhood, our country and its fertility, a real economy, peace of mind, freedom of religion, and so on. And, of course, we are doing it for *women, life, freedom, freedom, freedom!* Hajipour betrays the depth of his grief at the crescendo. When he cries "for the future," he sounds uncertain about it and has to push through. Is there a future? Is it any different than the present?



*The young ones whose needs have never been met, the old ones who have looked darkness in the face and been frozen with fear, and our collective grief for the unprotected, undefended women of all time reached critical mass and finally broke.*

*Iran's Heartbreak: Mahsa Amini*

The current protests were sparked by the death of a lovely 22-year-old Kurdish girl named Mahsa Amini. She died on September 16 in the custody of the "Morality Police." The job of the Morality Police is to cruise the streets looking for "manifestations of indecency." Amini was arrested for the indecent act of not wearing her uniform in the manner of Raisi's tightened hijab policies. The new president's efforts at promoting an even more Islamic Iran meant that—as usual—women would have to wear his belief system on their bodies or die should they resist arrest in any way, as Amini allegedly did.

Amini was arrested on September 13, entered into custody, and died three days later in a nearby hospital. Officials claimed they didn't lay a finger on her and that she died from a heart attack. But Amini's father fiercely objected to this explanation, as did the two female journalists who broke the story and the hospital nurse who took photos of Amini's bruised body, wounded head, and bloody ear. The story spread via social media, and their hearts broke when people heard about it. Their heartbreak was so profound that they risked their lives to give it expression. The Kurds were the first to step onto the streets, and Kurdish women were the first to tear off their veils and attack their hair with scissors. The shattering of hearts continued across Iran and the rest of the world, wherever Iranians live and beyond.

Horrific news comes out of Iran frequently if one is paying attention. Yet, this time, it was different. Before seeing a single image of Mahsa or the emotional protests in Iran, my own heart broke for Iran like never before. I was in the shower of my Los Angeles home on the morning of September 18 when the dam burst in me. I held my face in my hands as I wept and wept and wept. It felt as though Mahsa's death had unearthed an ancient unhealed wound hidden deep within me. I cried for the unprotected, undefended women of all time.

The journalists who reported the story were arrested, as was the nurse who took the photos. They haven't been heard from since. The rest is still unfolding. This was not the first arrest, the first death, or the first time the government covered up their murder. But it does seem to be the last straw.



Art work by 1 GoodHombre | Cloe Shade Hakakian, Photography by Niaz Parvaresh

***The woman-led revolution in Iran has a back story and many named and unnamed heroines in its lineage. Many Iranian women have long understood the impact of refusing the veil.***

The grief of those who have been scarred and starved for four decades, the young ones whose needs have never been met, the old ones who have looked darkness in the face and been frozen with fear, and our collective grief for the fun protected, undefended women of all time reached critical mass and finally broke.

#### *Our Unbreakable Heroines*

The woman-led revolution in Iran has a back story and many named and unnamed heroines in its lineage. Many Iranian women have long understood the impact of refusing the veil. In the last eight years, a number of online movements have centralized their activities.

Masih Alinejad started an online movement against compulsory hijab from her home in exile, a liberation movement she called "My Stealthy Freedom." She claims she had no intention of starting a movement when, in 2014, she posted a photo of herself joyfully running through a city street with the caption: "Every time I run in a free country and feel the wind through my hair, it reminds me of the time my hair was held hostage by the Iranian government." She went to Iran, did the same thing, and then asked others to do the same. They did. Next came the "White Wednesday" campaign in which women wearing white hijabs could now identify their co-conspirators. Alinejad's third campaign was "My Camera My Weapon," which she dubbed "our MeToo movement." Women now filmed instances of sexual or hijab-related harassment. In one video, for example, we see a woman being told by an ordinary cleric walking down the street to cover more of her hair. Outraged by his state-mandated arrogance, she yanks her veil off completely and firmly announces: "I don't want to cover my hair!" These movements were very successful, with some videos

garnering up to nine million views. Another online movement called "Girls of Revolution Street" began after Vida Movahedi posted a photo of herself on Revolution Street holding her veil at the end of a stick in December 2017. Many women followed suit on street corners around Iran, some electing to remain veiled while voicing their objection to *compulsory* hijab. When Movahedi and others were arrested, the fearless human rights lawyer Nasrin Soutoudeh risked defending many of them despite her prior arrests and prison sentences (2010-2013). She was arrested again in 2018 and sentenced to 38 years in prison for a long series of crimes. The purported crimes of espionage, violating national security, and even disparaging the Supreme Leader only earned her five years in prison, whereas defending hijab protestors earned her 10. She was sentenced for "encouraging debauchery."

The government condemned the women, called them prostitutes, arrested many, forced false confessions and professions of allegiance to the hijab, then kept them in prison. When asked how she feels about putting women in danger, Alinejad argues that Iranian women are already in danger. For example, 3.6 million women were stopped for improper hijab in a year, 18,000 were sent to court, and 40,000 of their cars were confiscated.

And it's only gotten worse. Two months before Mahsa Amini was killed, Sepideh Rashno was arrested and accused of "association and collusion to commit a crime against the country's security through communication with foreigners and propaganda activity against the Islamic Republic and encourage people to commit corruption and prostitution." She appeared on national TV on July 30, visibly shaken after days of torture, pledging her allegiance to the hijab.



***The new gods have begun to show themselves. I propose that a mythological revolution is occurring alongside the political one, albeit unconsciously.***

*It is no less than the divine feminine principle of the universe who is unveiling herself, un-tombing herself, and coming to face her foe: the enemy of woman, life, and freedom.*



Afterward, she was taken to the hospital for internal bleeding. Rashno is still in prison. Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRNA) reported that on September 26, another women's rights activist Bahar Aslani was arrested and is currently in the hospital ward of Evin Prison. And, of course, there have been a growing number of arrests, beatings, and murders of protestors since September 16. Sarina Esmailzadeh was among those beaten to death by police for removing her hijab. She was sixteen.

In addition to spreading the voice of those who object to compulsory hijab, Alinejad has given voice to mothers of those tortured and killed following the Green Revolution and for other political reasons. Because they have no voice inside Iran: "They try to silence them, but I have to say that the bravest voices you hear coming from Iran against human rights abuse are from mothers." Among them is Fatemeh Sepehri, who, while fully covered in her black hijab, wholeheartedly supports an end to compulsory hijab and criticizes the government for "taking everything away from us, leaving us with nothing!" Furthermore, she challenges any person or organization with a conscience to distance themselves from the Islamic Republic, especially its leader, Ali Khamenei.

Before an audience gathered at Stanford University in 2019, Alinejad predicted that "women would lead the next revolution." She called on "all the women in Iran to be a headache for the oppressors," to stop waiting for someone to save them and become leaders and warriors instead of victims. It appears that day has come. Women have their work cut out for them. Not only do they have to battle

the regime, but a whole culture accustomed to misogyny. The Morality Police is not alone in harassing women. Ordinary citizens—male and female—regularly order strangers to cover up and even attack them physically. The abuse of a woman's personal sovereignty extends into many homes, as does gender inequality. A boy is allowed to become a judge and president, travel alone, and attend football matches. His sister, on the other hand, is not. And he gladly accepts twice the inheritance his sisters receive! Not only have Iranian women had to claim their rights from the government, but they've also had to claim them inside the home—from their fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands. It is heartening that many fathers and brothers are now standing up for—and with—women.

#### *Unity in Diversity*

Iranians are a mixed bag like all other groups. Some are religious; many are not. While some believe this is a revolution against Islamic ideology, others maintain it is not an attack on Islam at all. I ask: is it not, at least, an attack on compulsory Islam and mixing religion with politics? Secondly, is it not a call for the current iteration of Iranian Islam to reform itself? Catholicism has reformed time and time again. There is a reason why the Pope no longer rules the European states and why the Church no longer launches inquisitions. Some clerics in Iran have intuited the need for separation and reform. On September 31, a group of seminary clerics made a statement denouncing Khamenei and distancing themselves from him. They declared that cooperation with this government is a crime against Islam, and, just like that, they stripped the government of its divine authority. Hopefully, more will follow suit.

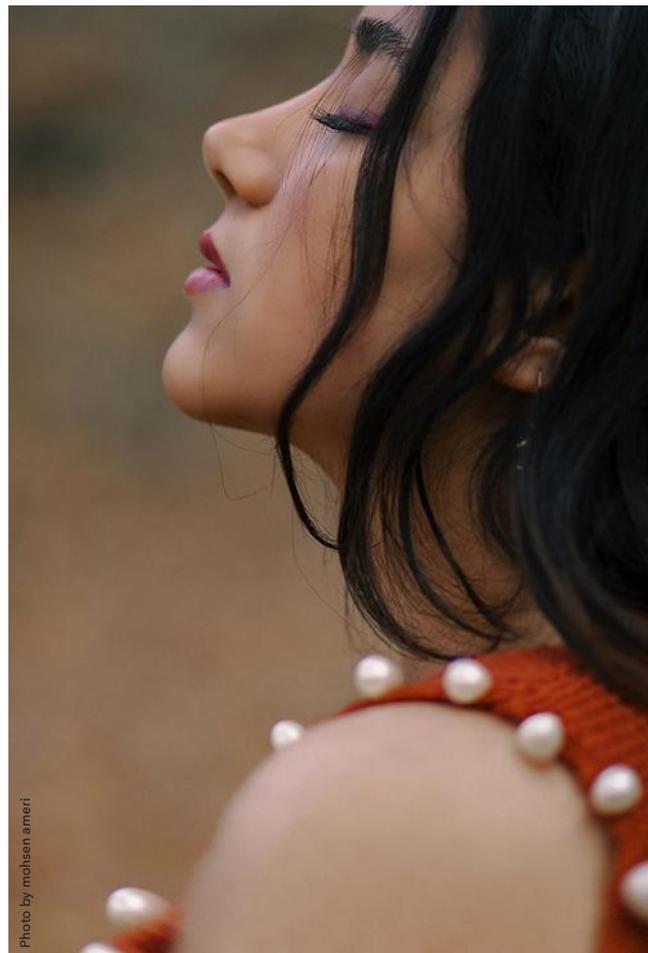


Photo by mohsen ameri



### *The Soul of this Revolution*

Iranian revolutionaries inside and outside Iran are—fists in the air, feet on the ground, hope in the heart—screaming out for the end of this dark chapter and the start of a new bright one. We desire a significant change politically, economically, and ecologically but also culturally, philosophically—and mythologically. We are screaming for new gods.

And the new gods have begun to show themselves. I propose that a mythological revolution is occurring alongside the political one, albeit unconsciously. It arises from the hidden part of the *psyche* which is the ancient Greek word for soul. This soul-level revolution is not in our hands; we are in **its** hands.

### *A Changing of the Gods*

In the last century, mythologists have been discussing a revolutionary period in world myth which took place around the start of the Iron Age (about 4000 years ago) in Mesopotamia, just west of Iran. This period witnessed a shift in the privileged deity and, therefore, in religious history when the primary god image shifted from the Earth Mother and Mother of the Universe to her conqueror, a sort of warrior god of thunderstorms and, often, a cosmic dictator. Scholars became aware of this event in the mythological record as more material became available throughout the twentieth century. It has become known in mainstream culture as the shift from *matriarchal* to *patriarchal* religion, although I would argue that this is not a precise description. The shift was not from the Mother to her Spouse/Lover. It was a shift from the Mother to her conqueror. The masculine was itself conquered by one of his

own aspects. I will use the terms *matriarchal* and *patriarchal* for the sake of continuity.

The misogyny present in Iran's cultural norms, religion, and government (though certainly not limited to Iran) is an expression of this mythic shift. The misogynist wills to conquer everything considered feminine. *The feminine* includes women, and it includes caring for children. The Earth is feminine. Nature is feminine. Imagination and art are feminine. Sensuality, beauty, and love are feminine. Wants, needs, and feelings—feminine. The feminine is the evil He must conquer. It is as if the masculine declared war on the feminine at some point, and his cosmic enmity against Her continues to live in the unconscious psyche of Iran. It is part of Iran's shadow, a psychic reality that has us in its grip.

Yet, the shadow wanted to be seen. The misogynistic shadow of Iran fully disclosed itself in its most overt expression in recent history. What rose to the surface after the Islamic revolution quickly spread across the Middle East as various fundamentalist Islamic groups came to power. I'm not surprised that the most psychotic expression of cosmic misogyny has emerged in the Taliban of Afghanistan, the country closest to Iran in both language and mythological heritage. Perhaps, it means that we must seek the medicine in this same region, the medicine that will heal the feminine and the masculine and restore their relationship.

### *When Breakfast Threatens God*

In the last few years, another discussion has gained momentum among mythologists, this time regarding the motif of the *heroine*. Pop culture is full of



female heroes—from Disney to Marvel, *Alien*, *Terminator*, and *Star Wars*, the role of warrior/savior has shifted to women. In the second week of protests, among the many actions young women have taken to transform their fate, the fate of Iran and, perhaps, the whole Middle East, if not the world, two friends simply had breakfast. They didn't carry banners or guns, shout slogans or insult anyone. They merely ate breakfast. But, they did so, baring the simple truth of who they are without veiling themselves under the state-mandated identity. One of the girls, Donya Rad, posted the photo online and was promptly arrested. If the main qualities of heroism are self-sacrifice and the courage to defend what is right, then we need look no further for real-life heroines. They are among us on this planet, somewhere south of the Caspian Sea, eating what could be their last breakfast.

In the same week, the Supreme Leader (a mythic title itself) gave an Arabic name to the act of burning the hijab: he called it *Moharebeh*. This word means "war with God." As a scholar of the gods, I have one question for the Supreme Leader: *which god exactly?*

A god who considers girls eating breakfast his enemy and who kills children for telling their elders what they need is just **one** among **many** gods. The people who are protesting on the streets—together with those who stay home and dream the same bigger dream, who hope against hope for a mythological sea-change but fear for their lives—these people do not worship the Supreme Leader's child-murdering god. Neither the Islamic clerics who advocate for separation nor devout Muslims who feel their religion has been hijacked worship the Supreme Leader's child-

devouring god. So, who exactly is his god?

Many dissidents have likened the Islamic Republic to *Zahhak*, the conqueror king from Iranian mythology whose demonic reign initiated a prolonged period of oppression in Iran. A snake grows from each of his shoulders and demands to eat a youth every night. *Zahhak* is a child-devouring demon king. Given that the word *Zahhak* is etymologically related to the word for dragon, he is a dragon figure. His Persian name *Mardush* refers to the snakes on his shoulders hence his dragon aspect. The name *Mardush* is remarkably close to the name *Marduk*. *Marduk* is the Babylonian sun god and god of thunderstorms. Like *Zahhak*, *Marduk's* animal symbol is the dragon. In Biblical Hebrew, *Marar* means to be bitter. *Dak* means oppressed. So, like *Zahhak*, he is affiliated with oppression. And he is affiliated with conquest. *Marduk* is the archetypal conqueror.

Mythologist Joseph Campbell is among the scholars who identified and detailed the shift from matriarchal to patriarchal religion in the mythological records of the ancient Near East. *Marduk* is not considered an evil figure within the Babylonian mythic complex. On the contrary, he was a heroic warrior and god of justice like *Indra* in India and *Zeus* in Greece. When placed in the larger context of myths spanning from the Neolithic Age until modernity, however, Campbell identifies *Marduk's* slaying of his grandmother *Tiamat* as the earliest surviving account of the conquest of the feminine godhead. And since that event in Babylonian myth, the feminine has been maligned in cultures influenced by the Fertile Crescent. This includes Iran and it includes the West. The feminine godhead



Photo by seban joedi



Donya Rad (R) was arrested after posting this picture of her eating breakfast in Iran without a hijab, her family said on September 30, 2022. (Twitter)



Photograph: handout

**Maryam Sayyad** is a mythologist and designer who emigrated from Tehran, Iran and lives in Los Angeles. She is a scholar, writer, lecturer, story consultant and serves as Director of Art and Education for Cross Cultural Expressions (CCE). She earned her PhD in Mythology and Depth Psychology in 2022 from Pacifica Graduate Institute.

was forced underground where she has lived in the unconscious psyche of individuals and cultures. The feminine principle of the universe is the Mother of all life. She is Life Eternal. It is laughable to think she can be killed!

Is Zahhak-Mardush (Marduk) the God of Iran's theocrats? This image of a girl standing over her Mother's tomb makes me gasp. Minoo Majidi was killed while protesting this past September, and now her daughter clutches her own hair in her left hand. She cut it off as if cutting off the head of her Mother's killer. What will come of the fury planted in the soul of this young woman? What will become of what is only the latest and most acute manifestation of the ancestral trauma in our hearts since that day long ago when the Mother of Life was declared the enemy of God?

If you see Iranians gathering in your local city, and shouting passionately at the sky, don't be afraid. Maybe join in. What we want is to defend and protect this girl. We want to embrace her and the furious girl inside ourselves. Let

her see her lion-hearted mother reflected in a new soft and sensual, laughter-loving, child-loving, nature-loving, protective god image, goddess of milk, love, and beauty. A mother goddess and lover goddess who honors the sacred eroticism that generates life and has been rising from the depth of this untiring regenerative Earth for some time now. This time in Iran. It is no less than the divine feminine principle of the universe who is unveiling herself, un-tombing herself, and coming to face her foe: the enemy of woman, life and freedom.

Special thank you to:

- Dina Morrone**
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- Maz Jobrani**
- Mary Apick**
- Banafsheh Sayyad**
- Tirdad Aghakhani**
- Marjan Neshat**
- Mehri Sahihi Modiri**

With the courtesy of copyright to all the images, we chose in this article

## Shohreh Aghdashlo



“

"Having gone through the 1979 revolution myself, I must admit what is happening in the streets of Iran nowadays resonates with me a lot. But the huge difference is that unlike today's generation of Iran, my generation was politically naive. My generation had not witnessed wars and was not familiar with their consequences. My generation, unlike today's generation, had little knowledge of politics, let alone of the political prisoners and torture chambers. This generation has witnessed them all on the internet, on television, and in the streets of Iran and can no longer tolerate the injustices. They don't underestimate the power of terror but are ready to pass the terror to gain their freedom at a high cost, to live or die for freedom."

## Mary Apick



“

"I am so proud of the young generation of Iran that have renewed the face of courage in our world. Woman. Life. Freedom! “

“

"I've always believed in and voice for equality. Specially equality for women and men in Iran. I'm a voice; you are a voice. We are strong voices together. Freedom for Iran."

“

"Freedom of thought and freedom of speech are as important to me as breathing. I left my Motherland forty-three years ago and never returned because the leaders of the Islamic Republic deny these basic rights to Iranian citizens. For the past few weeks, brave Iranian women have rekindled the desire to have those rights returned to the people. With the confidence of youth and the bravery of the righteous, these women, joined by the young men of their generation, have confronted armed soldiers and mercenaries, many giving their lives to this cause.

I hope one day, this newly aroused young generation of Iranians will find the same basic freedoms enjoyed by free people the world over. For a generation, the parents of these brave demonstrators could not even write the word Freedom, much less have freedom, lest the Islamic regime would take and break their pens!"

## Golnar Djahanbani



## Maryam Seyhoun



## Houshang Touzie



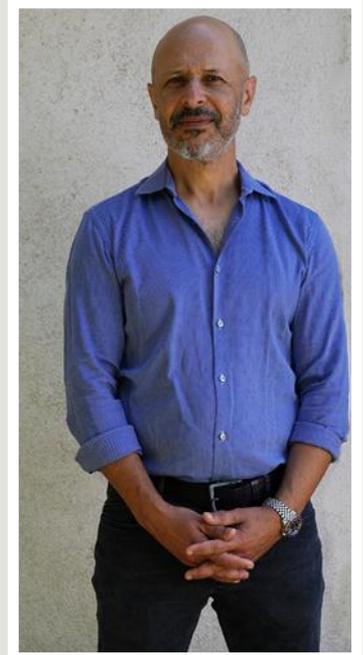
“

My heart goes out to the people of Iran. To the brave youth who are unarmed, fighting this oppressive regime. These young women and men are creating a Historic movement that should serve as a pattern and an example for those living under dictatorship.

What this current mullah's regime is doing to it's young citizens is shameful! What they've done to this country for over 40 years is shameful! And the Biden administration's current weak reaction to these atrocities committed in Iran is equally shameful!

My hope is that they realize that dictatorships only succeed when there is inaction by the rest of the world. The time to act is now!”

## Maz Jobrani



“

"The entire Iranian community around the world mourns the killing of Mahsa Amini and we see the anger that it has caused. We, in the West, must support the protests of the Iranian people who have been oppressed for forty three years under this brutal regime and are literally dying for their freedom. This isn't just a battle for the freedom of women and others in Iran, but it's a battle for democracy around the world."

“

"It is hard to put the size and scope of what the Iranian protests illicit in me. As a child going to school during the reign of the Islamic Republic, I was told every day that "the number of hairs I showed a man who was not my father or brother were the number of hairs I would hang by in hell and burn". This regime's tactics have always been to frighten, isolate and threaten in order to divide and control its people. To see these young, brave girls holding hands and fighting for their basic rights fills me with awe and pride, as well as heartache for the beautiful lives lost in this struggle. The fact that one of the chants of this revolution is "don't be afraid, we are all together" highlights the unbreakable humanity of the people on the streets. This is the first female-led revolution of our time, and we must do all we can to amplify their voices, show solidarity, and support their lion hearts."

## Marjan Neshat



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Interview by Phyllis King

# Dr. NATASHA Filippides

A Clinical Psychologist, Life Coach,  
Guest Speaker, Author & Equine  
Assisted Psychotherapist



**D**r. Natasha's extensive background in Depth Psychology provides a unique approach, addressing underlying issues beneath symptoms to shift deeply entrenched patterns, behaviors, and relational dynamics.

Dr. Natasha's particular area of interest is relationships, from the relationship to oneself to the relationship with others. She sees individuals, couples and families in her therapy and coaching practice. Dr. Natasha specializes in helping clients that have found themselves plateaued in their journey of healing and growth.

**You are doing incredible work in the world of equine therapy. How did you come to this path?**

I was one of those horse-crazy girls from day one. I was hopelessly in love with my horses. My family has a history of horses. My parents and grandfather were Grand Prix show jumpers and avid equestrians. I had a pony growing up. I lived in Virginia, in a rural area, and got to go into the woods with my horse and spend amazing afternoons.

**You went right from walking to horseback.**

Exactly. These are some of the best memories of my childhood. As I grew up, I became fascinated by philosophy and psychology and what makes humans tick. I knew I wanted to be of service to people.

My brother was diagnosed with autism when he was three years old. Watching his journey with the therapists, and the people involved in his life, brought me to want to study psychology. I got my bachelor degree. I started looking into a master program and what I wanted to do for my thesis. I started exploring horses and humans.

**So, did you go straight into being a traditional therapist, or did equine therapy start immediately?**

I did both. I was doing the internships that I needed to do for school in a very traditional setting. But simultaneously, I was doing my master's thesis. I was living in Southern California at the time, and I stumbled upon Stand In-Balance and my mentor, Dr. Val Coleman.

I started interning with Stand InBalance while I was interning doing traditional therapy.

**How does it work for you now?**

My favorite way now is to do traditional therapy or coaching sessions and couple them with the Equine work.

I have found that my clients could be at a place where they have a lot of insight. They could see their patterns and what had been going on in their life. But things were not shifting. That is when we would go out into the arena with the horses and do the experiential work that brings it all into the somatic realm in real-time. Horses are the most honest and best mirrors in the world. They give you immediate feedback with no judgment.

**Do people already know how to be around horses? They are such large, intimidating animals to the average person.**

That is such a good question. We have people from all different backgrounds, from kids seven and up.

We have had people who are afraid of horses. We have people who are avid equestrians and have their own horses. We approach it a couple of different ways. Let's say I have someone who is fearful of horses. We may start with a mini horse or a mini donkey and then move on up. We also have different levels of challenge with the horses. A lot of the horses are rescues, so they all have different backgrounds. Some have their own traumas. Some of them are very easy going, extroverted, and friendly. They all have different personalities, as we say, and some are more challenging because they have traumas in their background.

**How do horses communicate?**

Horses communicate through their body language and they can read our body language and energy.

The beauty of equine therapy is that horses are prey animals, and we are predators. If you notice, we have eyes in the front; they say that it is meant to hunt. The eyes on the side are prey animals because they are always looking 360 for any predators.

*Horses and humans have a long history. They are one of the only prey animals that have partnered with humans in the way they have. What makes them so unique for therapy is that they are super-tuned into their environment. They can sense the energy all around them.*





Horses and humans have a long history. They are one of the only prey animals that have partnered with humans in the way they have. What makes them so unique for therapy is that they are super-tuned into their environment. They can sense the energy all around them.

I did a lot of research early on. I read about how they can feel our heartbeat four feet away. They can sense if a predator is walking by on a nearby hill, if it has eaten, or if it is on the hunt and react accordingly. They can tune into us and give us nonbiased, nonjudgmental feedback, moment to moment.

We call them big biofeedback beings with a heart and souls.

#### **What is the first step when you put someone with an animal?**

I assess their strengths relationally and their challenges, and their patterns. For example, someone will come into the arena, and a horse will

walk up to them, breathe on them, snort, and then walk away. The person may immediately say that horse does not like me, they hate me, and I am no good. You can tell right away they have a pattern in their life of feeling rejected. And then, we use the arena to practice the skills we want to develop and the tools we want to build for life.

#### **What is the duration of treatment?**

It is individual. Some people will have a therapist or a coach, and they will come in purely adjunctively.

They want to do Equine work for a specific reason. It's very solution-focused, and we can do two to three sessions. Some people like to have it ongoingly. Most sessions are about an hour long. If you are doing weekly, an hour is great. If you are doing it every other week or monthly, we encourage a 90-minute session.

*I strive to bring each gem of wisdom into my life. When I start feeling stagnant or at a plateau not to be afraid to make changes. If I do not have that spark, I do not want to do what I am doing.*

**Do you have a favorite client story that stands out as one of the more remarkable moments?**

I have so many, but the story that popped up just now was when I was working with a preteen. We had just gotten a new black thoroughbred, and she looked like Black Beauty. This horse had had so much trauma. Her feet were all messed up; she had ulcers and had been completely neglected. We were rehabbing this horse before we could even use her in therapy. One day this little twelve-year-old walks over, and they start nuzzling together and walking together without a rope and halter, with the horse following her. Then the conversation after that was this kid was saying, "I do not always feel understood, and I do not think this horse feels understood." I was sitting there, eyes wide. Saying to myself, okay, do not move. Do not say anything. This was fabulous. It demonstrates the beauty of the work.

**You have epitomized manifesting your dream job scenario. Is there a formula for people to manifest their best reality?**

Oh, that is such a good question. I feel very blessed and like God gave me

gifts, and that is what I am here to do. The biggest piece of wisdom is that there are always two paths we can take. 1) Why is this happening to me? 2) What can I learn from this? Whatever I go through, I ask, what can I learn from this?

I strive to bring each gem of wisdom into my life. When I start feeling stagnant or at a plateau not to be afraid to make changes. If I do not have that spark, I do not want to do what I am doing; I have to have joy in it and an energy and drive behind it. I ask myself how I can visualize what I want and move toward it?

**Are you currently taking clients?**

If you are in Southern California, I recommend Stand InBalance in West Lake Village, [www.StandInBalance.com](http://www.StandInBalance.com) If you want to work with me, my website. <https://drnatashafilippides.com> I take virtual clients all over the world for coaching and couples coaching.

We have learned a lot today about the healing power of horses. I Thank you so much for all the incredible work you are doing.



photography by Alessandro Gentile and JennKL



## 5 Finds that Abused Children



Photo by AungMye/AdobeStock

## Need in Order to Survive and Thrive

By David Pruitt

Ultimately, I found five things that pushed me forward—that allowed me to survive and thrive in life.

### The 5 Finds

There are things an abused child needs to discover in life to have a decent shot at a productive future. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult for an abused child to find these things because the biggest, most important part of a child's life in their formative years is the home in which they live—and an abused child generally will not find these things in their dysfunctional home. But find them, you must!

#### Find your role model

A child in a well-adjusted, loving home may find their role model in a parent, a sibling, or another family member. But an abused child in a damaged home isn't as likely to find one within the traditional family structure. To understand there is a better way to behave, a better way to live, you have to see it modeled in others.

My earliest role model was Andy Griffith, the father on *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Yes, it was Hollywood, and yes, it was fiction, and yes, it portrayed the backwoods South—but for an abused child looking for a better father figure, it was as real as it could get.

I saw what an even-keeled, caring adult male looked like.

I saw how a father could and should approach a relationship with a son. Yes, discipline was part of that relationship, but it was to be meted out in the proper measure and with a purpose

when a behavior needed to change or a lesson had to be taught. There was teaching, there was caring, and there was also an apology from the parent when a mistake was made.

If you've never watched the show, watch the *Opie the Birdman* or *Opie and the Bully* episodes on YouTube.

Contrast that with my story growing up. I sat in front of that old black-and-white TV as a child and discovered early on that what was happening to us was wrong. It was a momentous and invaluable find! It made me less accepting of the abusive treatment, less accepting of the idea that I was somehow getting what I deserved—that it was my fault. I told myself, and I told my father that if I ever had children, I would never treat them the way he treated my brothers or me. It helped me break the cycle of abuse. I learned a different, better way from a fictional role model.

A second role model for me was my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Ross. Demanding but loving, she showed me what a good mother, what a smart and strong woman, what a charismatic leader and committed mentor could look like. I thrived under her prodding to be better, and her exacting but caring tutelage. She told me she believed I could be something special, and it planted the first seeds of possibility in a battered, immature mind filled with growing resentment and lingering doubt. Later, her early belief and her subtle but persistent calls to action, her repeated efforts to pull the best from me, provided a reminder that maybe I could be better—that maybe if I worked my ass off, I could make something happen. She will never know what she meant to me, but her impact was profound and indelible.

*As a child, in my bed alone at night, I would spill out my hurt and pain to God and ask for both the why and the way—why was this abuse happening to me, and what was the right way to get past it, to persevere, to keep moving forward?*

My last two role models, in later life, helped carry my career in the business world to levels I never thought possible.

Terry Smith, a brilliant CPA, and capable leader, showed me that the financial guy with the bean-counter label was just a stereotype—that brains, talent, integrity, and partnership could expand influence and ability to make the change.

Garry Snook was a tremendous entrepreneur and visionary, always looking ahead and making the toughest decisions when others might waver. He also influenced me personally with his resilient.

Strength of his marriage to his wonderful wife, Sharon. I'm very proud to say he has remained my friend to this day.

When you are abused, and the role model can't be found in the home, seek them in other places; they're out there. Internalize the behaviors you see and the lessons to be learned. Make them a part of your understanding of what you're going through now, as well as the human being you aspire to become in the future.

Find God (or a person you can trust and confide in)

I will say here, with tremendous gratitude, that I am a Christian. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to save our sins and that I, by His grace, am forgiven for mine. I am by no means perfect—in fact, I sin daily—but I pray nightly to be a better man, husband, father, and son, and I strive to do His will. His grace and mercy provide strength and comfort as I navigate the challenging perils of life. I don't read the Bible as much as I'd like or go to church as often as I should, but the presence of God in my life has made all the difference. I know it instinctively and carry endless gratitude in my heart because of it.

As a child, in my bed alone at night, I would spill out my hurt and pain to God and ask for both the why and the way—why was this abuse happening to me, and what was the right way to get past it, to persevere, to keep moving forward? In time, doing this became a strengthening and reinforcing exercise for

me. The power of prayer buttressed me in the most difficult times of my life—the abuse when I was young, in my responsibilities as a CEO in a challenging professional situation, and even with the death of my father. Given the agonizing but miraculous journey of my life, do not try to convince me there isn't a God! There is, there is only one, and I'm a walking testament to His grace and existence.

But my mission is to explain to you how I got past my abuse as a child to lead a productive life and, even more importantly, how you can do the same. Telling you about a great and wondrous God that pulled me from the ruinous depths of abuse—and He absolutely can do the same for you—is a critical part of my story. But society today is largely secular, and I will acknowledge this by adding the following observation:

You can't shoulder the burden of abuse alone—no one can! Find an outlet through which to share your pain and hurt, to seek solutions, or at least reconcile yourself to your situation and bring in some healing perspective. Maybe it's a sibling. Maybe it's a teacher. Maybe it's a best friend, a pastor, a counselor, a coach, or a psychiatrist. But find that confidence, that release, because you have to get it out—have to confront your difficult situation head-on—before you can understand how to move forward. You must have support to defeat the tragic impacts of child abuse. It is impossible to do it alone.

My support was, and still is, God; in deep, sincere, thoughtful prayer, I found His grace and comfort. But if you don't, or won't—find someone you can talk with about the special challenges of the abused. Find your support; find your outlet.

### **Find a Better World (outside your home)**

When you are a child being abused in your home, you are not safe, you are not secure, and you are not free to grow into something better than what you see and experience around you. If you're not careful, you'll start to believe that your abuse and your household is all the world has to offer—that life and people are bad, that you are worthless or damaged, that love is conditional, unattainable, and maybe not even real. But the truth of your damaged and dreaded family home is not the full pallet of available truths

*You can't shoulder the burden of abuse alone—no one can! Find an outlet through which to share your pain and hurt, to seek solutions, or at least reconcile yourself to your situation and bring in some healing perspective.*

in a broader world. Yes, there are bad things and people in the world, but there are also wonderful, kind-hearted souls, charismatic leaders, and loyal and true friends.

Do not let your scope be narrowed to the harrowing halls of your family home. When you leave that desperate, discouraging situation at home for school or work in the morning, open your eyes to the world around you. Look at what good people do for a living and how they behave. Read books; acquire knowledge about what others have done and where others have been. It's not about wealth. It's about the possibility, opportunity, the promise of what one can be. You must understand that the situation you're in is abnormal and dysfunctional, that everyone comes from somewhere, and that many started at a place that was just as bad or worse than yours (impossible as that may seem at this moment in your life) and still somehow found their way to a better place.

The journey from the barbarous abyss begins with one simple realization: there is a better world outside of the abusive one that you were born into or that has been foisted upon you—a place where you belong, a place where you can excel.

Open your eyes to the incredible opportunities in the ever-changing larger world. Be relentless in your search.

### **Find Your Courage**

This is perhaps the hardest Find of all for the abused. Perhaps you've been beaten, physically or sexually violated, neglected, demeaned, or told you're worthless. In my case, in addition to beating me to a whimpering pulp, Pop told me I wasn't "worth a shit for nothing." On top of his tragic assessment of my self-worth, I was sometimes ridiculed in early life for my appearance by my peers, and I believed all they said about me for almost nine of the most important years of my young life. *Look at how horrible my life is, I thought. They must be right.*

I confess that how I found the courage to try, to believe, to go to college, to become a CPA, to try my hand at marriage and parenting, to step forward and lead others on a relatively large corporate stage—it was partially born from anger and resentment.



I was angry about the words and the beatings, almost from the very beginning. Still, I floundered mightily for years until late in that first semester of my freshman year in college when I finally said enough was enough.

Anger, resentment, and a desire to prove your naysayers wrong can play a big role in the rise to a better life, but that alone is not enough. Instead, I believe the Finds that I'm talking about are both critical and cumulative—which means that before you can find the hardest and second-biggest Find of all—the courage to try, the courage to believe—you have to start building toward it.

Once I saw and knew strong and positive role models, prayed and received God's strength, and understood there were reachable possibilities in a larger world, I was able to find the courage to try, to believe that I could reach for something better. Only then did I open those damn textbooks in November of 1980 and study until morning under dim light with drowsy eyes; only then did I begin a different and better journey. What will inspire you to try?

### **Find Your Determination**

When you are a child of abuse, you are a child left behind by society. With

the hell being unleashed on you in the home, education and social interaction are the least of your concerns. Your chief concern, above all else, is simply survival. You're filled with resentment at your precarious situation and your tormentor's behavior. It is also self-loathing—the mindset bequeathed to you as penance for your helplessness, your inability to stop the abuse.

Because of all this, almost regardless of how long it takes you to cycle through your particular version of the first three Finds and garner the courage to try, you will almost certainly be behind the majority of your peers. And since poverty and neglect are typical byproducts of an abusive environment, resources are likely scarce as well. So you're now ready to try, to take control of your life and outcome, but your access to money and knowledge relative to your peers is limited or nonexistent.

What's the answer? It is, simply put, this: there is no substitute—none—for finding your determination at this pivotal moment in your life.

I wish the path to rise above poverty, physical abuse, verbal debasement, sexual violation, or parental neglect was an easier road to travel. But it's not. Life is hard for all of us at times, but it's worse for you and me.

There are obstacles in front of those of us who have been abused that most others who never faced the hardships of adolescence that were heaped upon us won't ever encounter. And the largest obstacle of all is sustained self-belief in your ability to achieve! I know you: Your self-esteem was taken at an early age. You were told what you couldn't do, or you were beaten to a pulp, sexually violated, or subjected to some other crippling debasement. The vile acts in your past led you early to the sorry conclusion of predestined failure. conclusion of predestined failure. As you begin your hard-fought journey to rise, you must remember this: your self-belief will be at its weakest early on—when you first find the courage to stir into action, when the work begins without accomplishment.

People will tell you that you can't, and in truth, you won't know if you can. Worse still, there may be failures in the beginning; if not, then, certainly at various points along the way. But while all of that effort may not give you everything you want, you will get something better than anything you've ever had if you just keep working: the satisfaction gained when you achieve a particular goal.

When you begin to achieve and reap the fruits of your determination, your self-belief will finally begin to flower, which will help you down the long, tortuous road to recovery. Completing difficult work and being rewarded for it has a compounding and reinforcing effect on your behavior and outlook, on the endless possibilities of your life and the lives of those you love. I know it's true. I've seen it. I've lived it.

And yes, while talent and intellect matter, nothing matters as much as the willingness to work hard for

what you want. So find your determination—the unyielding, immovable, intractable will to work hard and go get it. As the pundits say, there is no substitute for hard work. And you can work as hard as you must only when you have an unshakable will, a relentless drive—only when you are inexhaustibly determined.

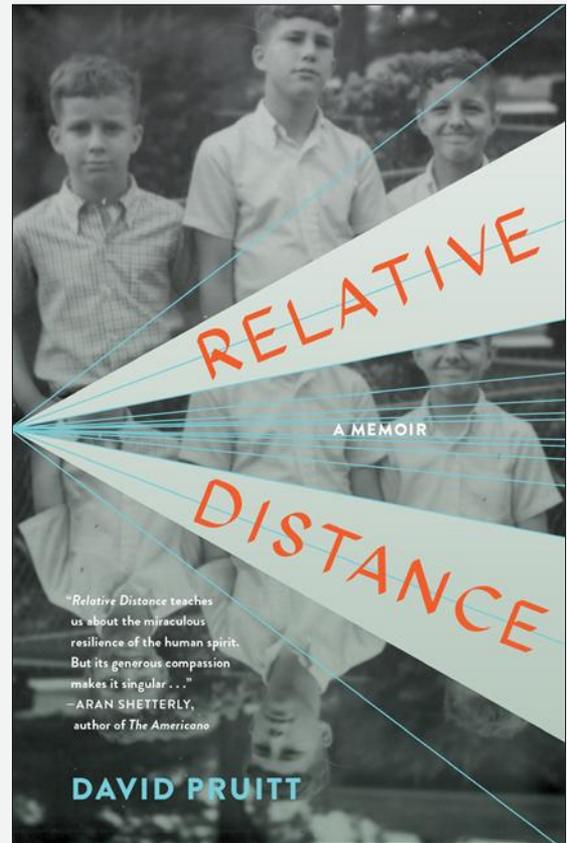
So that's it: the five things I found in my life that allowed me to make the long climb up from the underbelly of an abusive home. These five critical elements helped lift me to a better life than I ever imagined possible—a life that, while imperfect and flawed as any other, is also resilient and fulfilled.

Beyond my 5 Finds, I'll share one final statement as a card-carrying member of the fraternal order of abused souls:

*Let no one but you and God define the outcome of your life. No one.*

If you abused your children, or you were abused and are now an abuser—you do not have a built-in or allowable excuse. I have two pieces of advice for you: First, break the cycle, and change your ways—it's not too late. Second, if those whom you abused have grown up and left your abode—it's too late to change what you've done, but it's not too late to apologize. So reach out and do so with a sincere heart. I waited for it from my father, but it never came. If it had, I'm convinced it would have helped.

***If you abused someone in the past, spend the rest of your life behaving better than you did in that earlier time. Maybe you can't fix it, but you might be able to make it better. It could also blow up in your face; you just don't know. But, then again, it's not really about you anymore, is it?***



**David Pruitt** is a first-generation college graduate from UNC-Greensboro. A licensed CPA and a member of the AICPA and NCACPA, David started his business career in an entry-level accounting position before advancing to first CFO, then CEO, of Performance Bike, for a time the largest cycling retailer in the United States. David retired from corporate America in 2016 and began writing his memoir, *Relative Distance*. His early life as an abused child taught him how to overcome obstacles and his successful career as a senior executive taught him how to lead and communicate effectively as a writer and speaker. He has a passion and ability to not only tell his story but to help adults, young and old, who were abused as children to live the lives they want, not the ones forced on them.

Heather Rae Young  
FOR **PETA**

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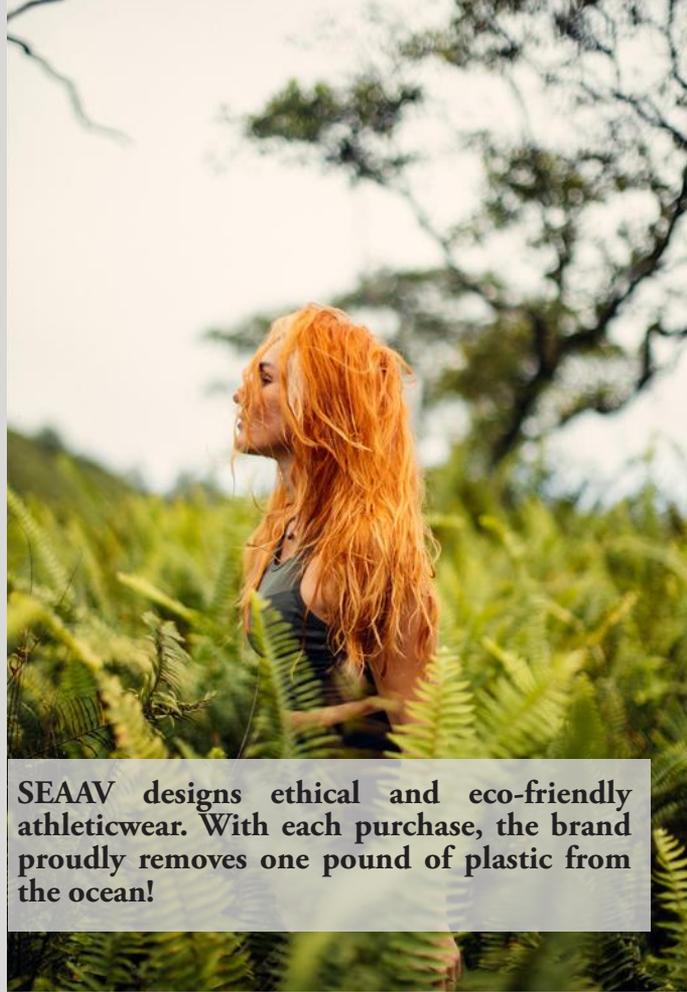


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23-year-old entrepreneur Mckenna Haz created SEAAV to provide function, sustainability, and fashion that can be worn all day long, from morning spin to afternoon drinks. SEAAV is made from recycled plastics, making this active-wear stylish and sustainable.



**A**nna McKerrow is a funny and heart-centered woman. She is a deep thinker with boundless curiosity. She is also an accomplished poet and writer of both fiction and nonfiction works. We talked about many elements of her perspective that helped formulate her powerful book, "The Path to Healing is Spiral."

**It has been a pleasure to be with you today. To begin, I would love to hear about your early life with your parents. It does pertain to your overall story and what you do today.**

My parents divorced when I was young. I grew up with my mom in a one-parent family. I did not have any brothers or sisters. We had a very intense relationship. That happens when it is just the two of you. I did see my dad once every two weeks or so for an afternoon. We always had a great time together.

**You thought your dad was the best even though you saw him less frequently than your mom.**

When you are a kid, and you have one parent you see all the time who does all the normal parenting things and tells you off and makes sure you do your homework and eat your vegetables and all that, then they are a bit less glamorous. I grew up thinking about him as the ideal parent. I had to rethink how I was judging my mom.

**How did that experience impact how you parent in your life?**

We either repeat the patterns of our parents or try very hard not to. I am married to my husband, so we are both parenting our son. That is different. Because I did not have a dad around when I was growing up, I found it hard to have my father's en-

ergy in the house. My parenting is like my mom's style, which is to talk everything through. We are friends; I am still your mom. But it was talk based on our feelings. My husband is more authoritarian, which is not a bad thing. I find that difficult.

**Let's talk about "The Path to Healing is Spiral." I love that title. You were always intuitive. It was not something that was talked about or nurtured. What was your break-open point?**

I entered my healing journey with Reiki, and that was a few years before my mom died. This was after she first got cancer. She got cancer when I was about 20 for the first time, and then she got it again just before 30. In between is when I came to the healing path, as it were.

**Thanks for sharing. You have written many books. At what point did writing poetry turn into writing books on healing?**

This is the first nonfiction book that I have ever done. It is very different for me. I have always loved writing. I started with a lot of poetry. I still write poetry from time to time. I find it super cathartic. It is imagery rich, and you can go straight to the heart of an emotion.

**I read that you listened to Motley Crew. You developed views not only on misogyny but how we can manifest illness and disease in our body in some part because of how we view ourselves.**

They were one of my favorite bands when I was a teen. As I grew up, I realized they were part of a very misogynist pop culture and part of a wider misogynist culture in general. While those individuals are musicians doing their thing, they were quite reflective of certain attitudes towards women particularly. I remember listening to the Girls Girls Girls album about strippers. You cannot get more misogynistic than that album. And it affected the way that I thought about myself, my sexuality, and my identity. I ended up writing a poetry book inspired by the album and how misogynistic it is.

**I love the way you approach it in the book. It is very upfront and a matter of fact. I would like to hear about body talk. That was significant to you.**

I started having it when my son was about three, seven, or eight years ago. It is a bridge between a few different things. Not exactly biofeedback but a bit like tapping EF. There is a bit of talking in it as well. The practitioner can use different things with you, like Reiki, if they feel that you need it. Its focus is to reset yourself to your own alignment allowing the body to heal itself.

**Would you share a bit about Wicca?**

When I was a teen, there was a surge of popularity around Wicca. I very much felt the current of that. It is a modern interpretation of witchcraft, which has drawn on a lot of older traditions. In the 1950s, in the UK, a man named Gerald Gardner was practicing witchcraft and started publishing books about it. In the sixties, it became more popular. People created Wicca drawing from other areas, like more general pagan views about nature being sacred.

It is more of a spiritual discipline. Very basically, there is a god and a goddess, like a male and a female element of divinity. It is a lot about honoring the old gods, the Greek gods say, the Egyptian gods, what-

ever you might feel drawn to, but then specifically learning magical techniques. It is a very broad subject.

**The book focuses on healing. What is your view on holding emotion or trauma in our body and wellness?**

I do not ever want to go down the road of saying, oh, you have cancer because you wanted it. No, that does not happen because one in two people in the world gets cancer. That would mean that 50% of the population wanted to get it. That just does not make sense. What is more sensible is that over time we can hold on to toxic emotions, particularly, and they cannot be helpful to us. They can make us make not-so-healthy choices because we might feel depressed. We might overeat or smoke, we might take drugs, and we might drink a lot to try to deal with what we are holding inside.

I have certainly seen times when it is highly likely, particularly when people have corrosive, long-held grief or fear, or anger. It can manifest in lots of ways. I do not think we ever consciously think; I want this.

**You are a nonfiction writer, a fiction writer, a practitioner, a speaker, and a mom. You are doing many things. Is there more for you?**

I am quite happy with where I am at the minute. When I wrote this book, I wrote it because I wanted to write it, and I did not expect anything to happen with it. It is of interest to people. I am happy with that. I am interested to see where it goes. It is revealing that I feel like I have been aligned with my purpose.

**This book is so useful because, for women, in particular, to find methods to treat ourselves and different ways to unlock our answers. You are in the UK. Where is the best place to find the book?**

The book publishes in September and is available in all good bookshops wherever you usually buy books. So, people can order it online or purchase it at the bookstore.

An excerpt from  
*The Path to Healing is a Spiral*  
by Anna McKerrow

Healing is not always pretty.

When I say healing, I mean emotional and spiritual healing. (Although healing from surgery isn't the most gorgeous thing either, I think we can all agree – scarring, soreness, physiotherapy – but usually worth it. Plus: hospital-grade painkillers! Hurrah!). As someone who has pursued a variety of what we might call non-traditional healing approaches for my emotional pain and mental health, I can reassure you, hand on heart, that the most effective therapies and breakthroughs I've had have been accompanied by plenty of snot, panda eyes, unattractive grunting, and bawling.

The other common feature is that usually, these experiences have taken place in some remarkably underwhelming locations, including an army base, a primary school hall, various cramped suburban lounges, and (my personal favorite) the room above a mechanic's workshop on an industrial estate, with the mechanic at work downstairs.

Now, I don't know about you, but I tend to imagine healing happening somewhere like a beach in Bali, where a Reiki Master called Skye rows me out to one of those houses on stilts over the crystal-clear water. As I lie face down on a treatment table, maybe listening to harp music, I watch tropical fish dart in

the shallows under me and ride the waves of bliss as Skye transports me to a rainbow kingdom where I receive unimpeachable wisdom from Jesus, Ganesha, and Quan Yin. Right? Surely this is what emotional or spiritual healing is all about.

Don't get me wrong; I'm saving up for Bali (and Skye, if you're reading this, give me a call); I'm a huge fan of luxury spas, and I never met an aromatherapy massage I didn't love. Give me five-star luxury all day long, please, with a side of mai tais and designer-scented candles. But all I can say is that in my experience, at least, profound healing didn't come for me in a luxurious setting – which, quite honestly, is a massive bummer. I wish it had.

It came for me on drizzly days in February, where, after the session, someone's car wouldn't start and had to get towed away. It came for me in suburban semi-detached houses with grimy bathrooms, dingy south London community centres, and, yes, occasionally, the odd field. I have eaten a lot of custard creams in my pursuit of better emotional and spiritual health – in fact, probably nothing symbolizes my journey to healing better than that cheapest and yet (controversially) most-loved British biscuit. I'm not complaining about the custard creams, but, you know, they're no chocolate hobnob. Don't email me with your arguments about Oreos.





I'm someone who has always believed that there is more to the world than meets the eye. I was brought up to be open to ideas like life after death, reincarnation, and the spirit world. So maybe that meant that I wasn't as resistant to alternative healing techniques as some might be. Nowadays, I'm a Reiki Master, and I've found my belief system best expressed by a pagan worldview (that all nature is sacred and that there are many gods and goddesses I can connect to), as well as that of modern witchcraft, which teaches us that we can be active agents in our own growth by recognizing the subtle energies that exist in the world.

However, I'm also a mum; I have a normal job, I spend what seems like endless hours every week vacuuming and loading and unloading the dishwasher, and I spend most of my time doing normal things like binge-watching detective TV series, food shopping, cycling around rainy parks and gossiping with my friends. So, yes, by having some alternative world views to start with, I

might have had fewer mental obstacles in my way when starting my healing path than some. But if that makes me a more experienced healer friend for you, then that's a good thing, right?

Whoever you are, if you've never thought about where healing could take you, let me at least show you where it's taken me. What have you got to lose?

But why would our souls choose pain – physical, emotional, or mental? Surely it's to be avoided at all costs? It's a bit of a counter-intuitive concept, especially if you've been raised in a largely secular society informed by a Judaeo-Christian worldview (as I have). If you are a Hindu or a Buddhist, you have a different view of how pain and destruction feature in life. In Hinduism, you have the goddess Kali whose purpose on Earth is destroyed. She is the ending of all things. She is the pain that comes so that the healing may begin. She is dark so that the dawn may break. Kali is to be honored, like any other god, as having her natural space in the universe.

*If healing (and generally living life) has taught me anything over the years, it's that we are all on our own journey, and it's pointless to judge others.*

Alternatively, Buddha teaches us about the “two arrows”. The first arrow is pain, which is inevitable. The second arrow is when we “shoot” ourselves with fear, resistance, and judgment of the pain. If you are a Buddhist, you are taught to have a relationship with pain rather than ignoring it, medicating it away, and denying it ever exists. Physically (and mentally and emotionally), pain exists to tell the body/mind/heart that something is wrong. Pain is a symptom. It is not the original problem.

Living in Judaeo-Christian-influenced cultures means that we are more likely to have a strictly binary view of the world: good-bad, light-dark, heaven-hell, pain-pleasure, male-female. In the Christian view, we must strive towards goodness; heaven is the goal in the afterlife, and we are supposed to resist the devil on Earth who plagues us with pain, suffering, sex, “temptation,” and human frailty.

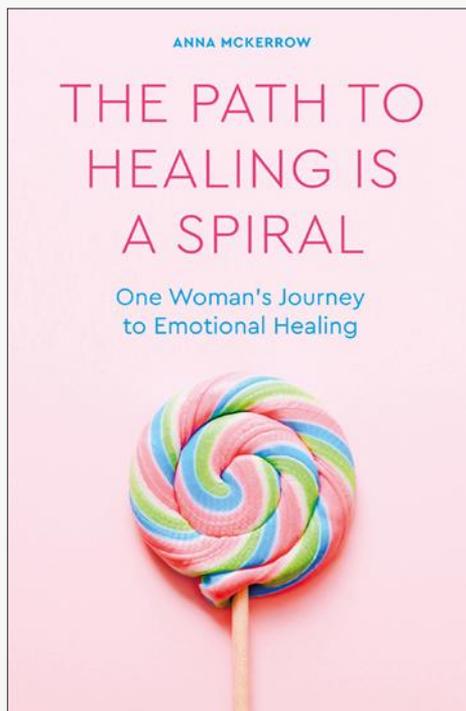
For me, it makes a whole lot more sense to consider our lives on this material plane of Earth as a place where we learn to live with pain and to heal from it. If Earth is as generous as it is in providing countless opportunities for suffering, there must be a reason. I see pain as part of being human, and in our pain, we have opportunities to heal and become powerful beings.

There is no real reason to attach emotional judgments to pain or to things like disease. It’s hard not to, of course. We’re terrified of diseases because they cause pain, discomfort, and sometimes death, but viruses and bacteria, and other things like cancers and inherited conditions are not inherently evil. All we can really say about them is: they exist. We can mitigate against them by cleanliness, vaccination, medication, and maintaining healthy lifestyles, but

they’re part of our lives. Pain in itself is not evil. There’s no consciousness to it; it’s just your mind/body/heart saying I need help. So, in many ways, pain is a good thing if it signposts us to help ourselves.

As for the rest of the suffering in the world? Humans created it all because humans are imperfect beings. All we can do is accept it, decide how best to respond to it in a responsible and caring way, and, I believe, raise our own personal “vibration” by doing our own healing work. When we heal ourselves, we can then make choices that don’t perpetuate the existing patterns that we find repellent in the world (I think it’s important to phrase it this way because there are many truths and beliefs in the world, and as long as they come from a place of love and compassion, how can any of them be wrong?). For example, you do some healing and feel strong enough to come out as a lesbian, thereby living your own life more authentically and helping to move humanity forward toward greater LGBTQI visibility and acceptance. Or I do some healing around my trauma about being bullied and then feel able to end my abusive relationship, indicating to my partner that that behavior is not acceptable. Our healing enables us to act.

If we believe that pain is an acceptable and inevitable part of life, then we can’t ever judge anyone for making “mistakes” – after all, to err is human. If healing (and generally living life) has taught me anything over the years, it’s that we are all on our own journey, and it’s pointless to judge others. Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes, as the saying goes. In my view, everyone is here on Earth to experience something, but it’s not a set curriculum. One size does not fit all. All I can tell is my story.



**Anna McKerrrow** is a poet and writer of Young Adult and adult novels. Following Anna's critically acclaimed YA Greenworld trilogy, she wrote *Daughter of Light and Shadows*, an adult fantasy romance set in Scotland, which was short-listed for the Romantic Novelist Award, followed by the sequel, *Queen of Sea and Stars*. In 2019 she published a standalone occult novel, *The Book of Babalon*, and in 2021 self-published a magical story about bereavement, death and the process of a spirit's passing into the next world, *The Bird Atlas*. Anna is a Reiki Master, an eclectic witch and reads the tarot. Her latest book, *The Path to Healing is a Spiral* is out now priced \$18.95 and available in all good bookstores.

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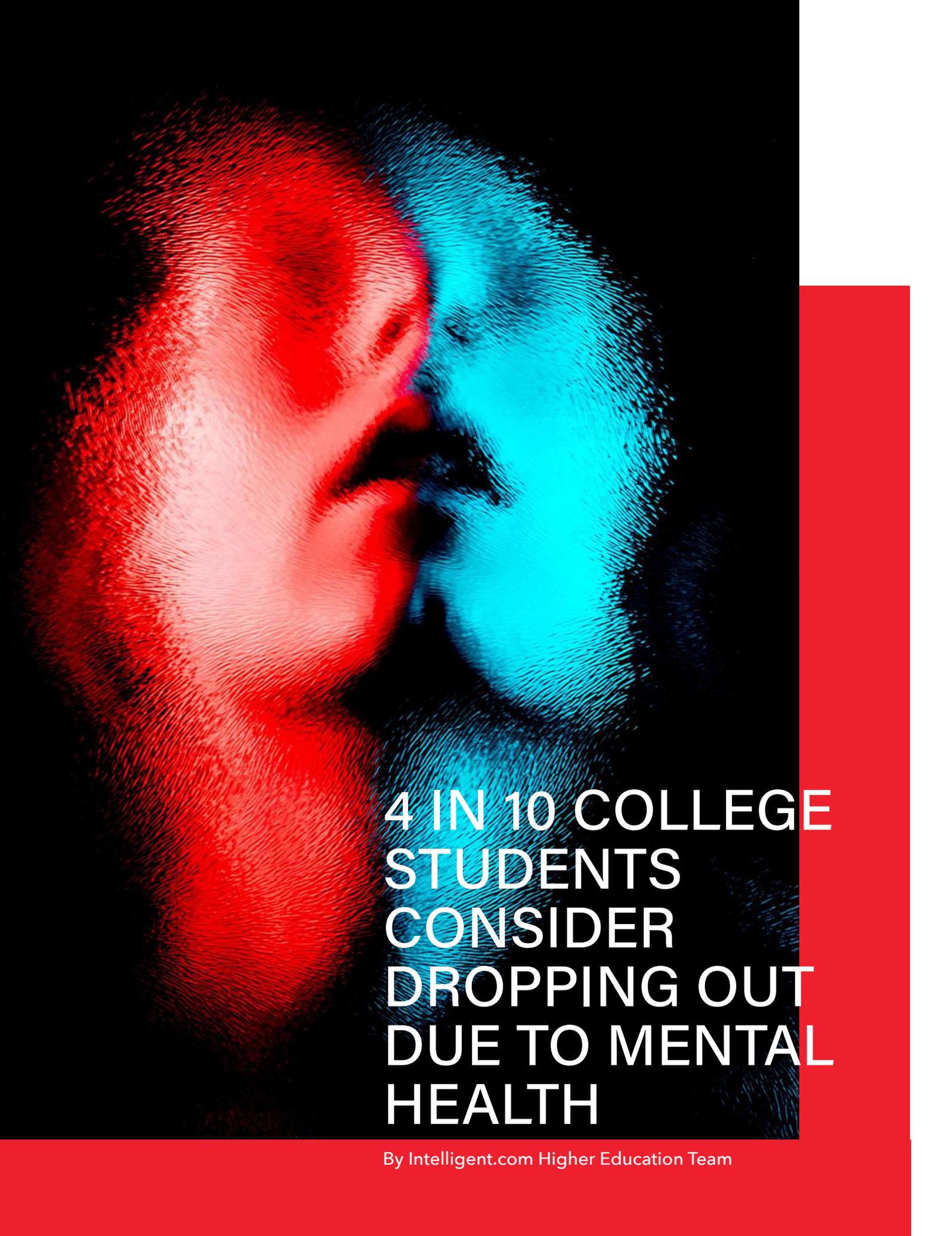


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**4 IN 10 COLLEGE  
STUDENTS  
CONSIDER  
DROPPING OUT  
DUE TO MENTAL  
HEALTH**

By [Intelligent.com](https://www.intelligent.com) Higher Education Team

*Twenty-seven percent of current college students say they have personally experienced discrimination or are being treated unfairly because of unalterable characteristics.*

**M**any college students are struggling with mental health. Twenty-four percent say they ‘struggle a great deal,’ and 47% ‘struggle a little.’ Additionally, 19% say they ‘don’t struggle much,’ and 10% ‘don’t struggle at all.’

Struggling with mental health is new for 18% of students, while 82% say they experienced mental health issues prior to starting college.

However, the majority of those with a history of mental health issues are struggling more now. Eighteen percent are struggling a lot more,’ while 41% are struggling ‘a little bit more.’

The vast majority of students (87%) report experiencing at least one mental health condition. The most prevalent mental health conditions among college students are anxiety (73%), depression (53%), disordered eating (31%), and suicidal thoughts (22%).

#### **Classes, and personal finances drive anxiety**

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition on college campuses. It’s been experienced by 73% of students since attending college.

Students are most likely to report that classes (70%), personal finances (58%), and life post-graduation (55%) make them anxious. Students also report feeling anxious about friendships (39%), the economy (36%), and romantic partners (33%).

#### **3 in 4 students who’ve experienced discrimination say it’s been damaging to mental health**

Twenty-seven percent of current college students say they have personally experienced discrimination or are being treated unfairly because of unalterable characteristics. Of these students, 77% say discrimination has been ‘very damaging’ (31%) or ‘somewhat damaging’ (47%) to their mental health.

### **Students are most often discriminated against by peers, classmates**

Students report that discrimination most commonly comes from peers (56%) and classmates (56%). They also report being treated differently by professors (27%), friends (26%), and other campus staff members (24%).

Students say they are discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity (52%), weight or appearance (45%), gender (36%), and/or sexuality (28%).

### **6 in 10 students struggling with mental health consider dropping out**

Of students who report struggling with their mental health, 59% say they consider dropping out 'all of the time' (14%) or 'some of the time' (45%).

This means, overall, close to half of all college students (42%) think about dropping out due to the state of their mental health.

Erin Halligan-Avery, Ph.D., who is the President of ConcernCenter, has a Ph.D. in Mental Health Counseling and Supervision and has spent 18 years in higher education, which offers some insight.

"The results of this survey are not alarming to someone who has been in the field as long as I have and who has seen student distress first hand," says Halligan-Avery. "College students are struggling with academic stress, home challenges, their identity, and myriad other mental health concerns at rates that are rising indefinitely. Despite having good intentions, colleges are not always well-equipped to handle the outpouring of student needs. Many students consider dropping out because they are unclear about

their path forward and know that it costs a lot of money to keep going to school without a solid direction."

### **Half of the students are not confident in their college's ability to help**

Overall, 80% of students say mental health services are 'very' (32%) or 'somewhat' (48%) available on their campus.

Students who attend schools that provide support say they offer counseling services (81%), student organizations (52%), support groups (45%), and an anonymous hotline (39%).

However, 42% of students who are currently struggling say they probably wouldn't (35%) or 'definitely wouldn't' (6%) use resources offered by the college.

Students expressed that they would not utilize these services because they are not confident in their college's ability to help (50%). Additionally, students say they wouldn't seek help from the college because they can find better resources outside of the school (43%) and/or they are too embarrassed (35%).

#### **Methodology**

All data found within this report is derived from a survey commissioned by Intelligent.com and conducted online by the survey platform Pollfish. In total, 1,000 U.S. college students (18-24 years old) were surveyed.

Appropriate respondents were found via Pollfish's screening tools and a screening question. To take the survey, respondents had to answer that they are currently undergraduate student who takes at least some classes on campus. They also had to consent to answer questions about mental health.

This survey was conducted on August 28, 2022. All respondents were asked to answer all questions truthfully and to the best of their abilities. For full survey data, please email Content Marketing Manager Julia Morrissey at [julia@intelligent.com](mailto:julia@intelligent.com).

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*Struggling with mental health is new for 18% of students, while 82% say they experienced mental health issues prior to starting college.*





Photo by Jose Velazquez

# SHOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT WHERE YOUR CHILD FALLS ON GROWTH CHARTS?

By William "Dr. Bill" Sears, M.D.

*We would often say to our children, "Eat the food that makes you grow first, and then you can have your fun food."*



**I**n my 50-plus years of pediatric practice, I have consulted with thousands of parents about the confusing diagnosis of failure to thrive.

The problem isn't with growth charts. We include them in most of our books. What parents often don't consider is that growth charts represent a percentage. They are an average of thousands of children.

Your child is a person, not a percentage. If your child fits lower than average on the growth chart, it's not a red flag. It's more like a yellow flag. It's something you might want to mention to your pediatrician.

Factors that may influence where your toddler fits on the growth chart

If you suspect your child is undernourished and that this may be compromising his/her optimal growth, then journal all the things below to discuss with your pediatrician.

**1. Genetics:** When one or both parents are genetically lean, their child will often measure above average in height in a growth chart but below average in weight. Lean does not mean skinny. It means having the right percentage of body fat for your body type. On the other hand, a child who is naturally big-muscled and big-boned will often plot just the opposite: a higher percentage on the weight chart but lower on the height chart. A third body type

would be a child who is genetically big-muscled, big-boned, and of big height. This child may plot in the 75th percentile on both height and weight. These three variants are usually quite normal.

**2. Diet.** This simply means the way we eat, not a weight-loss program. Watch for signs that your child may not be getting enough nutrition, and journal the ones you want to mention to your healthcare provider. Pale skin may be a sign of low hemoglobin. Pale earlobes are a telltale sign of nutrition-induced paleness. That's because the earlobe is very richly supplied with blood vessels. Toddlers who have loose, stretchy, wrinkly skin instead of adorable baby fat may also be undernourished.

**3. Formula-fed vs. breastfed.** Children who were breastfed will often maintain their adorable baby fat over a longer time than those who were formula fed because a mother's milk is 40-50% fat. (Remember, the brain grows fastest during the first five years. So, you are feeding a little fathead! Unless advised by your pediatrician, low-fat diets are a no-no for children. Instead, think of a smart-fat diet. The brain is 60% fat.)

**4. The scale and plotting errors.** Be sure to check your child's weight a second or third time because wiggly, squiggly children are often challenging to plot accurately.



Photo by Ioann-Mark Kurnietsov

*Let them help care for the plants, harvest the ripe vegetables, and wash and prepare them. They will probably be much more interested in eating what they helped to grow.*

### **Do you have a picky eater?**

Picky eaters can certainly be frustrating. Once children reach the age of 3, they also tend to have a mindset about the order of things in their world. This includes their food. Any alternative is unacceptable.

I've consulted with thousands of parents who panic because their picky eater falls low on the growth charts. They are concerned that their child may be undernourished. They worry that this may compromise their child's optimal growth.

Here's the reassuring news: Being a picky eater is part of what it means to be a toddler. There are developmental reasons why your three-year-old pokes at their food. After a rapid growth spurt during their "terrific twos," toddlers gain weight more slowly. So, of course, they need less food.

They also won't sit still for long, including at meal times. Snacking throughout the day is more compatible with their busy lifestyles. As parents, our job is to buy the right food, prepare it nutritiously and serve it creatively. Leave the rest up to the kids. The picky eater stage is usually one that passes or at least mellows over time.

Also, remember the brain grows fastest during the first five years. So, you are feeding a little fat-head! Unless advised by your pediatrician, low-fat diets are a no-no for children. Instead, think of a smart-fat diet. The brain is 60% fat.

Here's how to fill nutritional gaps **Here are the things I have learned over 50 years that work most of the time.**

**1. Don't be wimpy.** Many parents today will say, "Oh honey, you don't like deviled eggs? I'll make some mac and cheese out

of the box for you." It may not be immediate, but a hungry child will eat what they're served if they don't have a choice.

**2. Feed more grown foods.** I use this term to mean foods that are nutrient-dense. They pack the most nutrition per calorie, per volume. This is very important, especially when feeding picky eaters, because tiny children have tiny tummies. At any age, the size of our stomach is the size of our fists. Theoretically, you want to feed children a fistful of nutrient-dense food per meal.

My favorite growing foods are avocado (the fattest fruit on the planet; remember you're feeding your fathead), nut butter; olive oil; sweet potatoes; tofu; yogurt (whole milk, organic, plain), lentils, and blueberries. Children between 3 and 4 years of age can begin to comprehend which foods are the most nutritious and why. We would often say to our children, "Eat the food that makes you grow first, and then you can have your fun food."

**1. Make foods relevant to your child's interests.** Call them "soccer foods," "baseball foods," or "ballet foods," and emphasize the fact that these foods will help your child excel in his or her preferred interests.

**2. Try the sipping solution.** Many children who are undernourished are also underhydrated. One of the top feeding strategies that I have found over my decades in pediatric practice that corrects the most nutritional deficiencies in most children is what I call the sipping solution. Making a daily smoothie has been a Sears family nutritional adventure for many decades. They are a great way to sneak in nutritious foods. If you're looking for shortcuts, please resist the urge to feed

your child smoothie powders, such as sports or protein powders, that are made for adults. Look for growing food powders, such as Healthy Heights, to make sure your child is getting the right macronutrients and micronutrients for optimal growth, such as protein (preferably whey); vitamin D, iron, calcium, potassium, vitamins A and C, zinc and fiber.

**3. Dr. Bill's nibble tray:** Our sixth child, Matthew, was a picky eater. We were so busy with our other children that we couldn't hover around to make sure he ate every bite of his veggies. Our fun solution was to fill an ice cube tray or muffin tin with nutritious nibbles. We gave each food a fun name, such as banana wheels and cheese on trees (lightly steamed broccoli florets dipped in cheese). Toddlers love to dip their food. So, in five of the nibble compartments, add guacamole, plain, organic full-fat yogurt, cheese sauce, hummus, and olive oil. By the end of the day, the nibble tray was empty, and Matthew's tummy was full. We were in charge of what he ate, and he was in charge of how he ate it.

**4. Involve your kids in the process.** I must have heard, "Doctor, he won't eat his vegetables" a thousand times. Yet, the child keeps right on growing. Vegetables require some creative marketing for a picky eater, as they seem to be the most contested food in households with young children. Plant a garden with your child. Let them help care for the plants, harvest the ripe vegetables, and wash and prepare them. They will probably be much more interested in eating what they helped to grow.

How many vegetables do toddlers need? Although kids should be offered three to five servings of veggies a day, for children un-

der five, each serving need only a tablespoon for each year of age. In other words, a two-year-old should ideally consume two tablespoons of vegetables three to five times a day.



Show me the science. Your precious child, the most valuable creation in the universe, deserves the best food surrounded by science. When shopping for food supplements, look for the science on the company's website. If they have done the research, they're going to be proud of it and want it right in front of you. This is why I recommend Healthy Heights shake mixes. They are clinically studied, and pediatricians developed them to help children achieve optimal growth. In some cases, the Grow Daily 3+ formula may even qualify for medical insurance reimbursement. Another huge perk: The serving size is just four ounces. So it's small enough for children to easily consume the entire amount, even when served as a beverage along with their meal.

And finally, use what we call "the bite rule" to encourage the picky eater: "Take one bite, two bites..." (however far you think you can push it without force-feeding). The bite rule at least gets your child to taste new food while giving her some control over the feeding. As much as you possibly can, let your child – and his appetite – set the pace for meals.



**William Sears, M.D.** has been advising parents on how to raise healthier families for over 50 years. He received his medical training at Harvard Medical School's Children's Hospital in Boston and The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, the world's largest children's hospital, where he was associate ward chief of the newborn intensive care unit before serving as the chief of pediatrics at Toronto Western Hospital, a teaching hospital of the University of Toronto. He has served as a voluntary professor of pediatrics at the University of Toronto, the University of South Carolina, the University of Southern California School of Medicine, and the University of California: Irvine. The father of 8 children, he and his wife Martha have written more than 45 books and hundreds of articles on parenting, childcare, nutrition, and healthy aging. He is the co-founder of the *Dr. Sears Wellness Institute* for training health coaches, and he runs the health and parenting website **AskDrSears.com**. Dr. Sears and his contribution to family health were featured on the cover of *TIME Magazine* in May 2012. He is noted for his science-made simple-and-fun approach to family health.

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# BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING

By Alissa Cassidy



**Y**ou're meditating, practicing yoga, eating organic and local foods, driving an electric car, and you've ditched the single-use plastics. But still, you know there's more you could be doing to connect to the Earth and have a positive impact on the environment.

If you're looking for a sign to make more changes to your lifestyle, this is it. You can live more sustainably and lessen your home's environmental footprint by making a few easy, and a few major, changes.

Wondering where some of the most sustainable homes are located?

**Los Angeles**, home of *The Eden Magazine*, ranked **No. 1** on the Best Cities for Self-Sustaining Homes. **San Francisco** and **San Diego** finished in the **No. 2** and **No. 3** spots.

## WATER

Our planet is 70% water, but there seems to be a never ending shortage. Why? Only 1% of the world's water is fresh and accessible (not currently frozen as an iceberg in Antarctica, for example).

What can you do to help? Besides the obvious – like turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth – you can start collecting rainwater. Want to water the flowers? Don't get the garden hose – fill your watering can from your rainwater collection barrel. You can even take it a step further and keep a jug of collected rainwater in the bathroom to use for flushing the toilet.



## GROW

Even if you don't have a lot of space, most people can carve out a corner of their patio to grow a tomato plant, and basil grows great on a windowsill. If you do have a lot more space, planting your own food and growing it without the use of pesticides is one of the best ways to not only eat more healthy foods, but to lower your impact on the environment.

Don't have a green thumb? Instead of shopping at supermarkets, support your local farmers at the farmers markets. Buy vegetables, honey, and fruits locally.



*You know there's more you could be doing to connect to the Earth and have a positive impact on the environment.*

## PLANT (OR DON'T)

If you have Algerian ivy, English ivy, French broom, Spanish broom, or Brazilian egaria in your yard, you have invasive species that are harming the local ecosystem. Pull those out and plant native flowers, bushes, ground coverings, and trees instead.

**Here's why:** Natives need less water, they don't require much fertilizer or pesticides because they're able to withstand the local environment, and they help restore the natural habitat.

Alternatively, xeriscape. Needing little to no irrigation except for the rain, xeriscapes also don't need to be mowed, which means you don't need to buy extra gasoline. You can use mulch, rocks, and hardscaping to create a low-maintenance, low-impact yard with high curb appeal.





## FIX

Simple routine repairs that you might think are negligible are actually very important. Caulk around your windows, replace your weather-stripping, and install insulation.

Take it a step further and replace the windows in your home with newer, more efficient ones that will better regulate the temperature inside your home. Install awnings, use curtains, and plant shade trees to minimize the amount of hot sun coming in.

The less air conditioning you need to use, the better. Lowering your electricity use, even a little, will benefit your pocket as well as the environment.



## SWITCH

Turn off the lights. Unplug your unused electronics.

Install solar panels and harvest the power of Earth's biggest renewable energy source. While solar panels are expensive, they're an investment. If you can't install enough to power your home, start smaller and install a couple panels to heat your pool.

Security cameras, outdoor speakers, fans, power banks, generators, and portable stoves all have solar-powered options.

## CHANGE

By changing your way of thinking and your way of life, you can make big changes for our planet.

Living sustainably means living with intent. Having a purpose of connecting with nature, protecting the environment, and caring about the future is a way of life. Abandon the disposable and embrace the sustainable.



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**Alissa Cassidy** lives in Georgia with her three boys, her husband, and their beagle harrier, Daisy. She's working on her master's degree and is an amateur photographer.

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*Welcome to our Contributor Writers ' neighborhood*



# THE BIRTH OF YIN AND YANG

By Zee

**F**or the sake of humanity, let's acknowledge and give respect to the beingness of TIME, past, present, and future becoming.

Keep the fire burning within? The birth of the Elements Yin and Yang has untold legends, volumes written and spoken about via lore and storytelling down through the ageless timeline. Will we ever know what these twins are capable of? Does it even matter? With their help, what are the lessons humans could learn in order to elevate one's level of vibration?

Under the waterfall of professed ancient and traditional knowledge, with their massive multitude of adaptations and now with all the new rules on how to transverse the big picture to become whatever the heart desires, it still remains a mystery. Here is one untold version of how that journey began.

It could be wrong; it could be right.

The Divine Mother of the cosmos, the all-pervading ethereal essence as defined by the human mindset of all that was, is, and will be, for reasons never to be known, gave birth to millions of universes. Some may call this a gift; others may call this an act of pure unconditional love.

According to today's current understanding of the cosmos, all is connected, and the Micro is a full-bodied representation of the Macro. As the universes comprehended their existence, one in particular, knowing its full worth, recognized she was also a Divine Mother and therein decided to give birth to her own miniature cosmos, our Earthly Universe.

Due to our modern technological know-how, scientists finally understand that our universe and the cosmos exist as a connected consciousness and yet still maintain they're, dare one say, their own individual consciousness respectfully. And here it comes, our miniature universal mum noticed I AM also a Divine Feminine, and as such, being a solo entity was thinking and contemplating her navel, as all creators do. I could create my own Micro universe and see what transpires. What could possibly go wrong? After a long, prolonged length of time, of course, time doesn't exist, and if it did, all time exists at the same time in the same space. Wrap your head around that. Anyway, in time our Divine Mother gave birth and called her daughter EARTH. Quietly referred to knowingly in the underground mystic circles as Planet Crematorium.

AND SO IT IS.

Generations upon generations passed as our universal mother watched over Earth and waited for some development to occur. As time, yes more time, as time rolled along with very little movement, our universal mother, Mum, was thinking, this is boring. I better create some TV entertainment. And wallah, a baby Element was born, but wait, it turns out Mum gave birth to twins. Unfortunately, no one knows who came first, the chicken or the rooster, not that it matters. Mum was so happy, giving birth to two healthy ethereal Elemental beings equal in all ways. Mum named them Yin and Yang after the great Ya-Ya caterpillars that transverse the night skies with their fiery heads.



And as life would have it, over time, the twins also came to the same conclusion as their mum did eons before. Each of their rational thinking mechanics began to flourish. "What's that, and why is yours different than mine"? Yeah, you guessed it, folks, they got their MOJO working, and low and behold, did you guess correctly, our new mum Yin gave birth to Quintuplets, sometimes referred to as a "quint." Wow, that was a big surprise.

How do mothers do it? Imagine the dilemma of having to come up with 5 names. Now you will understand how this old naming tradition first got started. Mum said, one will be named after our Earthly Mother, and so the first ethereal Elemental child shall be named after her mother and be called EARTH (tu). Then each of the other 4 was named accordingly. METAL (jin), WOOD (mu), WATER (shui), and lastly, FIRE (huo). And so began the luck surrounding the numbers 4, 5 and 7.

#### AND ALL WAS GOOD

The 5 ELEMENTS have existed among many cultures under various names. Yet even with these cultures being separated by land and ocean, all have the same understanding that these 5 elements, regardless of having different names, are the ethereal foundational cornerstones used by humans to describe through the use of language all that exist within our earthly universe. These are the elements our universal mum used as her representatives in creating everything that exists today on this earth and above, including the creation of all phenomena and everything that we refer to as NATURE. You may have even heard of another MOJO story something about an apple. Our universal mum combined the 5 elementals for that creation also, but this happened millions of years later after mum had created all that existed on Earth.

All 5 ethereal Elements are Divine Conscious Beings that have the capacity and ability to destroy and generate at will.

To fully understand the 5 elements better, the word elements are ethereal representa-

tions used in language to describe a single object or object and as being an agent for change in every earthly process. One may look and notice how these elementals function in the world around us only through the quality of the information received, rejected, or accepted. Here are a few terms that may help. They function as cycles, stages, movements, relationships, phases, numerology, internal and external body functions, virtues, conditions, and many more.

At first glance, this element system of understanding may come across as complex, considering it has taken on the challenge of giving an explanation to all that exist within our universe. And yet, as it is with all structures, constructs, and strategies, right there in front of us is an explanation of all universal processes contained within earth's natural laws, in all its simplicity.

When we think about the nature and tendencies of how humans function and behave and remember how all is connected from Macro to Micro, as above and below, it will come as no surprise that they too, the 5 Elements, came to the same I AM realization that they are also capable of giving birth. And so the storyline continues.

**EARTH** deciding not to be outdone, morphed into 3 Elements, hence the terms lower, middle and upper Earth.

**METAL**, quite happy and contented within the self, decided to morph into twins; hence we have Yin Metal and Yang Metal. **WOOD** following on from this, and wanting not to be greedy or be a show-off, also followed suit and morphed into twins and became Yin Wood and Yang Wood.

**FIRE and WATER**, often referred to as the mother and father of Alchemy, realized their power would be better retained if they maintained the original essence of their great-grandmother, the Divine Mother of all that was, is, and shall be. Neither being had the need or desire to become limited agents as their brothers and sisters; therein, they both decided to morph into conscious hermaphrodite

beings, thus becoming Divine Beings within all Nature. This action is sometimes referred to as Free-Consciousness. True or false remains a matter of conjecture; what it does describe is their ability to morph from Yin to Yang, from Yang to Yin. This quality also exists within each of you. Every human still contains this ability and know-how on how to be free.

As our Divine Mother's story unfolds,  
ONE became TWO.  
TWO became FIVE.  
FIVE became NINE.

The mind may perceive each element as defined by its name, which is totally incorrect. Every single element carries within its own beingness a color, taste, energy, shape, structure, movement, disease, time, number, symbol, location, personality, identity, vibration, human and natural frequency, including every known and yet unknown form which exists in our earthly universe. We all know life is created when two entities or energies come together, and so it was when the Divine Mother joined two elements together to begin the creation of all that exists today in our earthly universe. The original 5 elements transferred their essence from macro to micro and gifted all humans their essence of consciousness, unconscious, subconscious, higher consciousness, and power to a Freedom-Consciousness. Remember, each consciousness has its own level of emotional vibration. This is one of the ways to measure where you are at in any given moment, drowning, stuck, or flying.

Yin and Yang are fragments of the original Divine Mother. The self-created human mindset and the progressive mindset of the powers that be will continue their suffering and reality separations while they maintain their fragmented functioning, behaviors, and thinking, embracing the dual mind-state of being human.

The paradigm shift happening within all humans around the world at this time-vibrational level is due to a human realization concerning our social construct. One's education, hopes, and dreams are in conflict with our state of beingness. If

one is completely satisfied with one doing and becoming endeavors at work, family, or play, take a moment and peer beyond the veil of one's success and discover, and become aware of, a deeper, far greater self-rewarding vibration to nourish one's purposeful existence.

Hence the underlying foundation of all that exists in our world, in this universe from the beginning before time up until this moment, exists within our physical, mental, and emotional bodies, within all nature, in all scientific research, from all cultures, primitive and modern. All earthly, natural, and cultural foundations are made up of the 3, 6, 9, and originate from the lesser-known 9 elementals of Yin and Yang.

A Metal element human will experience life as a child completely different from an Earth elemental child. Their early-stage mindset programming will be completely different, and yet in the release of trauma, all therapists use the same generic processes expecting the same result. And the 9 types of humans are just the beginning! What happens to those humans that are not earthbound? Questions never considered.

All 9 Elemental Beings like us exist in spirit form, manifested as a physical construct that creates and maintains this universe. The existence of Yin and Yang defines mindfully our Natural Earth Mothers state of beingness and all who live and exist on planet EARTH, past, present, and future. Suppose you, the reader, understand the importance of these written words. In that case, you will be aware of how crucial acknowledging these 9 elements is to our future personal and collective human evolution.

#### NOW WHEN DO WE START WHERE DO WE START?

The idea that anything new cannot exist is a downright lie. All thoughts and so-called trust-your-gut-feelings are nothing more than today's reproduction of yesterday's past thoughts and feelings. People, it's time to move forward.

**W**e can learn much from wise, supportive others; at times, we do need another person to physically treat, affirm, guide, comfort, or support us. After all, co-regulation and connection to other people are essential for our well-being from the moment of our conception.

But, there also comes a time when we need to discover and

turn toward our own inner healer and give ourselves the support, wisdom, and healing we need. Like the master of the healing arts himself, Chiron, we need to take ourselves off to our own metaphorical cave at times and turn inwards to explore previously untapped resources, medicine, and potential. To meet with our own inner healer and put together all we have previously learned so we can now harness our own healing capacities to help ourselves.

# ACCESSING YOUR INNER-HEALER

*“Who looks outside dreams; who looks inside awakes.” ~C. G. Jung*



“*You are far more powerful than you think. It’s always a matter of trusting and believing in yourself and of digging deep to bring to life all that you hold inside as potential to support and heal yourself.*”

As Jung suggests, we need to awaken to our own unique inner well of resources, many of which lie dormant and in our unconscious yet quietly awaiting our arrival and activation. And in so doing, we access hitherto unknown reserves of personal power, all of which is empowering and confidence-giving. We learn to trust in ourselves and our capabilities more, and crucially, we stop always searching for help “out there” through projecting our healing potential onto others.

“Every time we reclaim some of our own energies, stop projecting onto others attributes of ourselves, we become more whole, more present.”  
-Jill Mellick.<sup>1</sup>

We also discover something vital during this process: We are not as helpless as our wounded, and traumatized selves have come to fully believe. We come to find that there is another part of ourselves that isn’t still traumatized but in fact, is immensely resourceful and powerful. This is our own inner Wise Woman or Man, our own inner Healer.

If we have doubted ourselves all our lives, then meeting with this inner other can be very healing in itself. Often, this part of us shows up in dreams as an older man or woman as someone who radiates healing powers and who supports us in some way or even performs healing practices on us. And we can be sure that our

dreams ARE showing us a part of ourselves here; this is a part of us that we need to get to know better and reclaim their energies and potential for our own lives.

Of course, this isn’t an either-or, as, at times, we will still need to seek the support and guidance of others, as I said at the beginning. Yet, to also begin to take this step and discover your own healing potential is hugely important as it returns much-needed personal power and a firmer sense of self, bringing us closer and closer to wholeness rather than being fragmented with scattered parts which are always at odds with one another. The more whole we feel, the less we project outwards onto others and the more of our own power we retain and use for both ourselves and in service of life.

So, I encourage you to trust yourself and your inner wisdom and intuition that you DO know what it is you need and to have increased faith in your capabilities. Find the courage to look within and to stop running from yourself. Turn and face what is calling you via your symptoms, bodily sensations, feelings, ideas, and dreams. You are far more powerful than you think. It’s always a matter of trusting and believing in yourself and of digging deep to bring to life all that you hold inside as potential to support and heal yourself.

1. Quote by Jill Mellick from the book she co-authored with Marion Woodman, ‘Coming Home to Myself.’



**Angela Dunning** is a regular contributor to *The Eden Magazine*. She is the author of *The Horse Leads the Way: Honoring the True Role of the Horse in Equine Facilitated Practice*.

Angela writes regularly on Facebook: [ebook.com/thehorsestruth](https://www.facebook.com/ebook.com/thehorsestruth).

You can learn more about Angela and her work helping people and horses at: [www.thehorsestruth.co.uk](http://www.thehorsestruth.co.uk).

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# IN YOUR SHOES

**W**e've all heard the expression "until you've walked a day in my shoes." These days the saying has an even deeper meaning as the average shoe size has grown.

The point, however, is still the same. Don't get too familiar. You know nothing about me or my life. Interesting, isn't it? The assumptions people make of one another. "I wish I was her/him" or "What I'd do to live where they live" or "how they live"!

The images we take for ourselves to be anything but ourselves. I feel that Social Media and the Internet take much of the blame. But in truth, this madness started before any of that noise.

Nowadays, this world seems to thrive solely on the image. And as vast as it is inconsistent. Do we really know what we envy and why? Being inspired by images - I always felt that was healthy, like a spark that ignites creativity and imagination. A path to dreams, search and desire. A way to bring things to life. The fuel to drive ambition. A thought to do better. Be better. Thankfully for some, it still is. For others? Not so much. It couldn't be farther from it!

So, is it envy? Is it familiarity? Or some strange mashup of what you see is what you want to get? Or is it simply the assumption that someone else's life or situation is better than ours? To me, that in no way is a compliment. On the contrary, it is more insulting than anything else. It says that someone allows themselves, at a glance, the right to assume your life and everything in it is as their desire.

But if they spent even a minute "in your shoes"? Oh, how quickly that would change. Quite an experiment that would be. Take ten strangers, separate them in half and have them trade lives for one year. Not like one of those "Family Swap" or "Job Swap" situations but an actual, long walk as someone else you thought you'd rather be. Complete with all their possessions that you always wanted to have as your own, material and otherwise, including their spouse or partner, family, children, pets, struggles, insecurities, debt, unhappiness, illnesses, troubles, trials, tribulations, mayhem, and strife. It's interesting, at best, to see and hear by the end of that year who still wants what you have. I would gladly hand over my size 10 Gucci loafers and say, "Have at it." Just to see how far they'd get.

I don't look good in green. It has never been my color. Envy is something that never entered my sphere. I genuinely am happy for those I care about, and I champion them. And when they struggle, I'm always there to support them. If and when I see things I want to possess, I work hard to obtain and maintain them and have always been happy to share them. These are part of the lessons I learned from and grew from, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

My two feet carry me to and through life's destinations just fine. "My shoes" help prevent callousness!



**Joey Santos** is a Celebrity Chef, Life Stylist & Co-Host of *The Two Guys From Hollywood* Podcast on iHeart Radio.

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Joey was raised in NYC, Malibu, and West Hollywood. He is the son of Film & Television Actor Joe Santos, and his Grandfather is World-Renowned Latin Singer Daniel Santos.

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# Me, Herbology, & Dream Pillows!



Photo by Annie Spratt

I've been studying herbology since 1992 when I discovered Rosemary Gladstar, who is internationally renowned for her knowledge in the field of herbology. I took Rosemary's course then, and I've continued to study all these years because I wanted a natural system of healing and health care.

I originally sought out knowledge in this area because I was tired of doctors prescribing drugs to deal with an illness's symptoms rather than the underlying cause. There is no disrespect to doctors intended here, as I believe 100% that Eastern and Western medicine can and should work hand-in-hand for the benefit of the human race.

Years ago, when my then gynecologist prescribed mood-altering drugs to combat PMS, I didn't want to take them—I wanted to treat the underlying causes of the PMS, and that's what initially led me to Rosemary.

I learned to use herbs to quickly eliminate the UTIs I frequently had to deal with, and much more—but I certainly did not attempt to treat my ovarian or rectal cancer with herbs—I followed the treatments prescribed by my oncologist and used my knowledge of herbs to help me deal with the ravages of chemotherapy. How we deal with illness is a personal choice, and my choice is to combine modern knowledge and ancient wisdom.

I love herbology so much that I added a column about herbs to my monthly newsletter; herbs are not just for helping us deal with illness. Here's a fun way to use herbs for dreaming—let's talk dream pillows.

Dream pillows, sometimes called comfort pillows, have been used for centuries. They're made up of

herbs that help us drift to sleep and take us to dreamland. The aroma of the herbs helps us relax, feel calm and tranquil, and they help bring back vivid memories. As Rosemary Gladstar says, "The natural scent of the herbs is what excites and inspires dreams."

You can use any combination of herbs you choose when you make a dream pillow (you can also purchase one online); here's the recipe I learned when I first studied herbology and still use to this day:

- 2 parts lavender
- 2 parts mugwort
- 1 part chamomile
- 1 part rosemary
- 2 parts roses
- 1/2 part hops

I learned in class to make the pillow 4" X 4" square; just sew the herbs inside the fabric. I keep mine under my pillow, and I usually mush it up a little before I go to sleep—the mashing releases the scents and energies of the herbs. You can also add a few drops of essential oil to your pillow.

Have fun with it, and happy dreaming! If you would like to receive my monthly newsletter, which includes messages from my Guide Group and articles from several inspirational metaphysical authors, please email me at [Scortland@cfl.rr.com](mailto:Scortland@cfl.rr.com).

For more about Rosemary Gladstar, please visit her website at <https://scienceandartofherbalism.com/>.

Namaste.



*I followed the treatments prescribed by my oncologist and used my knowledge of herbs to help me deal with the ravages of chemotherapy. How we deal with illness is a personal choice, and my choice is to combine modern knowledge and ancient wisdom.*



**Sherri Cortland** has been communicating with her Guide Group, the "GG," since 1987 via automatic writing. Much of the information she has received is included in her four books, which were originally published by Ozark Mountain Publishing and are currently available on her website and on Amazon.

On Sherri's website, you will find several free classes and meditations, along with more articles and workshops on video.

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# Life After Death

I know what miracles are. I know because I see them happen daily—and because some happen to me. I guess you could say that I'm proof, or my life is proof, or, for that matter, my very existence is proof. There have been so many miracles in my life that choosing just one to write about and calling it the "biggest" would be like loving one of my children more than the other.

I loved my husband, Randy Michael Connolly until death did us part. So much so that it felt as if I'd died with him. By the time December 2013 rolled around, I'd been praying for my death for a little over a year, although I still hadn't conjured the nerve to take my own life, and I realized I might never find that nerve, no matter how devastated I was. The only thing that could possibly keep me going, I determined, was a miracle.

I wanted, I needed, some kind of concrete, measurable evidence that he was still with me, just as he'd promised he'd be as he was dying.

Night after night of crying myself to sleep had mitigated neither my desperation nor my depression. Nor had I known that people around me were hearing Randy, in spirit form, clearly and irrefutably. Sure, I appreciated their loving messages, as indirect as they were. But what about me? I was his wife, dammit. Didn't I deserve to hear those messages straight from the source?

Then, one night, a night like all the rest where I'd passed out after hours of tossing and turning and abject anguish (I don't profess to be one of the stoic ones), I was awakened at 3 am by a loud—booming—voice that said, "Get out your pen and get writing. We're going to write a book."

***Once your anguish has been imbued with conscious awareness, the frequency of unconditional love, the vibration of truth, and the resonance of wisdom, nothing is ever the same again.***

I can't tell you why and I can't tell you how, but I knew in every cell of my being that this disembodied vocalization belonged to my husband (and not only because I was alone in the house). I did not realize that the result of this mandate, and the next half hour of notebook scriblings, would be the basis for our first "ghostwritten" book together, *Crossing the Rubicon: Love Poems Past the Point of No Return*.

You might think I'm going to say the miracle was that Randy, in spirit form, woke me up and downloaded a book of poems, along with an almost instant comprehension and precisely worded description about how to form a new relationship with your loved one after death, and how to write about it so others would understand and benefit.

You might think it was that since that night, I've been able to communicate with Randy and the dead brother of a manicurist, the dead wife of my father's best friend, and many other spirit beings who so much want to communicate with their own loved ones.

Either way, you'd be right.

But, honestly? The most profound and shocking miracle is that without the gift of Randy's death, I would never have discovered, or perhaps I should say uncovered, the brilliant conscious creation practice that has become my way of life.

A celestial life.

Is it possible to recognize a miracle—a blessing, even—while you feel you're being ripped to shreds? When your soul can't see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel even if it were wrapped in the glow of every star in the sky? When your heart is gasping for breath in order to survive one more

minute, one more hour, one more day? My answer, BRD, Before Randy's Death? Absolutely not. ARD, After Randy's Death? Absolutely. Even if you're in the throes of agony. Because once your anguish has been imbued with conscious awareness, the frequency of unconditional love, the vibration of truth, and the resonance of wisdom, nothing is ever the same again.

For me, on that night, even as I wrote in the dark, sobbing over the pages of an old lined notebook, bleary-eyed from lack of sleep, fear, and the sense that I had been abandoned to fend for myself in a world I could no longer make sense of, I was concomitantly aware that I was feeling something I'd never felt before.

Even in that state of complete overwhelm, I knew I was experiencing something so enormous, so rock-me-to-the-core powerful, that while I couldn't name it at the time, I could feel it blooming inside me, as evidential as the scar on the inside of my thigh, the one I'd gotten in a motorcycle mishap in high school. It seemed as if I'd always had this thing that was burgeoning—always known it, always felt it—but would never again fail to recognize it and cherish it.

The wave of unconditional love that flowed through me arrived in the form of complete phrases and rhymes and prose: an unabridged conversation. It arose in the vibration of truth through the voice of my dead husband. It emerged in the resonance of wisdom as a new kind of knowledge I was being invited to believe in, accept, and share. It emanated with the awareness that, even as I wept and the lead in my pencil dwindled to a stub, I would never be the same again.

Turns out, it's true.

Because nothing has been the same since that night, I no longer have any need to pretend that I have it all under control or that life makes sense.

I don't, and it doesn't, which is precisely what makes miracles so miraculous.

I now understand that all our attempts to control, fix, cajole, maneuver, manipulate, push, and pray are nothing more than miracle blockers. When viewed through the lens of retrospection, miracles are the fruit of faith, not force.

I knew that was a miracle when I met Randy after my first 40 years on the planet. The circumstances were too bizarre, too completely without precedent. We agreed that we were two of the truly fortunate ones. We'd prayed for a miracle. We'd gotten it. End of story.

Then he died.

Which compelled me to ask, What does that say about our supposed miracle? Was I wrong? Were we wrong? Was this some kind of a joke, a faux miracle? Had I been deceived? If God wanted me to be happy, why take away the one person who made me happy?

Could something that once looked like a miracle of light and love turn into something so sinister and dark, something so obviously not miraculous?

I did not know the answer then. But these questions are what goaded me on, deep into realms that I'd never previously tapped. I explored karma, life after "death," past lives, meditation, and conscious creation. I acquiesced into what has been so aptly called the dark night of the soul. I allowed myself to be held by those who'd had similar experiences and encouraged me to believe that I would come out the other side... whole again.

I eventually learned that my sensitivity was simply coding for being an HSP, a Highly Sensitive Person, and a medium for the spirit world and that tapping into that ability would prepare me for becoming a facilitator for other HSPs.

Finally, ultimately, I learned that miracles are in the eye of the beholder, like these:

- I contracted with Randy and agreed to be his partner in this lifetime to help him learn that someone (me) could and would love him unconditionally—a lesson that allowed him to cross over knowing he'd achieved his spiritual goal.
- Randy is now helping me learn, from across the veil, that having trust and faith in what you can't see is the means by which we can influence the energetic force that determines our ongoing lives.
- Questioning every core belief you once held deepens your understanding that the spirit world is always communicating with us and that it's simply up to us to learn how to listen. For me, this has meant having the ability to share such insights with others.

The *biggest* miracle of all, you ask? That's easy.

There is life after death on both sides of the veil.

\* \* \* \*

### MY SPECIAL OFFER THIS MONTH

Purchase a copy of *Crossing the Rubicon* and receive the complete audiobook version, read by Heidi and backed by her inspirationally guided flute music, for free! Use CODE RUBICON11 at checkout.

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### Heidi Connolly,

*The Celestial Professor*, is a purveyor of down-to-earth spirituality. She has authored a number of books, including *Crossing the Rubicon* and *The Gateway Café*, as well as her upcoming, *Elevate Your HSP-ness: How to Live a High-Frequency Life that Amplifies Your Vibration, Celebrates Your Sensitivities, & Uplifts the World!* Heidi is an intuitive coach and medium who works with those who wish to communicate with loved ones on the other side as well as Highly Sensitive People to develop their sensitivities and intuition. A spirit-guided musician, Heidi's flute recordings are renowned for the healing power of their encoded frequencies.

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# JANE BADLER

By Philip Smith & Dina Morrone



Jane Badler, actress, singer, mother, and advocate, inspires others with her commitment to LGBTQ+ and mental health issues by building a community that will join her mission in helping those who are struggling. Her goal is to promote understanding, compassion, and acceptance for all.

### **What was your first love, music or acting?**

Growing up, I was always singing. I played guitar and flute. And I was also performing and acting. I look back on my mother's wisdom, who used to say, "Darling, your beauty is a dime a dozen in the acting world. You should become a lawyer or a doctor." I thought she was ridiculous when she said that. Now, there are times I almost wish I had listened to her.

**You survived the pageant world – winning the title of Miss New Hampshire and competing in the**

### **Miss America pageant in 1993 - how about the Soap Opera world?**

As a performer, you must have a resiliency and survivor attitude to survive LA, New York, and an acting career, especially working on a Soap Opera. You sometimes have to learn and memorize 20 pages a night. And sometimes, all that changes before you even get to work early the next day, only to discover that you have to learn a whole bunch of new pages in a very short period of time.

### **Tell us about your role on *Mission Impossible*.**

It was one of my most remarkable experiences working in TV. I had taken over for another actress who left the show. I got to work with the most incredible warm cast that embraced me. I became very friendly with Tony Hamilton, who sadly passed away too young. And I had the best makeup artist and the best clothes!

**How and when did your music career take off?**

After being a star in the eighties and early nineties, I went to Australia, thinking they would want me for everything. But it's a very different culture on Australian television. I worked a lot in the first couple of years doing guest starring roles on American TV shows but then that all stopped. I think, because of tax reasons. So, I started doing a lot of theater and then moved back into music. I released three albums, did cabaret, wrote an album, and toured. But I was starting to be away too much. And, like many mothers, it wasn't easy. It's a terrible juggle. It was at that point I made a choice not to travel. When my kids were small, I decided to stay in Australia and not come back to America to pursue work.

**You met your husband in Australia. What do you love about Australia?**

Australia is a beautiful country with a wonderful lifestyle, fine food, and spectacular beaches. It's a bit more laid back and not entirely so driven. Success and money and all those things Americans feel give them a sense of importance are not attributes that are probably looked at as favorable there. Not that it's not good, but it's just different—a different set of values.

**Tell me about motherhood and raising your two boys?**

Well, my first son, Sam, was very easygoing. I didn't know anything about mothering. I was a gypsy actress who didn't even know how to cook. Sam was an easy child, so I thought, this is so easy. Then Harry came along, and he was the opposite. There was nothing easy about Harry. He was extraordinary. Brilliant. And he was uniquely different. He classified himself as non-binary, not gay,

although he mainly loved boys. Growing up, he wanted to express himself in flamboyant clothes, in all sorts of designs, jewelry, and wigs. He was very creative. But Melbourne was quite provincial then, in the early nineties, and people didn't understand him. It makes me sad now because I think about the school systems and how the boys played a sport, and the girls went to art class. He would walk over to the Art Department, and they would say, "Where are you going?" He'd say, "I'm going to do art." The response would be, "No, no, no. You're a boy. You play sports." It had such a profound effect on him because he felt pretty isolated. If there were boys that were gay or different, they didn't express it. He was alone a lot of weekends growing up on video games. He was so fearless and didn't care. He wore a dress to his 12th-year prom. He wore makeup and a dress. He just said, "Excuse me, everyone. This is who I am." That affected all the people around him to be brave and fearless as well. It's a gift, and he was always himself. Truly himself, even though he didn't understand it. Children like my son need mentors, not



*For me, the only way I think to survive is to have a much broader perspective than just this earth, this planet, and my ego.*





Harry Hains

*My son left behind some extraordinary creative ventures. His music is extraordinary. I suppose there's some way I could even implement some of his music.*

just their parents but the school system. They need to have a program where they can recognize that and educate and help them.

**You said your son Harry classified himself as non-binary?**

Yes. He called himself anti-boy, which I love. That was his name and his music. He had a tremendous vision, not just for music but costumes and projections of a world where people were accepted, not by race or gender. A world beyond how we judge people by the color of their skin or their attractions. It's a very romantic, beautiful vision, but it was something that he believed in very much. He was significantly evolved but could not cope in this world.

**You were recently in New York for the Ali Forney Foundation's 10th anniversary. Please tell me about this Foundation.**

It's such an excellent Foundation for so many reasons. It's very close to my heart. The people involved, even now, are starting to explode with popularity, and many celebrities have come on board. There's still humbleness and generosity to anyone interested in the organization.

**How did you get involved, and where do you want to go with it?**

I got involved because my managers, who are huge supporters of Ali Forney, and their assistant, an extraordinary trans girl named Chris

had invited me to a fundraiser five years earlier. At that point, my son Harry was still alive, but he was deep in addiction. I remember going to the event and saying to myself, 'Wow, this is incredible.' I'd never quite seen a fundraiser like it. So inclusive, so full of color and fun. After that, I stayed in touch and became a patron and available to slot in wherever they felt I could help.

I think because Ali Forney works with kids, mostly from homes where they aren't accepted, they end up homeless in New York. It's so sad and touches me so profoundly. They have homes for trans, especially trans kids. I want to be involved in any organization that works with kids who feel different and are bullied. These are extraordinary kids! These are the kids that are going to change the world.

As to where I want it to go? I don't have a plan right now. I love that they're involved in changing policy and extending their houses to international countries. It's broadening the whole thing, and I'm not quite sure where I can help.

I'm the mother of a child who struggled with mental illness and addiction and ultimately died of an accidental overdose. But my son left behind some extraordinary creative ventures. His music is extraordinary. I suppose there's some way I could even implement some of his music.



He has a music video called *Dream*, and it's very aligned with LGBTQI. All of his stuff is. We'll see where that collaboration works for all of us.

**Are we going to see you in anything anytime soon?**

I was one of the producers of a movie called *The Trim Season*, which I shot eight months ago in Utah. It's a fantasy horror, but I think it's one of my greatest roles after Diana in the science fiction series, *V*. I'm so excited. We're finishing the film now, and we'll submit it to some big festivals. It's got an incredible young cast. I also produced a short film my son wrote called *Sapphire* about a trans with addiction starring Andrea Pejić. She's a very famous model/actress. It's now making the circuit all over America in many LGBTQ+ festivals. Harry's music is in it. Another thing I'm working on is a memoir, but I'm first looking to see if there's interest from some publishing houses before I decide to move forward with it.

**You said that the loss of a child is "upside down."**

Yes. It is. It's a crazy, surreal out of the body. For me, the only way I think to survive is to have a much broader perspective than just this earth, this planet, and my ego.

And to explore a much bigger picture of others' pain of the planet and the planet's happiness.

**You've had quite a life and career. Do you think your perseverance laid the groundwork for your success and your life's mission?**

Absolutely. It's been a massive shift in my consciousness, going through what I've been through with my son, Harry. It's like another chapter in my life.

\* **Allyship** is key in moving society forward and as a cisgender parent of a non-binary child, Jane's gift of being able to connect with the public at large about these issues, and other parents and families who are struggling is very powerful because these conversations can open up communication and new ways of thinking that can create a healthier environment for kids that are having a tough time and feeling like they don't belong or fit into societal "norms." Jane is the driving force behind her son Harry Hains posthumous projects by keeping his music art and message alive. You can listen to Harry's Inclusive Vision of *One Love* by going to Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i17tCzHFIjI>



# THE JOY OF RHYTHMIC SYNCHRONIZATION IN RELATIONSHIPS



By Jill Lebeau, MS, LMFT & Amit West, M.A

Let's hone in on how relationships have the potential of either uplifting you into higher states of presence, joy, and bliss or, conversely, sending you down the rabbit hole of unhealed anxiety, frustration, and anger. We know the lower vibrational emotions are not on your Top 10 list of feeling favorites. But stay tuned because when you understand the higher purpose and grander perspective of all of this, you'll realize how it's all perfect. Really! No matter how things show up, appearing as problems in your cluttered mind's point of view.

We begin by highlighting the nervous system and the pivotal role it plays in our power to create those juicy, loving relationships we all want to enjoy. What does your nervous system have to do with relationships? Actually, it's a key player in how we experience ourselves and everyone else. All day long, we're sending and receiving vibrational cues both consciously as well as unconsciously.

What is the purpose of the nervous system, anyway? Think of it this way. The nervous system is the master regulator of all the

systems of the body. Much like a conductor of an orchestra, it knows what needs to happen and directs all the musicians to create the most beautiful, harmonious music.

Do you feel as though you're creating a life of beautiful, harmonious music? Consider this. These days, most of us are functioning from an old, antiquated operating system. Yes, when the mountain lion shows up suddenly on your Sunday afternoon hike, the nervous system's fight, flight, or freeze response is doing its job perfectly, letting you know it's time to high-tail it out of there! But, as we've been living in the conditioned rat race of modern times, our poor nervous systems are all out of whack, perceiving danger everywhere. All it takes is a comment in the "wrong tone," and we're off and running or fighting.

Our nervous system floods our body with stress hormones (cortisol), sending out cues to the nervous systems of those we're engaged with, and in turn, their nervous system starts flooding their bodies with cortisol. A domino effect and a recipe for disaster!



Check it out. Now, you're no longer two people communicating with one another; you've been reduced to two nervous systems kicked up into high gear, battling out old reactive patterns of unhealed, unprocessed pain. At that moment, both of you are desperately seeking safety. And let's face it, we've all experienced the rapid decline of consciousness and default to autopilot. You know, where we feel absolutely compelled to defend ourselves, judge and blame others (convinced that they've hijacked our power and all of our hard-earned self-esteem - now in the toilet), and find that safety at all costs, even if it means hurting your loved one unintentionally. By the way, the energy you're sending out to anyone first flows through every single cell in your body! Now you're both feeling hurt, hopeless, and separate when what you really want is to feel the loving connection you deeply yearn for.

And the same is true for what we're observing on the world stage at this time of Awakening. We each hold a piece of the tapestry of life and play a role in creating harmony, peace, and love in our beautiful home that we all share on planet Earth.

OK, so now for the really awesome, exciting part. Did you know that our nervous systems are designed to harmonize with our environment, which includes other people, animals, nature - the whole enchilada? The Divine Design is Love and Attunement. The Truth is Oneness. We are all interconnected. We're meant to live in peace, joy, ease, and love. We thrive when we support one another to live in harmony. And everything about us, from our nervous systems to Mother Nature - all of it is here to support us to live our Heaven On Earth.

We thrive when we support one another to live in harmony.

So, how do we experience the joy of synchronization & harmony within our relationships? Keeping it real, we love offering practical tips and highly effective

guidance to harmonize and synchronize in the easiest, most effortless, fun, and most potent ways.

Awareness is key. When we recognize our reactive patterns, we reclaim our power to show up for ourselves with love and compassion and, in turn, offer that same energy to others. It is exceedingly helpful to pause, tune in and have an inner chat with ourselves to find out what we need in the moment to feel safe. This is how we shift out of the reactive fight/ flight/ freeze state into a feeling of inner peace and flow. We can further support this shift by using a simple, effective mindful practice.

Here is a simple conscious breathing technique for you to play with and focus upon.

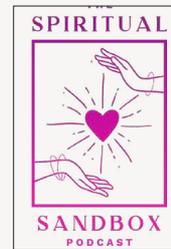
Sit comfortably in a chair, allowing your spine to be erect without any tension. Gently breathe in through your nose, filling in your chest and belly (deeper belly breathing activates the vagus nerve, which stimulates the nervous system to shift into "rest and digest" mode).

Breathe all the way in, and as you exhale through your mouth, let out an audible sigh "ahhhhhh." Repeat a few times and notice the renewed sense of peace and well-being within you.

Congratulations! You have succeeded in choosing a different trajectory. You are now able to respond instead of reacting... coming home to yourself, remembering your true Divine nature, which IS Love in action. Now you're emanating a whole different, much higher vibration with your nervous system no longer acting out fight/ flight/ freeze reactions. Yay, you!

Let's sum it up.

Every moment you choose to experience peace, those around you can tap into that frequency, and get this, you seed the possibilities for all to be in peace. This is how we create a peaceful planet through Oneness! And it begins with YOU!



**Jill Lebeau, MS, LMFT**- As a spiritual psychotherapist and author, Jill's mastery is guiding people to live in the magical flow of ease, joy, abundance, love and freedom.

Jill is here to help you remember the truth of who you are, a magnificent Being of limitless love and expansion. As the Creator of your reality, you can be, do, or have, whatever you desire. It's Jill's joy to show you how fast, easy, fun and thrilling it is to elevate into your highest vibration! To learn more about Jill's please visit;

<https://www.easejoylove.com/>

**Amit West, M.A.** - As a transformational facilitator, healer, guide, teacher, and ceremonialist, it's Amit's deepest Joy and honor supporting people on their awakening heart consciousness journey.

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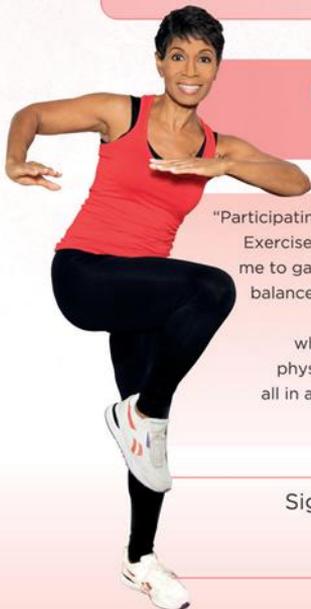
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**I'll see you in the next RHYTHM Exercise session.**



# THE PRESENT MOMENT VS. THE WHAT IS TRAP

The road to happiness is paved with the skill of retraining our minds to process life as it is rather than how we think it should be. Often that means becoming adept at honoring the moment we are in. There is another side to the "present" moment objective. This is where many of us get stuck and even sabotage our efforts. It is in what I refer to as getting caught in our "what is" moments. **"What is"** is a specific moment when we are experiencing something we wish we were not experiencing. We become focused on what is NOT working in our lives. We supercharge that focus with emotion, often grounded in some form of scarcity. We unintentionally make the number one mistake people make using the law of attraction: rather than seeing the abundance in every other area of our lives, we hyper-focus on one element that we do not see as abundance and give it all the power. We manifest accordingly. Emotion behaves as an urgent call for something to happen.

The trap in focusing on "what is" is that it pinches off the life force energy that would otherwise flow into our desires and make them manifest. Our negative experience multiplies. We attract more of what we do not want.

An abundance of work begins and ends with focus, intention, and desire. When we fuel our desires with positive emotion, we expedite benevolent results as we align with the limitless power of divine wisdom. When we hyper-focus on "what is," we create a competing flow of energy that moves us away from the desire we have crafted in our hearts and minds. We put ourselves at odds with the very thing we say we want.

Part of the answer to this ongoing challenge with human beings is to continue to develop an expanded view of life and strengthen ourselves as we learn to navigate gestation periods before manifestation occurs. The first step is to grasp that each moment life delivers to us is for us in some way. It is our interpretation of events that tell us something bad is happening to us. Life itself is conspiring every second of every day on our behalf. We cannot be given a learning experience we do not need. It is the ego that wants to quantify, qualify, and measure each moment and compare it to the ego's view of what life should look like.

Another part of the answer is that human beings become addicted to their emotions. We must address this imbalance. Emotion pulls us off center. The feeling is the body's biofeedback to life. It is useful as a guidepost. When something feels good, we move toward it. When something feels bad, we move away from it. Too often, humans ignore their biofeedback and press on at the urg-

ing of the comparing ego mind. It is not until we find ourselves in a quagmire we begin to reassess our approach. The feeling is a good thing. Emotion takes us out of balance.

We must learn to silence the ego's voice and defer to the voice of higher wisdom, and trust that wisdom. Some people will spend their entire lives refusing to defer to high wisdom. They wonder why their outcomes are fragmented. We create a self-fulfilling prophecy of lack that becomes more difficult to undo as time passes, and we habituate our processes.

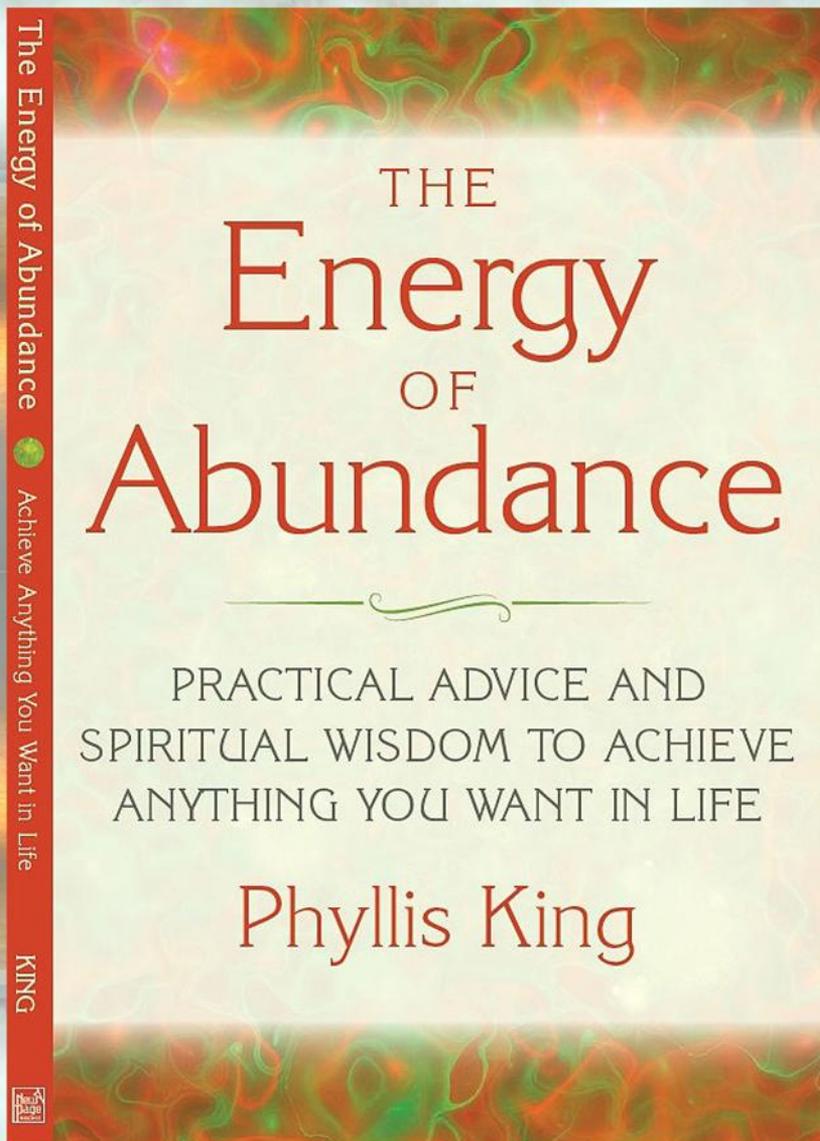
When we pinch off the wisdom that comes from divine consciousness, we take ourselves out of the abundant flow. We settle for a version of life that is smaller than what we deserve. That is how we know the ego won the battle in that conversation. Divine consciousness always says, "your needs are met beyond your wildest expectations." The task as human beings is to learn to align ourselves with our creator's promises. We have to learn how to be good receivers.

Quantum physics has proved that thought precedes tangible matter. Absent the ability to act as if what you want already belongs to you, your process to manifestation will either be delayed or completely detoured. Master your thoughts and your feelings, and life will come to you beyond your expectations. In that, develop the inner strength to hold the vibration of the divine promise until the manifestation occurs. This is the path to effortless abundance. It is an inside job. Worldly joy comes through energetic alignment with the grace and promise of divine wisdom.



Known as the Common Sense Psychic (tm), **Phyllis King** has worked with tens of thousands of people in 25 countries. She is known for her practical and down to earth approach. She has been featured on, ABC, CBS and NBC TV, radio programs across the country, and has been published in over 70 print and online publications. She has four books, including *Bouncing Back*, *Thriving in Changing Times*, with Dr. Wayne Dyer. Her latest book *The Energy of Abundance* is available in bookstores now. Phyllis holds a B.A. in Sociology. [www.phyllisking.com](http://www.phyllisking.com)

HOW YOU CAN PLAY THE ENERGY GAME  
TO INVITE MORE HAPPINESS LOVE AND ABUNDANCE  
INTO YOUR LIFE



Phyllis has worked with tens of thousands of people in 30 countries. She is known for her practical and down-to-earth advice. She has been featured on ABC, CBS, and NBC TV and hundreds of radio programs across the US, the UK and Europe.

# What would Ed do?

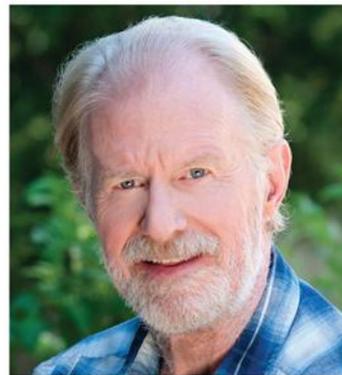


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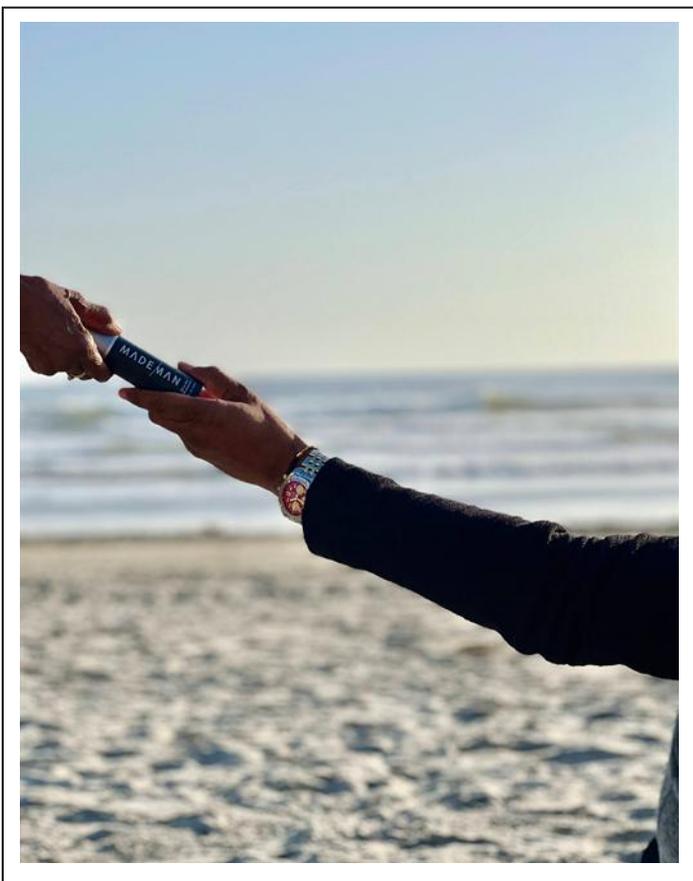
- DISH SOAP (also makes a great HAND SOAP)
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- MULTI-SURFACE FLOOR CLEANER
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# MADE/MAN



It's safe to say that most men aren't typically taught about skin-care. Yet, there's a growing trend among brands like MadeMan to change that. Simple and sophisticated, the line includes everyday tools men need for self-care and a lifestyle that brings fulfillment and enjoyment.



## The Re(Set) Collection

Simplified Two-Step Skincare

- Includes The Resetter, a 2-in-1 Shave Cream/Face Wash, and The Refresher, an All-in-One Moisturizer. \$99.99.
- The Resetter (2-in-1 Cleanser & Shave Gel):

This sulfate-free, two-in-one cleanser and shave cream combines eucalyptus essential oil with natural foaming agent soapbark to facilitate a smooth shave and a deep but gentle cleansing. It leaves the skin and facial hair feeling soft, smooth, and well-hydrated. (Individually priced at \$60).

**Ingredients:** Glycerin-Infused Coconut Oil, Quillaja Soap Bark Extract, Sunflower Seed Oil

- The Refresher (All-in-One Moisturizer):  
Protects from pollution and digital light exposure while minimizing skin imperfections and pore appearance. Continued use will improve skin luminosity (glow) and texture and reduce redness and signs of aging. (Individually priced at \$60).

**Ingredients:** Chicory Root, Castor Seed Oil, Vitamin C, Indian Ginseng Extract

Products are certified vegan, cruelty-free, Made in America, and free of phthalates, sulfates, parabens, gluten, and GMOs.

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For more information, visit <https://getmademan.com>

MadeMan is the solution for any man who seeks to take control of his life and looks. It's a foundation for good habits, discipline, and self-confidence. The brand simplifies self-care for men who have arrived and those on their way, refreshing faces with an entire routine packed into two easy products. Follow them on Instagram @mademan.



Massive flooding, sweeping wildfires, devastating landslides -- 2022 has been rife with visible reminders of our changing climate, and kids are noticing. As climate change continues to make international headlines, the future of our planet is top of mind for kids and grownups. We know kids are passionate about helping protect our planet, so what can we do to empower them to take action?

# This is Barefoot Books

We are an award-winning, independent children's book publisher with a mission to instill in young readers three of our dearest values: conservation, community, and connectedness.

Independent children's book publisher Barefoot Books has been committed to teaching kids about the values of conservation, community, and connectedness for over 30 years. They offer a collection of eco-conscious titles, but this year, they are taking their commitment to sustainability even further. Barefoot Books has partnered with *The White Feather Foundation*, founded by Julian Lennon, to curate a collection of products and resources to educate kids about the environment and give them real ways they can positively impact their communities now.



Photo by Irina Schmidt/AdobeStock

It's important to talk to kids about climate change and sustainability, but some parents or teachers may not know how. Author Christy Mihaly of Barefoot Books Water advises them to "Be honest with kids about how you feel about climate change. And encourage them to share how they feel. Support their feelings, whether they are anxious or angry, or confused. But tell them what makes you hopeful too. And keep the conversation going." Once kids understand the situation, they can be a driving force in making change. "As evidenced by the youth climate movement, children can play a large role in holding leaders accountable for their environmental promises," says author Stacy Clark of Planet Power. "Being an active citizen is an important character-building exercise and something even very young kids can learn." This is where the Planet Protector Pack comes in.



The Planet Protector Pack includes critically acclaimed Barefoot Books titles about renewable energy and natural resources, a tote bag made from recycled water bottles, a tree planting kit, as well as a suite of online, hands-on activities for teachers and families. One of the titles included in the pack, Barefoot Books Water, was just recognized by Kirkus Reviews as one of the "150 Most Anticipated Books for Fall." With each purchase of a Planet Protector Pack, \$10 will be donated to The White Feather Foundation to support their conservation efforts.

Established in 2007 by Julian Lennon, The White Feather Foundation brings awareness to worthy organizations by amplifying their voices, expanding their supporter communities, and providing funding for their initiatives. This is achieved through the support of projects across the globe that foster education and good health, preserve Indigenous cultures, sustain our environment and give access to clean water for the conservation of life.

New York Times bestselling author Julian Lennon, who is also a member of The Explorers Club, contributes a photo print to the pack, including a letter of inspiration to kids. His most recent book, a graphic novel for middle-grade kids, The Morning Tribe, was released in November 2021 by Sky Pony. Lennon was recently honored with the World Literacy Award for his work promoting literacy through The White Feather Foundation. He hopes this collaboration will encourage kids to take action on climate change, saying, "I am hopeful these books and activities compel kids to be the best stewards of the earth that they can be."

*As climate change continues to make international headlines, the future of our planet is top of mind for kids and grownups.*



**Planet Protector Pack**

**\$10 USD donation**  
to The White Feather Foundation  
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SIDE  
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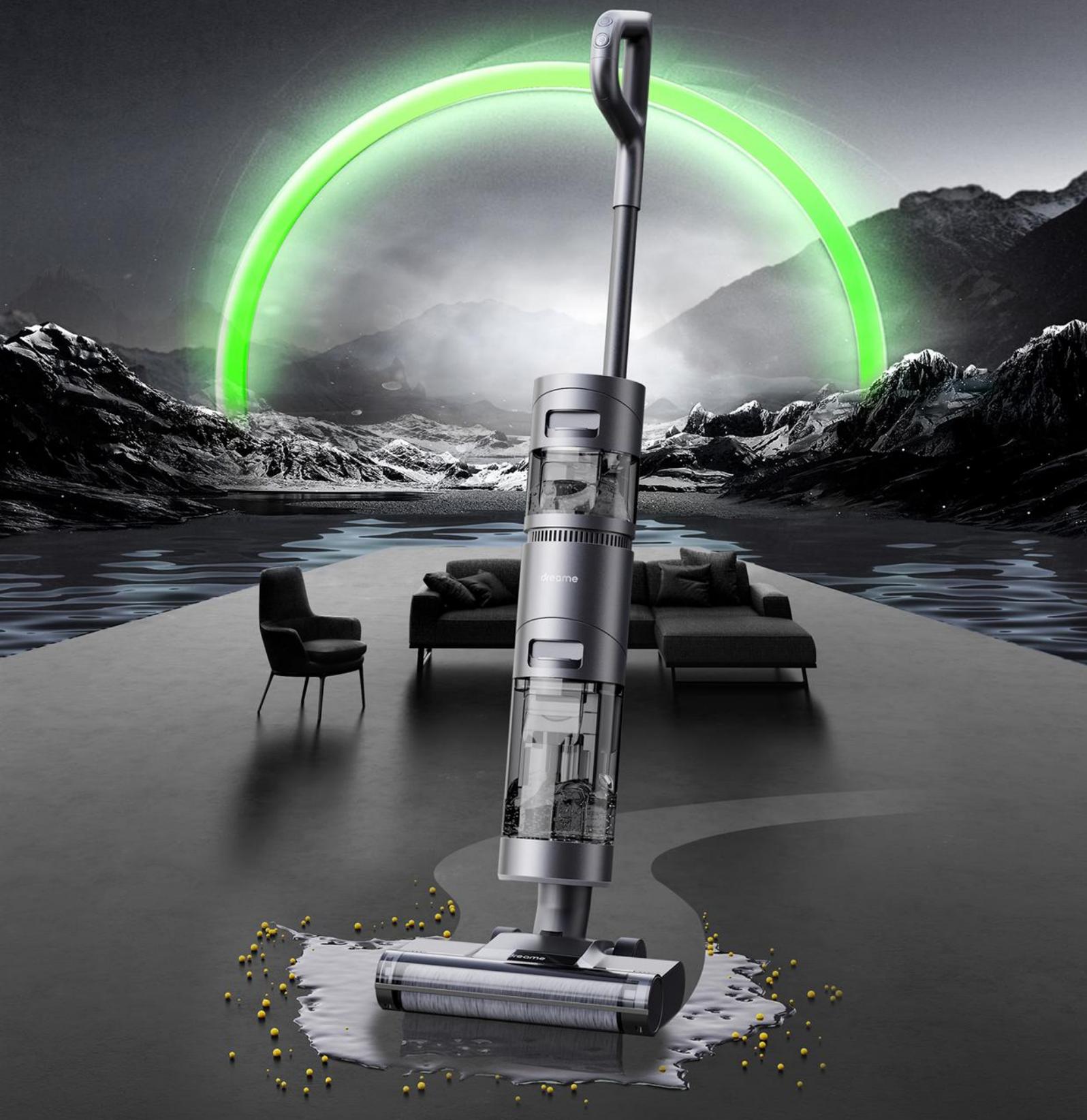


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Covering  
Climate  
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A misty, autumnal landscape with a tall, thin tree in the foreground and a wooden fence in the background. The scene is hazy, with soft light filtering through the trees and a wooden fence visible in the lower right. The overall mood is serene and slightly melancholic.

# WARMER WINTERS KEEP CROPS SLEEPY INTO SPRING, HURTING YIELD

*Annual crops go dormant during winter. Frosty temperatures cue them to wake up—but the warmer winters brought on by climate change scramble the cold signal, hurting yield.*

By Elise Cutts

**T**here's a reason sci-fi stasis pods are often icy: Biology tends to slow down when it's cold and speed up when it's warm.

By this logic, higher temperatures should boost plant growth. But the warmer winters brought on by climate change actually seem to hurt yields for many crops. And scientists now have a better idea why.

Annual crops need frosty periods to break out of their winter dormancy, reveal results published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America. Researchers grew winter oilseed rape, or canola, in temperature-controlled chambers and farm plots and found that the plant goes through a hibernation-like state that "breaks" only if the plants are sufficiently chilled.

The new results highlight how climate change can shake up the finely tuned feedback systems linking life and the environment.

"One of the main footprints of climate change is...the timing of biological events, like flowering in this case," said ecologist Johanna Schmitt of the University of California, Davis, who was not involved in the new research. Such events are "a big deal for ecosystems, the fitness of plant populations, and in this case for crop yields."

#### **Getting the Timing Right**

Perennial plants like trees and bushes stay in the ground for more than two growing cycles (usually measured in years). To protect their developing buds from winter frosts, perennials

enter a dormant state once things start getting chilly. This state is called "bud dormancy," and it's a critical adaptation to seasonal climates.

But there's a catch: Plants need to be very careful not to "wake up" from bud dormancy too early. Mistaking a few warm autumn days for spring could have deadly consequences.

Getting bud dormancy right means working against biophysics. Generally speaking, warmer temperatures speed up biology and boost growth, whereas colder temperatures do the opposite. But bud dormancy works against this tendency, explained plant biologist Steven Penfield of the John Innes Centre in Norwich, United Kingdom, who led the new study.

"The normal relationship between temperature and plant growth is completely reversed" during bud dormancy, Penfield said. "This is the trick plants have evolved."

During bud dormancy, plants slow down when it's warm and speed up when it's chilly. Dormancy breaks only once plants spend enough time at cold enough temperatures. This keeps them safe until spring actually arrives.

“*Plants need to be very careful not to “wake up” from bud dormancy too early. Mistaking a few warm autumn days for spring could have deadly consequences.*”

“*Bud dormancy is just one of many ways plants have evolved to perceive and respond to cues in their environments. Being able to notice those cues helps plants survive, but climate change is scrambling the signals.*”

### **Bud Dormancy in Annual Crops**

Annual plants stay in the ground for only 1 year or less, so many don't bother surviving the winter at all. But “winter annuals,” planted in late summer or early autumn, delay flowering until spring and need cold to develop properly.

Previous studies had linked warmer winters to lower yields in winter annual crops like winter wheat and winter oilseed rape, but the relationship wasn't clear. Penfield and his team wondered if bud dormancy might be the answer.

To find out, the team grew winter oilseed rape and watched what happened when they put the plants through simulated warmer winters.

In the lab, the researchers used climate-controlled growth chambers about the size of an office to grow their plants, which they programmed with weather station data to mimic a real farm in northern England. They also ran experiments in the field with temperature-controlled plots.

The results in both cases were the same: The plants that experienced warmer winters had worse yields.

A closer look at the plants, including an analysis of how they turned key dormancy-related genes on and off during the winter, revealed that the lower yield really was linked to flower bud dormancy, a life stage not previously recognized in annuals.

The new results don't “just show a direct correlation between a measured increase in temperature and reduced yield—it's been explained why” the

correlation exists, said plant developmental biologist Pilar Cubas of the National Centre for Biotechnology in Spain. “It could give us some ideas of how to sort out this problem.”

### **Climate Change Scrambles Environmental Signals**

Bud dormancy is just one of many ways plants have evolved to perceive and respond to cues in their environments. Being able to notice those cues helps plants survive, but climate change is scrambling the signals.

In a warmer climate, some events plants use to time their growth aren't coming at the expected time. They sometimes don't even come at all.

“What's happening with climate change is now there's a mismatch, so a formerly adaptive cue is no longer adaptive,” said Schmitt. “I saw this actually in our nectarine tree in our backyard in Davis one year: They just didn't accumulate enough chilling units, and they didn't really do much that spring. They [only] had a few deformed buds.”

Penfield said his group's experiments in growing diverse varieties of oilseed rape offer hope that breeding plants better suited to warmer winters may be possible. Understanding dormancy could help.

It's less clear how wild plants will cope.

“The really big question,” asked Schmitt, “is are our natural plant populations going to be able to keep up with climate change?”

This story originally appeared in "EOS" It is republished here as part of The Eden Magazine partnership with Covering Climate Now, a global journalistic collaboration to strengthen coverage of the climate story.



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