

# MIND & BODY

PLUME CREATIVE/GETTY IMAGES

If you can think of a way that you would like to improve or enrich yourself, then you can think of a way to journal.

SELF REFLECTION

## The Unexpected Joy of Journaling

There are endless ways to journal and each of them brings you closer to yourself

JENNIFER MARGULIS

I was in the bookstore looking for a new journal. I pulled one with Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* painting on the cover off the shelf, assessed how many pages it had, and checked the price. It had lines. An unlined journal is better for drawing and sketching, which I like to do, but other than that it seemed perfect. It had a ribbon sewn into its spine to use as a bookmark and enough pages that it would last me several months.

I strive to be a minimalist, but choosing a new journal is a ritual that I engage in three or four times each year. It fills me with optimism and a sense of excitement. For me, starting a new journal is always like finding a new friend.

### A Record to Improve Your Health

What do you do with all of your thoughts? How do you sort through your ideas? How do you make sure that you're on the right path toward healthy living and mindfulness? I believe that anyone can benefit from keeping a journal. You don't have to be a writer. You don't have to know how to spell. Especially if you have an active mind—or you're searching for ways to improve your life—the practice of keeping a journal will help.

Indeed, experts say that keeping a journal can improve your emotional well-being, reduce daily stress, help with problem-solving, and help with gaining mental and emotional clarity.

"There's an ever-growing body of research on journaling's many benefits," Marjorie Ingall, author of *Mamaleh Knows Best: What Jewish Mothers Do to Raise Successful, Creative, Empathetic, and Independent Children*, wrote in an article in *Real Simple*.

Continued on Page 6

## Why Is COVID-19 Severe for Some?

New study may explain severe reactions to COVID-19 and the vaccines

JENNIFER MARGULIS

Are the antibodies we produce to fight COVID-19 infection causing severe disease?

A new paper—so new in fact that it hasn't yet been peer-reviewed—from scientists in Hangzhou, China, appears to indicate just that.

The researchers' data suggests that at least two antibodies that target the spike protein that enables the COVID-19 virus to enter human cells are "pathogenic"—

meaning these antibodies create illness all by themselves.

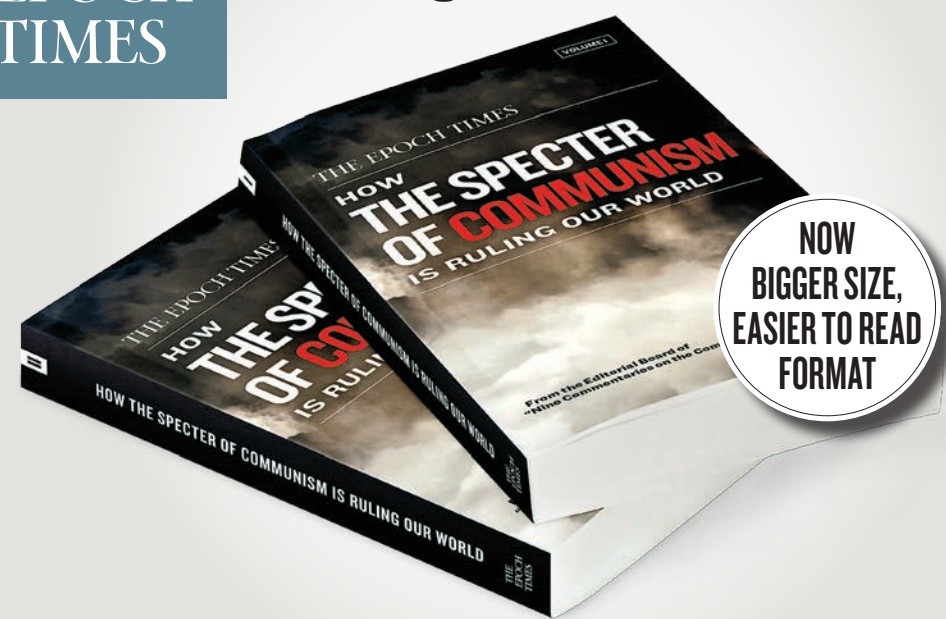
It's hard to think of antibodies—one of the body's best infection fighters—as "pathogenic," but that's exactly what happens in autoimmune disease. Antibodies that the body develops in response to foreign invaders attach to body tissues instead, sometimes causing catastrophic damage.

Continued on Page 2



A new study raises concerns about the antibodies triggered by both COVID-19 and the vaccines.

FAKRETOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

THE  
EPOCH  
TIMESThe Book You've Been  
Waiting for...“Extremely well  
researched and true.”“The Truth, as horrifying as it is,  
shall set us free. This should be  
on this country's academia's  
list of required reading.”

## HOW THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM IS RULING OUR WORLD

The specter of communism did not disappear with the disintegration of the Communist Party in Eastern Europe

**ORDER NOW!**

 Available at  
**amazon** **EpochShop.com**

MEDICALLY CORRECT

# Defensive Medicine

It may be more than just costly

PETER WEISS

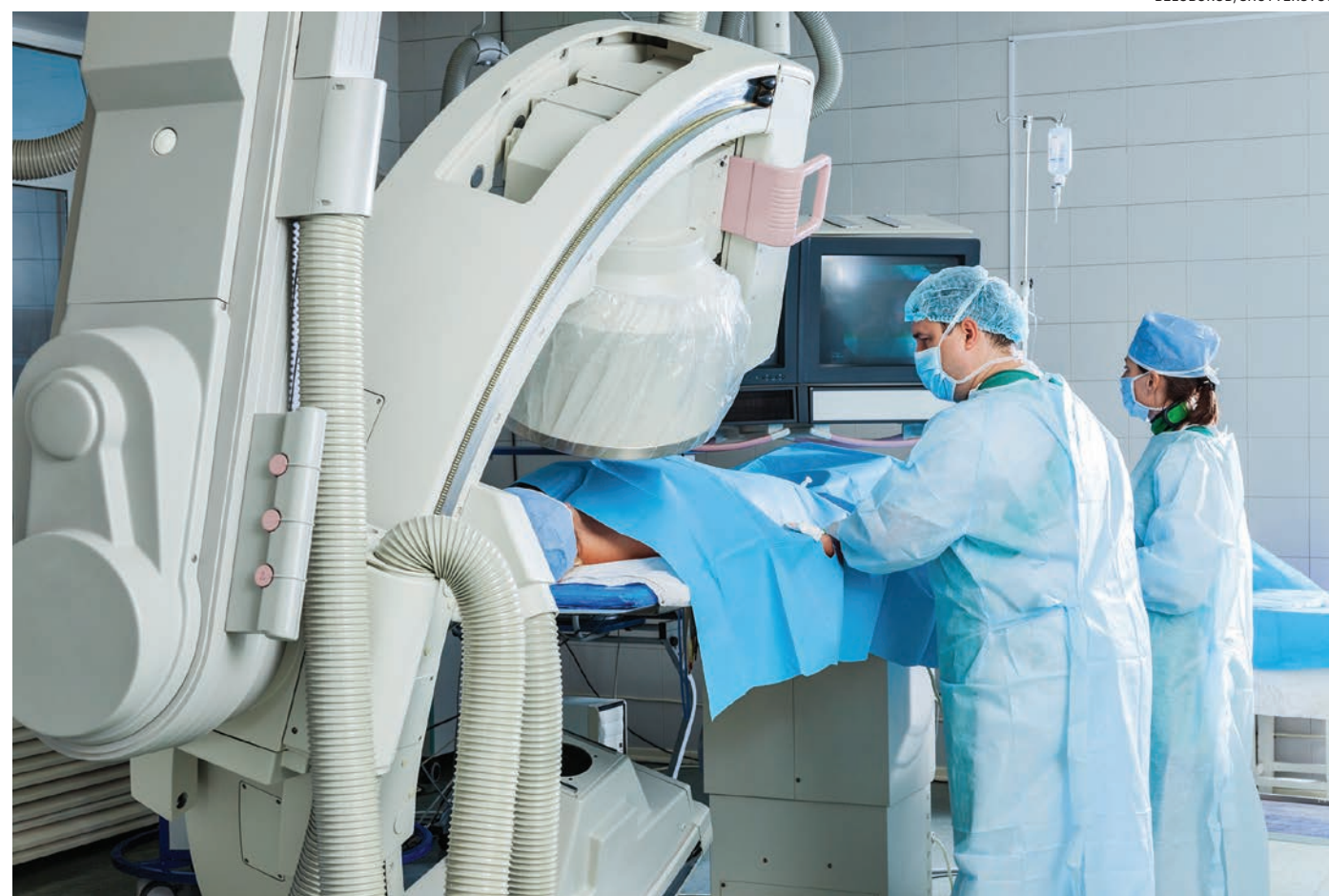
**H**T was a 27-year-old woman who was having some pelvic pain, nothing really bad, and it sounded like cramping due to her period. Could be endometriosis, but that's for another story. The problem is that when I was called by the ER doctor to go see her, she told me that the lab tests were normal and the CAT scan was negative as well as the pelvic sonogram. I asked the doctor, was the pain that bad you ordered a CAT scan? Her response was very typical, “Everyone with pain gets a CAT scan.”

The now-defunct U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment defined defensive medicine as “when doctors order tests, procedures, primarily (but not necessarily) because of concern about malpractice liability.” According to a 2018 article in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine* defensive medicine was estimated to cost \$45 billion annually, even more when you include overall liability costs. This is only an estimate, since it's very hard to quantify what medicine is defensive. A lot of what we as physicians do can easily be excused as “being thorough, just in case.” And sometimes we do it at the patient's request.

I went down to see HT. She was a lovely young woman who thought she may have had an ovarian cyst. She was visiting from out of town and didn't know what to do. I reassured her, she was fine, gave her some

Avoiding lawsuits may seem necessary for doctors and hospitals, but patients should be aware of its effects on health care.

**A 2008 survey of Massachusetts internists reported that 27 percent of CAT scans, 16 percent of laboratory tests and 14 percent of hospital admissions were ordered due to liability concerns.**



BELOBOROD/SHUTTERSTOCK

ibuprofen, and sent her on her way. Never mind the question of why she felt she needed to go to an emergency room at two in the morning. The real question is, why did she get a CAT scan?

Research findings on the risks of too many CT scans are a little conflicted in their analysis. Some studies show a theoretical increase in potential future cancer cases from the roughly 70 million CT scans done yearly in the United States. There are some studies claiming such fears are exaggerated. In 2016, *Medical News Today* reported there was “no evidence that CT scans, X rays cause cancer” while other studies suggest the risk is low. My point here is not to argue whether or not CT scans can potentially cause harm, it is to say, why get one if you don't need it? That is the point of defensive medicine.

A 2014 paper in *JAMA Internal Medicine* highlights that 28 percent of orders for CAT scans in a three-hospital review were for “defensive medicine.” In that same article, it mentions a 2008 survey of Massachusetts internists who reported that 27 percent of

CAT scans, 16 percent of laboratory tests, and 14 percent of hospital admissions were ordered due to liability concerns.

There is an even more interesting report from the results of a survey in Pennsylvania of 800 physicians published in the *Annals of Medical and Health Science Research* in 2013. It revealed that 92 percent of physicians were found to be ordering imaging tests and diagnostic measures for assurance. That is a polite way to say “defensive” medicine. In 2010 Gallup and Jackson Healthcare found 73 percent and 92 percent of private practice physicians, respectively, admitted practicing defensive medicine.

What really drives this “defensive medicine,” and is it really bad? The answer is mixed. In 2015, the National Health Interview study found 25 percent of women who had a yearly screening mammogram were informed that they had dense breast tissue.

The FDA ruled that in March 2019, radiologists must inform patients who were getting screening mammograms if they were found to have dense breast tissue. The real

*Dr. Peter Weiss has been a frequent guest on local and national TV, newspapers, and radio. He was an assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA for 30 years, stepping down so he could provide his clinical services to those in need when the COVID pandemic hit. He was also a national health care adviser for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.*

problem here, other than the government getting involved when they shouldn't, is what does dense breast tissue mean? Now the official written reports we as physicians get state that they have dense breast tissue, and they add “dense tissue can make it difficult to find a small cancer.”

Some radiologists even add on the report to consider getting an MRI. Not only are there no guidelines as to what is recommended, but some radiologists also advise additional costly testing. This is defensive medicine. I am guilty of this as well. Now when a patient of mine has such a report, I offer them a breast ultrasound and document it was offered. I do tell them very openly that this is defensive medicine and I document their decision.

I am sure all of you have noticed that when you go to see your physician or nurse practitioner, he or she is looking at the computer or laptop. Rarely do they look up at the patient. It's all about data entry and clicking on the appropriate box. I admit that I'm old, and even though I carry a small laptop, I leave it on the counter in the exam room and talk with my patients looking directly into their eyes. I jot down notes on paper and later transfer them to the computer. The laptop is for reference to old labs or imaging results if I need them for discussion.

A 2016 study from *Annals of Internal Medicine*, called “Allocation of Physicians Time in Ambulatory Practice: A time and motion study in 4 specialties,” stated that “for each hour doctors give direct clinical facetime to patients, approximately two further hours are spent on electronic records and desk work in the clinic day.”

Maybe we physicians practice defensive medicine because we have such limited time to spend with our patients and it's easier to order a test than to take the time to think through if it's really needed. That's only a part of it, the real reason is we know we can be sued for almost any bad outcome. Bad outcomes usually aren't malpractice, but tell that to the busy ER doctor at two in the morning when you are constipated and you decide you want them to treat you like it's a life-and-death emergency.

As Hippocrates guides us to pledge, “I will prescribe regimen for good of my patients according to my ability and my judgment and never do harm to anyone.”

That simple oath can sure get complicated.

## Why Is COVID-19 Severe for Some?

 New study may explain severe  
reactions to COVID-19 and the vaccines

*Continued from Page 1*

In early 2020, Japanese researchers discovered that many COVID-19 deaths were caused by part of the body's immune reaction. In a peer-reviewed article published in *Inflammation and Regeneration*, the scientists argued that it was a “cytokine storm” that overwhelmed the body and was implicated in the high death rates from the virus.

This new Chinese study shows that yet another component of the immune system may be a danger as well.

The fact that antibodies that target COVID-19's spike protein are harmful is disturbing enough, but it's especially disturbing knowing that these same antibodies are likely to be triggered by COVID-19 vaccines as well as the virus.

All three of the vaccines approved for emergency use by the CDC stimulate the production of antibodies against the spike protein—the mRNA vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer, and the recombinant vector vaccine from Johnson and Johnson.

### Spike Protein Antibodies Attack Body Tissues

The Chinese researchers suspected that some antibodies triggered by a pathogenic virus could attack body tissues. To test the hypothesis, they identified seven different COVID-19 antibodies. They then analyzed how well each of these antibodies bound to human lung cells, both healthy and damaged ones. Antibodies binding to your own tissue cells can cause autoimmune damage.

As the researchers expected, two of the antibodies bound strongly to damaged lung cells—and one of those bound strongly to healthy cells as well.

The researchers then injected the antibodies, as well as some combinations, into the bodies of healthy pregnant mice at three-day intervals. They wanted to see

“If you remove the replicating capabilities of the virus, it still has a major damaging effect on the vascular cells.”

*Dr. Uri Manor, researcher, Salk Institute for Biological Studies*



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

what, if any, damage the antibodies would do to the mice and their pups.

Again as expected, the same two antibodies that had bound well to the human lung cells did extensive damage to the mouse pups' tissues.

In fact, the antibody that could bind to healthy human lung cells, REGN10987, killed nearly half the pups.

“This is a very troubling finding,” says Zoey O'Toole, a vaccine safety advocate who has a background in physics and engineering and who reviewed the study carefully. “It should give anyone pause, especially pregnant women.”

### How Does SARS-CoV-2 Kill?

One of the big questions about SARS-CoV-2, also known as COVID-19, is exactly how it causes serious illness in those who have died as well as in others who develop long-term symptoms.

Most viruses cause short-term illness that resolves once the body has had time to develop antibodies, which appears to be the case for the majority of people who contract COVID-19.

Why is it, then, that some people die after two to three weeks of illness, when their immune systems have already cleared the virus from their bodies?

And why do some people—known as “long haulers”—have long-term multi-organ damage that seems to have nothing to do with the virus itself?

We know that no two people have identical immune responses. With COVID-19, we've also seen that those who get severely ill have higher levels of inflammatory cytokines in their blood. This is the “cytokine storm” that the media latched onto as an explanation for severe infectious disease.

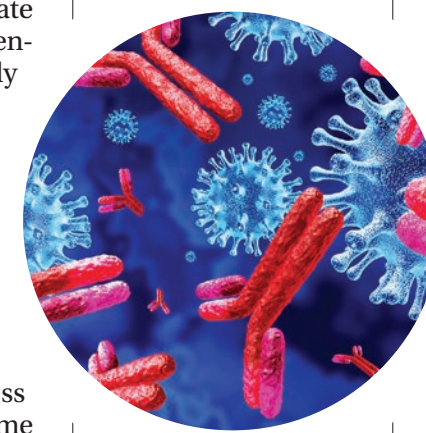
### How Antibodies Create Severe Disease

But elevated cytokines are only part of the picture. Researchers have long suspected an autoimmune aspect to severe COVID-19 disease as well.

An article in *Nature* in January noted that surprisingly high percentages of people with severe disease from COVID-19 had auto-immune antibodies. These antibodies targeted the immune system itself, as well as the blood vessels, heart, and brain.

Since COVID-19 was first identified, we have seen auto-immune responses worsening the effect of the disease, increasing inflammation and immune dysregulation,

Research suggests that the antibodies that target COVID-19's spike protein can be harmful, which is doubly concerning given these same antibodies are likely to be triggered by COVID-19 vaccines.



and sometimes increasing the activity of the virus itself.

The Chinese researchers don't suggest how the antibodies damage tissues, but autoimmunity researchers have long understood that the particular proteins our antibodies lock on to when they target a virus are sometimes found in our own cells.

This “molecular mimicry” might be only a partial match, but even that can be enough to cause otherwise helpful antibodies to attack our own healthy cells.

### COVID-19 Vaccine Design

The findings from this pre-print have profound implications for vaccine design. In order for a vaccine to be as safe and effective as possible, it would have to be one that stimulates antibodies that neutralize the pathogen but don't bind to any body tissues, so that people who got it would be safe from autoimmune effects.

Unfortunately, it seems that industry scientists didn't take molecular mimicry into consideration when designing the COVID-19 vaccines.

The spike protein that makes SARS-CoV-2 so infectious to humans was the target the vaccine makers focused on when designing their vaccines. They believed that the spike protein itself, apart from the rest of the virus, was harmless. If the isolated protein wasn't the disease agent, getting the body to make the protein for a short time would be safe.

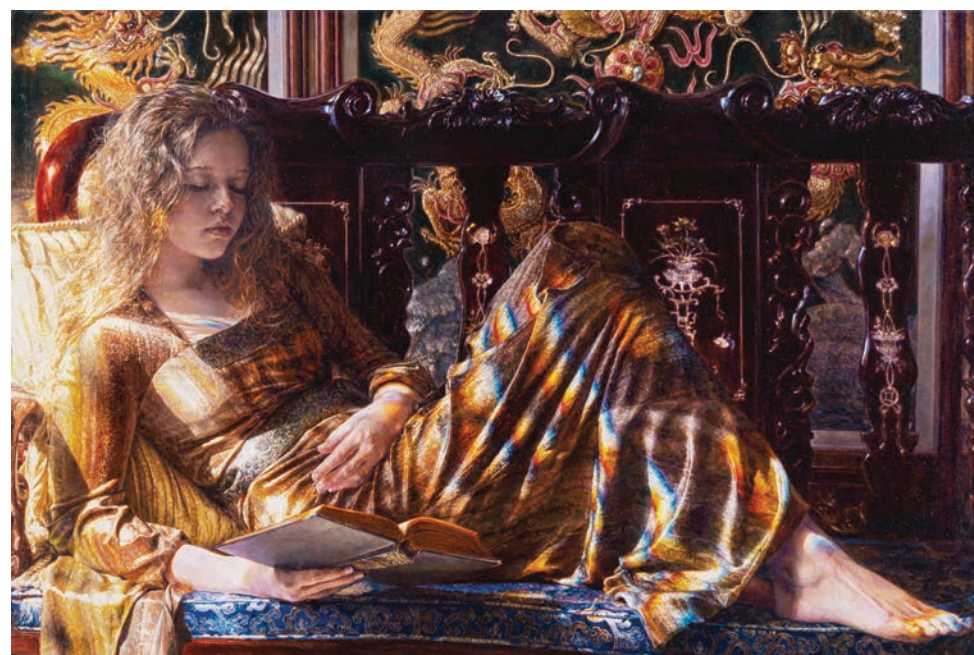
But, as the new research from China underscores, there may be at least three problems with this approach.

### Potential Problems With COVID-19 Spike Protein Vaccines

Firstly, the spike protein itself isn't harmless, as has since been found. In fact, according to science published by an international team of researchers in March in the journal *Circulation Research*, the spike protein can damage lung endothelial cells, just like the ones that bound to the antibodies in the Chinese study, as well as the endothelial cells that line blood vessels throughout the body.

“If you remove the replicating capabilities of the virus, it still has a major damaging effect on the vascular cells,” Dr. Uri Manor, co-author of the study and a researcher at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, said in an interview for Salk.edu. In the first paragraph of the press release,

**Whether the vaccines as they've been formulated can actually trigger production of healthy, non-pathogenic antibodies remains an open question.**



Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

 Original artworks, canvas wraps,  
and prints of Award-winning oil  
paintings now available at

InspiredOriginal.Org/Store

 INSPIRED  
ORIGINAL

*Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is an award-winning journalist and author of “Your Baby, Your Way: Taking Charge of Your Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting Decisions for a Happier, Healthier Family.” A Fulbright awardee and mother of four, she has worked on a child survival campaign in West Africa, advocated for an end to child slavery in Pakistan on prime-time TV in France, and taught post-colonial literature to non-traditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at JenniferMargulis.net*



Many people facing severe illness feel lost when modern medicine offers no cure. For some, this sparks a journey of self-discovery that brings them healing.

# How I Reversed an Autoimmune Disease (Part 1)

From crippling illness to complete recovery with a change in thought that changed my life

SINA MCCULLOUGH

Today I live a healthy, happy life. I run a business, homeschool my three children, and hike with my dogs on the weekends. You'd never know that six years ago I nearly died from an advanced stage of an autoimmune disease.

In 2015, while still in my 30s, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. It was accompanied by muscle wasting, arsenic poisoning, leaky gut, and deficiencies in 15 nutrients. I took a vitamin and mineral supplement every day, yet the nutrient deficiencies were so severe, I was borderline for pellagra and beriberi. Both of those diseases can lead to death, and both were eradicated in the United States by the mid-1900s.

My illness didn't happen overnight. It had been brewing my entire life, since I was in the womb. But the obvious symptoms began in my early 20s with gastrointestinal (GI) issues. Within 20 minutes of eating, I often looked like I was five months pregnant! There seemed to be no rhyme or reason. One day I could eat pizza from my favorite restaurant and feel fine. The next week, I ordered the same pizza from the same restaurant and I would become bloated and crippled over from the pain.

I initially sought help from a Western medical doctor who diagnosed me with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and prescribed Tagamet. I was only 20 years old and wasn't willing to become dependent on a prescription drug, especially since I knew it wouldn't address the root cause; it would only mask the symptoms.

Consequently, I got a second opinion, and a third, and a fourth. Eventually, I saw so many doctors and had so many tests conducted that I lost count. I had three colonoscopies, two sigmoidoscopies, breath tests, urine tests, fecal tests, blood tests, and even exploratory surgery. Nobody had any answers.

Meanwhile, my symptoms continued to increase in both number and severity, to include:

- Nausea
- Brain fog
- Chronic fatigue
- Chronic sinus infections
- Susceptibility to and delayed recovery from colds and influenza
- Kidney stones
- Tumor
- Hair loss
- Multiple food sensitivities
- 5 miscarriages

In total, I sought medical advice from Western doctors for 20 years. Nobody knew what was wrong. I knew it was related to diet, but the medical doctors didn't believe me. In fact, the last specialist told me the symptoms were in my head. That's when I knew that if I had any chance of healing, I had to find a different path.

Consequently, my husband and I became co-detectives. After scouring the scientific literature, we theorized I had "leaky gut,"

which was triggered by gluten and man-made chemicals such as GMOs, pesticides, and herbicides. Consequently, I switched to an all organic, "gluten-free" diet.

Additionally, in an attempt to heal the gastrointestinal damage caused by those chemicals, I tried many dietary protocols, including: gut and psychology syndrome (GAPS), paleo, and the candida diet. With each dietary protocol, I initially felt better but, shortly after, I felt worse. In fact, as I continued to grow sicker, my food sensitivities increased. Eventually, the list of foods I could eat dwindled down to a half a sheet of paper. Foods we think of as healthy, like apples and bananas, made me sick.

**I had three colonoscopies, two sigmoidoscopies, breath tests, urine tests, fecal tests, blood tests, and even exploratory surgery. Nobody had any answers.**

At this point in my healing journey, I was cooking everything from scratch, eating everything organic, and I never went out to eat. Regardless, a new symptom appeared: low-grade muscle pain. It migrated throughout my body with no obvious rhyme or reason and was accompanied by extreme fatigue. Shortly after, I reached a tipping point. In 2015, my entire family got the flu. They recovered within two days, but I ended up in the emergency room. I quickly spiraled downhill from there.

At my rock bottom, most of my time was spent lying on the floor in pain. I was too weak to walk up the stairs without getting winded and too tired to stand long enough to finish doing the dishes after lunch. Some days my body hurt so badly that I couldn't wrap my hand around a cup to take a drink of water. Soon it became difficult to breathe;

with every breath my ribs felt like they might break. When I chewed food, my teeth hurt as if they might fall out. Additionally, I had begun the process of muscle wasting, like a cancer patient can experience. I lost 15 pounds in one month even though I was eating almost constantly.

For the first time in almost 20 years, I was scared. My husband and I knew that if we didn't do something drastic, I wouldn't be alive to see my kids grow up and graduate from high school or get married. So, I surrendered to God, who showed me a different path.

Today, nearly six years later, I'm still disease free and have no pain. In fact, 11 months ago, at the age of 45, I gave birth to a healthy 9-pound baby girl! So, how did I go from lying on the floor in debilitating pain to having more energy than ever before in my life?

I took full responsibility for my health, which created empowerment. I realized that if I got myself sick with my choices, I could also heal myself with my choices.

Consequently, I began studying how to reverse disease. I started with our food supply. Instead of blindly trusting the food in our grocery stores, restaurants, and fast-food chains, I investigated what's really in the food and how it got there. What I learned had such a profound impact on my health that I published a book about findings (Hands Off My Food) for the world to see.

I also listened to hundreds of hours of cutting-edge health summits that were pushing the boundaries of our understanding of disease. Eventually, I saw a pattern; the practitioners who were successful in helping their patients achieve "remission" were using many of the same basic steps.

I combined all of those steps in a more doable, practical manner to create my own disease-reversal protocol. Essentially, I created a Healing Road Map that consists of four destinations:

#### Remove

You must remove the physical triggers that are creating imbalances in your body. There are many possible physical triggers and everyone has their unique set. For instance, I re-

moved the most common food triggers from my diet, including: grains, dairy, and sugar. I was also sensitive to chicken and bay leaf.

In addition, I addressed environmental triggers that were making me sick, such as man-made electromagnetic fields and toxic chemicals lurking in personal care products and cleaning supplies. I also rid my body of excess heavy metals.

#### Replenish

You must replenish any micronutrient imbalances, as well as imbalances in your microbiome. Building a robust microbiome is essential for complete healing. I built my microbiome using many different strategies, such as not eating sterilized foods (most food in the grocery store is sterilized in some manner), and eating a daily helping of fermented foods, prebiotics, and spices.

I also replenished my mind and body in others, like taking deep breaths throughout the day and spending time in nature.

#### Repair

You must repair any damage that exists in the gastrointestinal tract and other tissues. Fortunately, repair occurs naturally when you create a healing environment. That means reducing stress, removing physical triggers, and correcting nutrient imbalances.

#### Restore

You must restore your physicality by incorporating movement into your daily routine that is appropriate for your current level of fitness. In addition, when chronically sick, it's common to lose trust in your body. However, it's critical to restore that relationship so you can begin listening to your body and working with it, as opposed to working against it.

I tested this disease-reversal protocol on myself, and it worked. With help from God, I was able to reverse the disease without the use of medications. In fact, my healing was rapid. I got off the floor in three days. Within three months, nearly all of the pain was gone. And, within one year, there was no pain and no sign of disease in my body. The autoimmune disease had disappeared and Western medical doctors declared me to be in "remission."

But that's not the end of the story. Next week I will share how I moved past "remission" and achieved complete healing.

*Dr. Sina McCullough is the creator of GO WILD: How I Reverse Chronic & Autoimmune Disease, and author of "Hands Off My Food! How Government and Industry Have Corrupted Our Food and Easy Ways to Fight Back" and "Beyond Labels: A Doctor and a Farmer Conquer Food Confusion One Bite at a Time." She holds a doctorate in nutrition from the University of California-Davis. She is a master herbalist, Gluten Free Society certified practitioner, and homeschool mom of three.*



Dr. Sina McCullough

FIZIKES/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Tips for Having More Energy at Any Age

If you are haunted by fatigue, take a closer look at how you sleep, eat, and drink

IAN KANE

Everyone has experienced what it's like to get tired now and then, but fatigue works a little differently. Fatigue is characterized as having a sense of excessive exhaustion caused by either physical or psychological strain, or certain illnesses.

You can think of fatigue as being tired on steroids. Whether this is due to such things as eating too much processed foods, overworking yourself, not getting enough sleep, having bad relationships, or becoming ill—anything that puts undue stress on your system can lead to falling into a fatigued state.

An important aspect to be mindful of is exactly when your energy levels fluctuate. While being tired at the end of a long workday can be expected, when difficult circumstances emerge, a feeling of persistent exhaustion may wash over you.

While it's always good to get a good night's sleep, going to bed earlier or taking a warm bath might not necessarily cure your fatigue. Fatigue can follow us like a dark cloud that perpetually drains our energy reserves. It can be there just as severely when we wake up in the morning as when we hit the sack later that same night.

Therefore, it's wise to monitor your body's energy levels on a regular basis and take remedial actions when something feels off. If you find that you typically become tired (even if you recover relatively quickly) while performing your day-to-day activities, consider following these guidelines to boost your overall energy levels before you fall into the dreaded fatigue zone.

#### Ease Up

In these busy modern times, it's no wonder that overwork can cause tiredness and fatigue. According to a study by the Montreal Institute of Cardiology, overwork can also lead to cardiovascular disease. And overworking yourself doesn't just involve taking on too many duties at work, it can also include family and social obligations.

With this in mind, consider paring back your scheduled list of daily and weekly activities. Instead, set your priorities according to your most pressing tasks being at the top of your list, and less-important ones lower down. If you ever feel that you're becoming overwhelmed, feel free to drop some of those tasks off the list or hire qualified folks to help out—before you get burned out.

#### Eat Better Energy

The glycemic index, or GI, is a rating that indicates how fast or slow foods cause increases in your blood sugar (glucose) levels. While foods that are high on the glycemic index release glucose into your bloodstream quickly, ones that are lower on the scale release them at a more steady and modulated rate.

Therefore, eating foods with a low glycemic index can help to mitigate the sugar high and crash scenario that typically happens when you eat refined starches (such as sugary cereals, pretzels, and many refined flour-based products). Foods lower on the glycemic index include healthy oils (such as flaxseed, avocado, and extra-virgin olive oil), high-fiber vegetables (kale, sweet potatoes, artichokes), and nuts.

Besides, as the New England Journal of Medicine indicates in a recent study, foods that are rated higher on the glycemic index are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, and that's never a good thing.

#### Water Yourself

I'm sure we've all seen the flashy commercials featuring the overpriced sports drinks in the garishly colored bottles in stores. Don't buy them. The best form of hydration is good old-fashioned water.

Our bodies have astounding health potentialities when we don't sabotage them with toxic chemicals. Drinking purified water not only improves your circulation and helps to flush all the toxins out of your body, but it's also great for boosting your body's natural energy reserves while preventing fatigue.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

**Set your priorities according to your most pressing tasks being at the top of your list, and less-important ones lower down.**

Your body uses water to bolster your liver, allowing it to better convert fat into energy. That's why people who become dehydrated become lethargic and can run out of energy rather quickly.

Overcoming your fatigue might also benefit the people around you.

#### Shut It Down

Although sleep is crucial to regenerating your energy reserves, it's typically undervalued. Whether staying up late to watch TV, dabbling online, or working long hours, many folks waste hours that could be spent on a night of restful sleep.

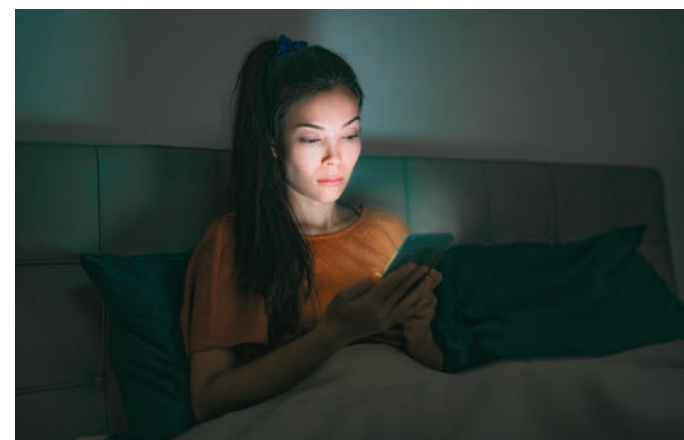
According to a National Library of Medicine study, a lack of sleep can result in feeling irritable and yes—fatigued. If you experience this often, you should consider whether or not you're clocking enough hours of sleep. The National Sleep Foundation recommends a sliding scale based on age, but typically seven-plus hours for adults.

#### Join the Resistance

Resistance training, whether lifting weights, using resistance bands, or any of the many other resistance exercises out there, is one of the best ways that people can increase their energy levels. This is especially important for older folks since resistance training is crucial to building up (and maintaining) muscle mass and retaining strength.

Exercise in general is a great way to keep energy levels up.

*Ian Kane is an U.S. Army veteran, author, filmmaker, and actor. He is dedicated to the development and production of innovative, thought-provoking, character-driven films and books of the highest quality. You can check out his health blog at [IanKaneHealthNut.com](http://IanKaneHealthNut.com)*



Whether staying up late to watch TV, dabbling online, or working long hours, many folks waste hours that could be spent on a night of restful sleep.



Resistance training, whether lifting weights, using resistance bands, or any of the many other resistance exercises out there, is one of the best ways that people can increase their energy levels.

# Drinking Enough Water May Prevent Heart Failure

A lifetime habit of staying hydrated has been linked to a lower risk of heart failure in later life

SARAH COWNLEY

New research has found a link between drinking water and a reduced risk of heart failure. According to research presented at ESC Congress 2021, staying hydrated throughout life could reduce the risk of developing heart failure.

Daily fluid intake recommendations range from 56 to 74 ounces (1.6 to 2.2 liters) for women and 70 to 105 ounces (2 to 3 liters) for men. However, across the world, people rarely consume even the lower ends of these ranges.

When the body isn't properly hydrated, the concentration of serum sodium increases. This directs the body to conserve water, activating a process known to contribute to the development of heart failure.

#### Habitual Fluid Consumption

Studies have shown that serum sodium concentration remains within a narrow range over long periods. Previously, many people had thought that hydration and serum sodium would change day to day, depending on water intake. Unfortunately, this isn't true, and it's more likely related to habitual fluid consumption.

For this study, researchers examined whether serum sodium concentration in

middle age could predict the development of heart failure 25 years later. The connection between hydration and the thickening of the walls of the heart's main pumping chamber was also examined due to it being known as a precursor to heart failure diagnosis.

The study included 15,792 adults who were enrolled in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) research group. All participants were between ages 44 to 66 years and were evaluated over five visits until the age 70 to 90.

All participants were divided into four groups based on their serum sodium concentration at the beginning of the study. For each sodium group, the researchers examined the population who developed heart failure and left ventricular hypertrophy during the fifth visit, 25 years later.

Researchers concluded that higher serum sodium concentration in mid-life was associated with both heart failure and left ventricular hypertrophy 25 years later. These results remained true even after adjusting for other factors, including age, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, body mass index, blood glucose, kidney function, and more.

Study author Dr. Natalia Dmitrieva concluded: "The results suggest that good hydration throughout life may decrease the risk



SHIFT DRIVE/SHUTTERSTOCK

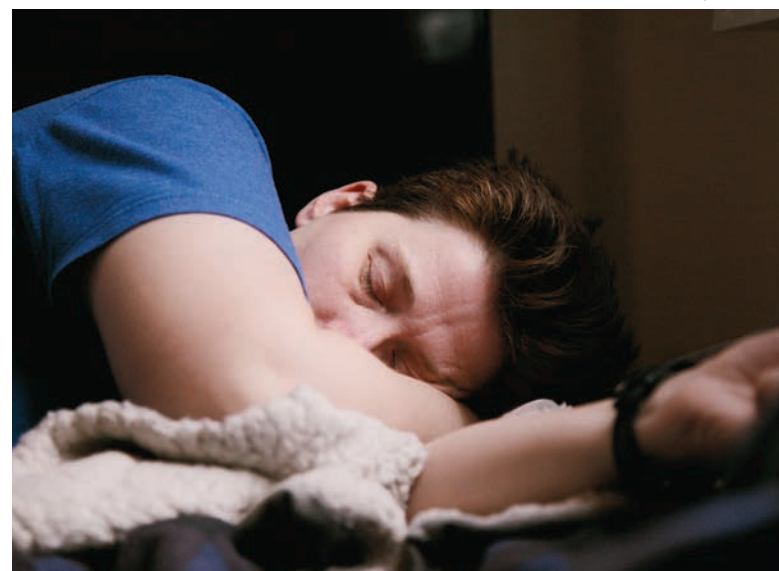
Drinking water is great for us in many ways, and the habit of drinking water consistently may also have an effect on us over time.

**Researchers concluded that higher serum sodium concentration in mid life was associated with both heart failure and left ventricular hypertrophy 25 years later.**

of developing left ventricular hypertrophy and heart failure. In addition, our finding that serum sodium exceeding 142mmol/l increases the risk of adverse effects in the heart may help to identify people who could benefit from an evaluation of their hydration level.

This sodium level is within the normal range and wouldn't be labeled as abnormal in lab test results but could be used by physicians during regular physical exams to identify people whose usual fluid intake should be assessed."

*Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London, and she enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published on [BelMarraHealth.com](http://BelMarraHealth.com).*



SHANE/JUNSPASH

Many people suffer with disease symptoms linked to lifestyle factors like diet and environmental factors like toxic exposures



NOVODIASTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK

There are unknown ingredients beyond consumer control in restaurant take out, including in the takeout boxes themselves.



## SELF REFLECTION

# The Unexpected Joy of Journaling

There are endless ways to journal and each of them brings you closer to yourself

Continued from Page 1

“Studies suggest that the habit can boost your immune system, lower your heart rate, and lessen some symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Keeping a journal can also improve your body image.”

In a series of different experiments done in the late 1980s and the 1990s, Dr. James Pennebaker, a professor of psychology at the University of Texas–Austin, and his colleagues also found journaling to have several health benefits. As the American Psychological Association explained in a review article, Pennebaker discovered that writing about stressful or traumatic experiences helped people reduce their visits to the doctor, have better immune system responses, and even improve their blood pressure.

This research really resonates with Shevawn Armstrong, who’s studying for a master’s degree in Leadership for Sustainability Education at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. Armstrong has been writing in a journal almost every day for more than 23 years, starting when she was a teenager.

Unlike me, Armstrong has always used the same-sized standard blank black book to record her thoughts. She has all of her journals, organized in chronological order, on shelves in the living room of her tiny home. Her journal pages often include to-do lists, calendar items, and meaningful phrases that she wants to remember.

“Journaling always feels like a way to get things out of my head so they don’t take up space, and a tool for processing my emotions,” Armstrong said. “The more I learn about adult education, [the more] I think that reflection is critical to the process of learning.”

## Many Methods

“Whether you’re looking for peace, perspective, or a creative outlet, there’s a journaling method that might help,” In-gall wrote.

It’s true. You can keep a creative journal, a dream journal, an exercise journal, a food journal, a gratitude journal, a poetry journal, a travel journal, or another kind of journal. And you can write in it every day, once per week, or just sporadically when you feel like it or you happen to remember. That’s one of my favorite things about journaling: There’s no right way to do it.

If you want to get the most out of journaling, however, writer Julia Cameron, in her highly acclaimed book, “The Artist’s

Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity,” recommended doing what she referred to as “morning pages.” Cameron herself has published fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and even written musicals and directed one feature film. She credited her practice of morning pages with helping her through creative blocks. Morning pages are three pages of stream-of-consciousness writing you do each morning as soon as you wake up. The idea is to write anything and everything that comes into your head, with no censoring or judgment, “before [your] ego is awake.” Morning pages are Cameron’s version of morning meditation.

The moment that you feel you have run out of things to write is often when you hit pay dirt, Cameron explained in her book. You may be surprised by how much creativity will surface when you keep going. Cameron said that some of her best creative ideas have emerged from doing morning pages.

But even if the habit of writing three pages doesn’t yield a screenplay or the great American novel, Cameron insisted that it will help you clear your mind and improve your day.

Like Cameron, Dr. Beth Jacobs recommended spending three pages with your pen on the paper, or about 30 minutes, exploring your thoughts and venting your emotions. Jacobs is a clinical psychologist based in Chicago and the author of “A Buddhist Journal: Guided Practices for Writers and Meditators.” She believes following stream-of-consciousness writing with a few minutes of positive writing or reflective questions will help you get the most out of the journaling experience.

## Quick and Easy

Erin Stone, a health and life coach based in Ashland, Oregon, is an avid advocate of journaling, particularly a method called the “five-minute journal.”

This guided journal writing focuses on the extraordinary aspects of one’s day. It includes listing what you already feel grateful for, as well as what will help you make the day great. Stone said she routinely shares this simple and effective journaling tool with her clients with consistently positive results.

“Journaling is a great tool to get clear on [the] focus of the day, work through any conundrums that may have arisen, along with having the space and location to state ... gratitude,” Stone said.

Stone said she benefits from the process as much as her clients.



A page from the nature journal Paula Lynam takes with her while camping in Washington, Oregon, and California  
PAULA LYNAM



Paula Lynam says her nature journal helps her connect to nature’s beauty.  
PAULA LYNAM

**You can use an app, an on-line program, or go old-fashioned and buy yourself a blank or lined bound book to write in.**

## How to Get Started

Perhaps you’re convinced that you should try journaling as well. So where do you begin?

### 1. Choose your journal.

You can use an app, an online program, or go old-fashioned and buy yourself a blank or lined-bound book to write in. If you’d rather use loose paper (journaling expert Julia Cameron recommended this), get yourself a lined pad or a ream of blank paper to get started. If you can’t bear the thought of writing, but you want to journal anyway, consider making daily voice recordings instead of written entries.

### 2. Gather your writing tools.

All you really need is a pen that you like, but it’s also helpful to have a sharpened pencil, some colored markers, and perhaps even some recent memorabilia (such as movie tickets or fortune cookie fortunes) to glue or tape into your journal.

### 3. Decide how often.

Make a plan for when you will journal. First thing in the morning or before bed each night? When you’re on your lunch break at work? Share your goal with a friend or relative and ask them to check in with you about it to help keep you on track.

### 4. Gather prompts.

Marelisa Fabrega, who runs the website, DaringtoLiveFully.com, offered 119 open-ended journaling prompts on her website (things such as “what scares you?” and “places you’ve enjoyed visiting”). Fabrega recommended keeping those prompts on slips of paper in a mason jar and picking one each day to inspire your journaling practice.

### 5. Have fun!

Remember, there’s no right way to journal, spelling doesn’t matter, and you get to write whatever you want. One sentence a day is as good as five pages. However you do it, it’s a wonderful practice to support your overall health and well-being. Enjoy it. Journaling should feel like an inspiration, not a chore.

**One sentence a day is as good as five pages.**

“It’s really a lovely practice, which has made a huge difference in my anxiety-ridden mind,” she said.

## What About a Dream Journal?

Dr. Timothy March, a chiropractor in Ashland, Oregon, whose focus is holistic whole-body health, became interested in keeping a dream journal 10 years ago in an effort to discover and learn more about himself. He wanted to get to know himself “at the deepest level possible,” he said.

So March keeps a little book and pen next to his bed. Whenever he has a particularly striking dream, March writes it in his journal. He does this right when he begins to wake up, recording the dream with as much detail as possible. He uses this dream journal as a tool for his own assessment, to explore and pay attention to the “hidden meaning or deeper truth” of the symbolism revealed by his subconscious.

March has found his dream journal to be especially helpful during times when he has had intense or recurring dreams. When his dreams consistently repeat themselves, he knows that is a signal to pay attention, he said.

But journaling doesn’t need to be about exploring yourself on a deeper level. My friend Paula Lynam, an educator who’s also based in Ashland, is a nature-minded person. During the summer she tries to go camping every Thursday, visiting remote places in northern California, southern Oregon, and Washington state.

Lynam enjoys being quiet and alone and tuning into the natural world. So she keeps a nature journal, documenting and sketching the plants, birds, and animals that cross her path. She said that nature journaling isn’t only a record of her adventures. It also helps her pay attention and feel connected to the West Coast’s natural beauty.

“I put the Van Gogh journal back on the shelf and opted for a less expensive blank book with roses on the cover. This one had unlined pages, so I would have room to draw. I couldn’t wait to brew myself a cup of green tea and start writing in it, which I did as soon as I got home. Just thinking about journaling makes me feel calmer, clearer, and more intentional. New journal tucked under my arm, I was flooded with happiness. Anything was possible. The blank pages beckoned.”

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is an award-winning writer based in Oregon and a frequent contributor to *The Epoch Times*.

## MINDSET MATTERS

# Gratitude: Living in the Tender Space

It is easy to compare and complain but choosing gratitude opens us to humility and hope

DANAE SMITH

There are days that feel hard. Not necessarily because stuff is out of whack or not working out. Everything is as it should be, but still, it feels hard.

It feels as if pieces are missing or just aren’t fitting. It feels as if there isn’t enough and never will be enough. Yesterday was one of those days for me. Yesterday was a day of a lot of feelings. Mostly familiar. Tears burned at the corner of my eyes as I kept thinking about how things were and how I wished they could be and all the ways they weren’t what I felt they should be. Discontentment and discouragement stood ready to receive me. It was easy to follow them. To get comfortable and run the gamut of woulda-shoulda-coulda. To be honest, I kind of went there a little bit. It’s easy to do. It’s easy to make myself at home in a space full of questioning, doubting, and worrying even though it’s not where I want to be.

When I got home from work, I made myself a cup of hot cocoa, grabbed my journal, and gave myself room. Room to process and write it out. Room to feel and acknowledge what was happening. I think sometimes we can get overwhelmed with life and forget to give ourselves room to feel and acknowledge it. We don’t give ourselves permission to feel the disappointment, the frustration, or the fear.

We are often in this tender space of living what is in front of us yet anticipating what’s to come. In that tender space, we will feel the full weight of our emotions. I think that’s what makes it tender. It’s a space we are meant to feel and leave. I realize this space can either make you or break you. It can either heal you or destroy you. I say this because how we manage ourselves in this space determines so much. It shapes you, molds you, and chisels you. What you become is entirely up to you. We are meant to feel and learn to manage ourselves in this space. I think it’s tender because it is an invitation to live well.

I realize more and more that we live in a fast-paced world. Things are happening quickly. Technology is advancing rapidly. We have everything—literally—at our fin-



I realize more and more that we live in a fast-paced world. Things are happening quickly. Technology is advancing rapidly.

## WISE HABITS

# Thinking Mode Versus Doing Mode

LEO BABAUTA

I spend a lot of time dreaming about things—incredible adventures I want to go on, self-improvement projects, all those books I plan on reading...

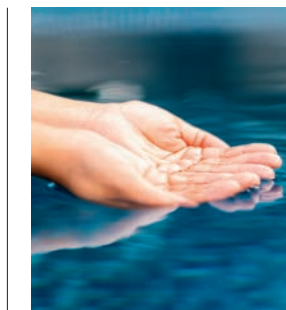
And there’s nothing wrong with that. Dreaming is wonderful.

What I’ve noticed, though, is that sometimes I get stuck in the thinking and dreaming mode. I don’t actually take action.

I dream about going on these epic hikes through the mountains. I research them, learn about them, and plan out my gear and food and routes, but I’m stuck inside, doing all of this research and planning. I’m not actually outside, experiencing the hikes.



What if the worry, regret, and doubt we carry with us is instead replaced by gratitude and hope?



Gratitude can shift your gaze to what matters.



We are often in this tender space of living what is in front of us yet anticipating what’s to come.

**Gratitude calls us higher. It pushes us to see the beauty in what we have right now.**

Danae Smith is the founder of *This Wondrous Life*, a lifestyle blog rooted in pursuing a life lived simply, slowly, and with community. She believes there is more to the mundane than meets the eye. This article was originally published on *This Wondrous Life*.

gertips. We grow impatient with long lines and slow internet. We fast forward through commercials and drive in express lanes.

There’s nothing wrong with that to some extent. I realize our impatience with simple things like traffic or long lines trickles down to impatience with ourselves and our process. It shows me how quickly we need things to be done. It’s impossible to not grow impatient with one’s journey or process because we live in a time when everything happens fast. It’s frustrating to have a dream swelling within you and feeling it will never happen. It’s hard to still hope and build the dream when the hype has died down and it feels “mundane” and insignificant. It’s hard because we live in a time when overnight success is expected. I get it. I’m there with you.

But, amid all that, I’m learning that living well isn’t something that can be rushed. Resting in the tender space between life lived and dreams fulfilled can’t be fast-forwarded. When I look at my life journey—at my dreams that seem so far away and so impossible—I realize it was never meant to be rushed. It was never meant to happen overnight or in a blink of an eye. I was meant to live in this constant tension because it’s an invitation for me to find the dream in front of me. It’s an invitation to grow and discover.

How my heart is positioned and where my mind is focused shapes so much of how I show up in this space. I believe the fuel to manage one’s self well is gratitude.

Gratitude is powerful. It’s so simple yet carries weight.

Gratitude can shift your heart. It can turn your gaze to what matters. It can completely rearrange your perspective.

We cannot live well without gratitude. We cannot sustain our dreams without gratitude.

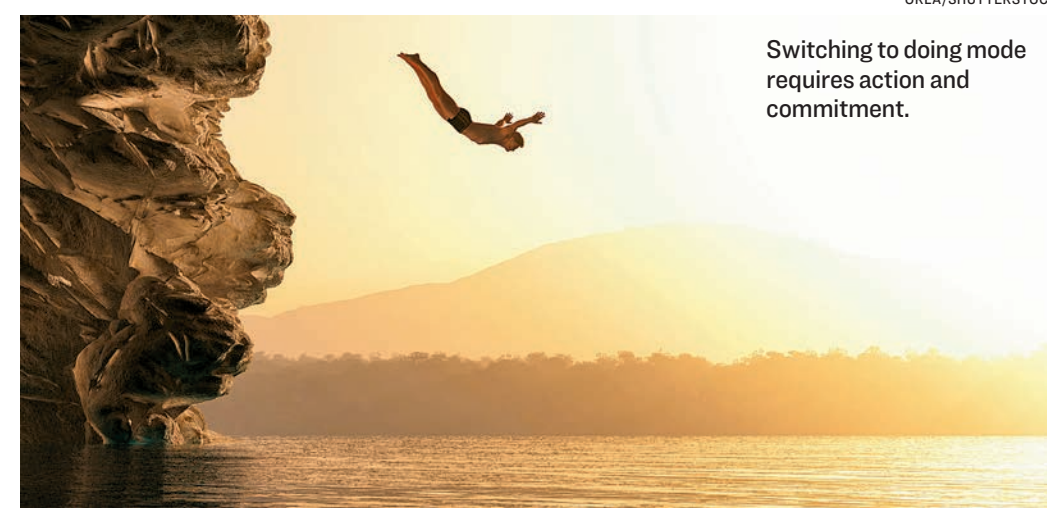
It isn’t always easy to choose gratitude. It’s easier to compare, even though it hurts. It’s easier to complain, even though it changes nothing. It’s easier to criticize others, even though it won’t make us any better. It’s easier to do all those things because it doesn’t require much from us.

But gratitude calls us higher. It pushes us to see the beauty in what we have right now. It celebrates the little things. It finds peace in the now. It doesn’t forsake dreams or shame us for hoping for more. No, gratitude increases our capacity to receive and manage our dreams and hopes. It positions our hearts to be humble, patient, hopeful, and persistent.

So, today is a new day. The sky is gray and I can feel the chill in my bones. Even so, I will choose gratitude today. I will choose to be thankful for what I have now and find joy in it. I won’t bemoan where I am. I won’t compare my journey as I build this wondrous life and as I live my life. I won’t criticize the success of others or judge their journey. No. I will choose gratitude, giving it permission to shift my heart, turn my gaze, and clarify my perspective.

What will you do?

**What areas in your life are you in thinking mode? And would you like to switch to doing mode?**



Switching to doing mode requires action and commitment.

When I realize this, it’s good for me to make this distinction: Am I in the mode of thinking about it or actually doing it? Both are fine. But at some point, it helps to make the switch from thinking about it to doing it.

This is the point where we make a commitment.

We go from considering whether to take the plunge with a big decision, to commit

ourselves to a course of action.

We tell other people about it. Make an announcement. Take an action that is like leaping off a cliff—no looking back.

What areas in your life are you in thinking mode? And would you like to switch to doing mode?

What kind of commitment would it take to put you into doing mode?

How much longer would you like to wait?

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives—choice, not chance, determines your destiny. Aristotle

Making strides toward your soul's wishes require focus, discipline, and attentiveness.

# How to Achieve What You Want

Each day is a step toward the wish we make and commit to fulfilling

DONNA MARTELLI

What do you want? What if I told you there is a way to get it? Like most things that matter, it's a process rather than a quick fix. It requires perseverance but you can apply this process to any area of your life. Whether your goal is better health, closer relationships, or financial freedom, these steps can help.

### Clarify Your Wish

It starts first with your heartfelt and up-right desire. What is it, and how much do you want it? You have to make that desire, or dream, your focal point. Think about what you need to do for your desire to manifest. Talk to people who are knowledgeable on the subject and will be able to help you. Do you need to take a course, develop a connection, save some money? Figure out the intermediate steps. The desire is yours, so you must claim it for yourself. Speak only success regarding your passion; never confess negative thoughts about it. Discard such ideas as "It is impossible," or, "I'll never get there." Only energize positive expectations. Doing this will strengthen you.

Visualize achieving your wish. Physical pictures can often help more than mental images. Look for pictures that express what it will be like when you have what you desire and put them in a conspicuous location. Dream boards may seem

Discover what changes you will have to make as you adjust everything in your life to line up with your wish.

Donna Martelli, formerly a professional dancer with the Harkness Ballet of New York, served on the dance faculty at Butler University in Indianapolis, and is now also a certified personal trainer, and certified Pilates instructor in Indianapolis, Ind. She conducts classes, seminars, and workshops in the United States and Europe. She is the author of "When God Says Drop It" and "Why the Dance," available on Amazon and wherever books are sold.

cliche to some, but they are popular for a reason. If you want to lose weight, find an old picture of yourself and put it on your refrigerator. It's a life principle that we move toward what we focus on. Don't forget.

### Strengthen Your Commitment

You must be committed to your wish. This requires fortitude because you will need to eliminate things that don't fit your wish. Time devourers like social media and TV can erode your commitment. You will have to be determined to ward off these time thieves. Are there people in your life who discourage you and try to steamroll your determination? If so, guard yourself. Know their position and subtract it from their influence upon you. Only you can decide what you will do with this one life.

Now, consider what should you add. There are probably some areas of study and learning that you will need to undertake. You will need new influencers who can help you. Big changes may be required. Is your dream worth it? If it is, be relentless.

### Change Your Actions

Now that you have committed to your dream, you will most likely have to make changes in your life. Your desire is a new thing, not another thing that you will add to your already over-extended life. Discover what changes you will have to make as you adjust everything in your life to line up with your wish. Let's say you want to purchase a vacation home. What sacrifices would you need to make? Would you need to curtail things such as eating out, buying more clothes, or spending money on luxury items? Again, it's your wish, and you will be the one to make these decisions.

### Prepare Your Acceptance

Allow this good thing and all good things to happen to you, or you will naturally pull back from them. That may seem strange, but it's true. There is always resistance to trying new things, especially good things. Sometimes we don't feel worthy of our wishes. Acknowledge this interference and move past it. Don't let anything trip you up. Take lightly the inevitable challenges like a bad day at work or friends who tell you what is wrong with your dream. Your daily actions will create your eventual reality.

It's a beautiful life! When you fall, it's OK; the important thing is to get back up and keep on going. I say "when" and not "if" because falls happen. You may be moving along and feeling great, and then suddenly it isn't. You may feel at times like you have ruined your chances of ever having your dream fulfilled, but you haven't. Falling isn't the problem; it isn't getting up after a fall. That is a failure. But not you, because you will get back up. You will win. You will grant your wish.



Take the inevitable challenges you will face lightly so you can better maintain the determination it will take to succeed.

## Be Inspired.

Mix-and-match with your favorite Shen Yun charms



SHEN YUN SHOP

ShenYunShop.com | TEL: 1.800.208.2384

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK



COVID-19

# Vaccine Mandates Affect Hospital Staffing Wars

For some hospitals, a lack of a vaccine mandate could become a competitive hiring advantage



LAUREN WEBER

In the rural northeastern corner of Missouri, Scotland County Hospital has been so low on staff that it sometimes had to turn away patients amid a surge in COVID-19 cases. The national COVID-19 staffing crunch led to hospital CEO Dr. Randy Tobler hiring more travel nurses to fill the gaps. And the prices are steep—what he called "crazy," with rates of \$200 per hour or more, which Tobler said his small rural hospital can't afford.

A little more than 60 percent of his staff is fully vaccinated. But even as COVID-19 cases rise, a vaccine mandate is out of the question.

"If that becomes our differential advantage, we probably won't have one until we're forced to have one," Tobler said. "Maybe that's the thing that will keep nurses here."

As of Sept. 2, about 39 percent of U.S. hospitals had announced vaccine mandates,

said Colin Milligan, a spokesperson for the American Hospital Association. Across Missouri and the nation, hospitals are weighing more than patient and caregiver health in deciding whether to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for staffers.

The market for health care labor, strained by more than a year and a half of coping with the pandemic, continues to be limited. While urban hospitals with deeper pockets for shoring up staff have implemented vaccine mandates and may even use them as a selling point to recruit staffers and patients, their rural and regional counterparts are left with hard choices as cases surge once again.

"Obviously, it's going to be a real challenge for these small, rural hospitals to mandate a vaccine when they're already facing such significant workforce shortages," said Alan Morgan, head of the National Rural Health Association.

Without vaccine mandates, that could lead to a desperate cycle: Areas with fewer vaccinated residents likely have fewer vaccinated hospital workers as well, making them more likely to be hard hit by the Delta variant sweeping the United States. In the short term, mandates might drive some workers away. But the surge could also squeeze the hospital workforce further as patients flood in and staffers take sick days.

Rural COVID-19 mortality rates were almost 70 percent higher on average than urban rates for the week ending Aug. 15, according to the Rural Policy Research Institute.

The lack of a vaccine mandate can serve as a hospital recruiting tool. In Nebraska, the state veterans affairs agency prominently displays the lack of a vaccine requirement for nurses on its job site, The Associated Press reported.

Continued on Page 10

The mandates are having ripple effects throughout the health care industry.

## Overcoming Regret

These 5 steps can help you walk beyond your past mistakes

CHERYL SMITH

Minimalism isn't just about letting go of excess possessions and the things we no longer use or enjoy. It is a whole-person release of everything that diminishes our well-being. There are things that complicate our lives far more than the clutter we can see—things like the heavy burden of regret.

Regret can anchor us in the past, robbing

us of the present. It can interject itself into the happiest of moments, clouding over our sense of peace.

If we've lived, we've done at least a few things we wish we hadn't or failed to do some things we wish we had. Some of the choices we wish we could change only had an internal effect on us—they didn't really impact anyone else.

Continued on Page 16



If you could go back to the moment before it happened, you would.

BARANO/SHUTTERSTOCK

NTD

## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> NTD INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

Revitalizing piano music of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras

Preliminary: 9/3~24 (Online)

Semifinal & Final: 11/4~6 (New York)



GOLD AWARD \$10,000  
PIANO.NTDTV.COM



The market for health care labor, strained by more than a year and a half of coping with the pandemic, continues to be limited.

COVID-19

## Vaccine Mandates Affect Hospital Staffing Wars

For some hospitals, a lack of a vaccine mandate could become a competitive hiring advantage

Continued from Page 9

It all comes back to workforce shortages, especially in more vaccine-hesitant communities, said Jacy Warrell, executive director of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee. She noted that some regional health care systems don't qualify for staffing assistance from the National Guard, as they have fewer than 200 beds. A potential vaccine mandate further endangers their staffing numbers, she said. "They're going to have to think twice about it," Warrell said. "They're going to have to weigh the risk and benefit there."

The mandates are having ripple effects throughout the health care industry. The federal government has mandated that all nursing homes require COVID-19 vaccinations or risk losing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, and industry groups have warned that workers may jump to other health care settings. Montana has banned vaccine mandates altogether, and the Montana Hospital Association has gotten one call from a health care worker interested in working in the state because of it, spokesperson Katy Peterson said.

It isn't just nurses at stake with vaccine mandates. Respiratory techs, nursing assistants, food service employees, billing staff, and other health care workers are already in short supply. According to the latest KFF/The Washington Post Frontline Health Care Workers Survey, released in April, at least one-third of health care workers who assist with patient care and administrative tasks have considered leaving the workforce.

The combination of burnout and the added stress of people leaving their jobs has worn down the health care workers that the public often forgets about, said interventional radiology tech Joseph Brown, who works at Sutter Roseville Medical Center outside of Sacramento, California.

That has a domino effect, Brown said: More of his co-workers are going on stress and medical leave as their numbers dwindle and hospitals run out of beds. He said nurses' aides already doing backbreaking work are suddenly forced to care for more patients.

"Explain to me how you get 15 people up to a toilet, do the vitals, change the beds, provide the care you're supposed to provide for 15 people in an eight-hour shift and not injure yourself," he said.

In Missouri, Tobler said his wife, Heliene, is training to be a volunteer-certified medical assistant to help fill the gap in the hospital's rural health clinic.

Tobler is waiting to see if the larger St. Louis hospitals lose staff in the coming weeks as their vaccine mandates go into effect and what impact that could have throughout the state.

In the hard-hit southwestern corner of Missouri, CoxHealth President and CEO Steve Edwards said his health system, headquartered in Springfield, is upping its minimum wage to \$15.25 an hour in order to compete for workers.

While the estimated \$25 million price tag of such a salary boost will take away about half of the hospital system's bottom line, the investment is necessary to keep up with the competitive labor market and cushion the blow of the potential loss of staffers to the hospital's upcoming Oct. 15 vaccine mandate, according to Edwards.

"We're asking people to take bedpans and work all night and do really difficult work and maybe put themselves in harm's way," he said. "It seems like a much harder job than some of these 9-to-5 jobs in an Amazon distribution center."

Two of his employees have died from COVID-19. In July alone, Edwards said 500 staffers were out, predominantly due to the virus. The vaccine mandate could keep that from happening again.

"You may have the finest neurosurgeon, but if you don't have a registration person everything stops," he said. "We're all interdependent on each other."

**It isn't just nurses at stake with vaccine mandates. Respiratory techs, nursing assistants, food service employees, billing staff, and other health care workers are already in short supply.**

But California's Brown, who's vaccinated, said he worries about his colleagues who may lose their jobs because they're unwilling to comply with vaccine mandates.

California has mandated that health care workers complete their COVID-19 vaccination shots by the end of September. The state is already seeing traveling nurses turn down assignments there because they don't want to be vaccinated, CalMatters reported.

Since the mandate applies statewide, workers can't go work at another hospital nearby without vaccine requirements. Brown is frustrated that hospital administrators and lawmakers, who have "zero COVID exposure," are the ones making those decisions.

"Hospitals across the country posted signs that said, 'Health care heroes work here.' Where is the reward for our heroes?" he asked. "Right now, the hospitals are telling us the reward for the heroes: 'If you don't get the vaccine, you're fired.'"

Lauren Weber, Midwest correspondent for KHN, is covering how America's health system is working—and not working—for patients in the region. This article was originally published on Kaiser Health News.

# Nature's Top Sleep Aids

These 7 remedies can help you sleep without the risk of drugs

**A**void the risks associated with sleep medications carrying "black box warnings" of harm (including death). Nature has several effective sleep aids ready to ease your tossing and turning and escort you gently into dreamland.

Sleep is as individualized as it is essential to your health. Whether you generally fall asleep easily or are more of an insomniac, it's good to have a few tried and true sleep aids on hand that are gentle, effective and, most importantly, non-habit-forming. You never know when jet lag, stress, or an irregular period in your life may have you counting sheep and praying for sleep.

Despite their potential negative health impacts, drugs for sleep disorders are among the most often prescribed medications. While there may be certain situations when such drugs are required, for most people they should be a last resort after exhausting safer options, such as better sleep hygiene. When you do need occasional sleep support, nature's top sleep aids are safe, soothing and, unlike many insomnia medications, won't leave you chemically addicted and feeling strung out in the morning.

### Melatonin

A natural hormone associated with the sleep-wake cycle, melatonin is released by the pineal gland in the brain during evening hours, dropping in production when the sun rises. When the body's natural timeclock, your circadian rhythm, is disrupted by things such as shift work, stress, or exposure to blue light from screens, melatonin levels can become depleted. During such times, supplementing with melatonin may be a safe way to restore your natural balance.

Experts suggest using supplemental melatonin in harmony with natural practices, like taking it one to two hours before you want to fall asleep or around sundown. Stop using screens (this includes your phone) and dim the lights in your home. If you must watch TV at night, be sure you are at least six feet away from the screen.

You can further enhance the effectiveness of melatonin by getting exposure to natural daylight during the morning and afternoon hours. If you can't be outside, sit by a well-lit window to stimulate production of your natural melatonin as the daylight fades.

### Vitamin D

Exposure to sunlight is not only essential for maintaining a healthy circadian rhythm, it's a primary source for photosynthesis of vitamin D's precursor: previtamin D3. There are more than 1,000 known genetic processes that are regulated by vitamin D3, making adequate intake of this vitamin essential for your body and your sleep.

A 2018 meta-analysis of the association between vitamin D and sleep disorders found that study participants with vitamin D deficiency had a significantly increased risk of developing sleep disorders. Further analysis found that low vitamin D was also associated with poor sleep quality.

There are two ways to get the right amount of vitamin D: proper diet/supplementation and adequate sunlight exposure. In addition to daylight outdoor activity, adding foods such as pastured eggs and fatty fish, and if necessary, a vitamin D3 supplement, to your diet several times weekly will ensure that you are getting optimum vitamin D to support quality sleep each night.



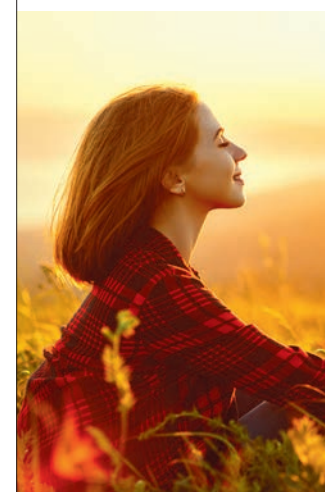
### Passion Flower

Passion vines produce passion flowers—a lovely addition to any garden. Did you know that the passion flower is also a treatment for insomnia? If you can't avail



Natural, time-tested, remedies often have more than one benefit.

**There are more than 1,000 known genetic processes that are regulated by vitamin D3, making adequate intake of this vitamin essential for your body and your sleep.**



There are two ways to get the right amount of vitamin D: proper diet/supplementation and adequate sunlight exposure.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Sign up for their newsletter at [www.GreenMedInfo.health](http://www.GreenMedInfo.health)

yourself to passion flowers with a sunny stroll through a garden, you can enjoy the sleep-inducing benefits of *Passiflora incarnata* in supplement form and possibly kiss your sleepless nights goodbye.

A 2017 study of the effect of the medicinal plant *Passifloraceae* on sleep showed that extracts of the plant, when administered via injection, induced a significant increase in sleep time in rats. More time was spent in "slow wave" or phase 3 sleep, the deepest phase of non-rapid eye movement sleep characterized by delta brainwaves. Interestingly, this is the phase of sleep when dreams occur and is also important for consolidating memories.



### Lavender Essential Oil

There is no scent so instantly relaxing as fresh lavender flowers. Lavender has been used as a sleep aid since ancient times. Adding lavender essential oil to a spray bottle with distilled water to spritz your pillows before bed is a modern and convenient equivalent to the herb-stuffed pillows of the past. Similarly, a bedside atomizer can help soothe dry sinus passages while you sleep, adding humidity to the air, which aids breathing.

Beyond adding a fresh scent to your sheets, lavender can help smooth out the wrinkles in your sleep routine. Research has shown that lavender oil can increase your quality of sleep and may have the added effect of reducing anxiety. Another study found that aromatherapy using lavender increased both sleep quality and quality of life in women experiencing sleep deprivation in connection with menopause.



### Valerian

Valerian root is known for being the inspiration for the anti-anxiety drug Valium. So, it's no surprise that this botanical is valued for its calming, sleep-inducing effects.

Valerian is the most widely studied herb for sleep and is generally recognized as safe (GRAS) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The plant, *Valeriana officinalis*, is a popular herb that grows in many parts of the world. Both the mineral-rich leaves and the rhizome (rootstalk) have been used in herbal remedies for hundreds of years. Most commonly used as a relaxant, a warm cup of valerian tea may be just what the doctor ordered for a night of sound sleep.

In a study of 918 children under 12 years of age experiencing restlessness and nervous dyskoimesis (tics and involuntary movements), 81 percent of patients had

a "distinct and convincing reduction in severity ... for all symptoms" when dosed with a homeopathic remedy combining lemon balm and valerian root extract.

Children's symptoms previously described as "moderate/severe" by parents and clinicians improved to "mild" or "absent" in most patients. Researchers concluded that the herbal remedy was effective at treating restlessness in children and was very well tolerated.

One of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to use valerian is in a bedtime tea, which can be made by simmering the root or, for a slightly milder effect, decocting the dried leaves in water just off a boil.

### Cannabis (cannabinoids)

Cannabis is slowly being integrated into the legal pharmacopeia in the United States, but this plant has a history as an herbal remedy that spans millennia. Upon ingestion, active phytochemical compounds in cannabis called cannabinoids bind with receptor sites in the brain to deliver a host of therapeutic effects. One such effect can be deep relaxation and—yes—better sleep.

A 2017 study seeking to summarize the state of research on cannabis and sleep, including specific sleep disorders, found that the cannabinoid cannabidiol (CBD) may have therapeutic potential for the treatment of insomnia.

CBD further showed potential for treatment of REM sleep disorders and excessive daytime sleepiness, a frequent side effect of poor quality sleep.



### Chamomile

Is there anything more soothing than a warm cup of chamomile tea when you're winding down? There is a reason that chamomile has become synonymous with sleepiness; this is one superstition that really rings true.

Researchers conducting a study on postpartum women experiencing depression and poor sleep quality instructed a test group to drink chamomile tea for a period of two weeks in addition to receiving standard postpartum care. Compared to the control group that didn't drink tea, chamomile drinkers had significantly better sleep scores and fewer symptoms of depression.

### Sleep Finds a Way

Nature has infinite intelligence and sleep will find a way, especially if you provide gentle, plant-based support in measured doses. Remember, everyone experiences occasional sleeplessness. It's safest to avoid sleep drugs with black box warnings about death from sleepwalking, sleep driving, and other unconscious activities associated with these medications.

**WARNING: Always consult a medical herbalist or your health care practitioner when using both natural and pharmaceutical medicines for any diagnosed condition. This article is for informational purposes only and isn't intended to be used as medical advice.**

## What People Are Saying



I read The Epoch Times daily. I still like hard papers [...] and I still like to grab that paper in my hand, but I get more printed versions of stories than ever before. You guys have done an amazing job, and really—I think there's such a void in media, especially newspapers. They slant so solidly one way that **there are very few papers that I can really feel that I can rely on, and The Epoch Times is one.**

SEAN HANNITY  
Talk show host



**The Epoch Times is a great place where you can understand traditional values** in a way and in a tone and through content that is accessible. It's smart.

CARRIE SHEFFIELD  
Columnist and broadcaster



**I congratulate you and The Epoch Times** for the work you are doing, especially with regard to keeping the menace of the communist threat in front of us.

DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA  
Military and intelligence analyst and former deputy assistant to the president



**I rely on The Epoch Times** newspaper for factual and unbiased news coverage.

LARRY ELDER  
Best-selling author, attorney, and talk show host



**It's our favorite paper.** It's the first one we read. Thank you so much for your reporting of the news.

PAUL GOSAR  
U.S. representative for Arizona

Learn more at [EpochSubscription.com](http://EpochSubscription.com)

# THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION



Plans fall apart. Problems strike from nowhere. Fortunately, you're creative and adaptable, and grow stronger with difficulty.



JUICE FLAIR/SHUTTERSTOCK

## WISE HABITS

# Nimble Amid Ever-Changing Plans

Life is full of chaos, but you were made to be engaged and ready

## LEO BABAUTA

With the world in so much flux these days, many of us find it difficult to deal with ever-changing plans.

It's always been a challenge, but as with so many things, it's become an in-your-face challenge these days.

Some people really struggle when plans are always changing—it can be frustrating and feel like there's no solid ground under our feet. Other people seem to love having no solid plans. Their challenge is often that they can't seem to commit to anything regular, don't want to be tied down, and often have difficulty focusing.

Today, I'm talking to those who struggle with rapidly changing plans.

What if you could learn to be nimble and resilient when plans change? What if you could find focus in the middle of the chaos? What if you could learn to surf the erratic waves of life?

This is the promise of learning to relax with uncertainty and navigate uncertain waters.

## Key Ideas

**Every change is a training.**

When someone changes plans on us, we can (and often will) get frustrated with them for changing things up on us at the last minute. And while we can talk with them about it if it becomes an ongoing problem, sometimes changes are unavoidable. What if, instead, we embraced the change as a training opportunity to get better at being nimble and resilient with change?

We could then be grateful for this beautiful training opportunity. Thank the person. And then turn toward our own frustration, or resistance to change, as a way to grow in this area.

**Once we learn to relax with uncertainty and be open to the unfolding ever-changing moment, we can learn to flow.**

ful training opportunity. Thank the person. And then turn toward our own frustration, or resistance to change, as a way to grow in this area.

**Use changes to stay present.**

The training we can do, when presented with the opportunity of a change in plans, can simply be to remember to be present. Simply open to the experience of the present moment. When we're frustrated with changes, it's because we are fixated on what we expected things to be, things that are no longer true. What if we focused instead on what is right in front of us, the reality on the ground?

In this way, change training is simply mindfulness training. Learn to be open to the moment that's unfolding, unpredictable, unplanned, but still breathtakingly wondrous.

**Learn to relax with uncertainty.**

When a change in plans presents itself, we often will feel a tug of uncertainty at our hearts. It's the feeling of the rug being yanked from under us. We feel a moment of fear. That can turn into a train of thought: "Why can't I just have one day of peace?" And so on, until we've turned a momentary feeling of uncertainty into a pervasive feeling of disquiet.

What if, instead, we could feel the sensation of uncertainty in our bodies, and simply turn our attention to it and be with it? What if we could practice relaxing with the uncertainty? It doesn't have to be turned into a frustrating narrative (though that might still happen). We could simply experience the change.

**Practice flowing with changes.**

Once we learn to relax with uncertainty and be open to the unfolding ever-changing moment, we can learn to flow. Like a surfer on a wave that's always changing. It can actually be fun: "Let's see how good I can get at flowing with change, let's see how nimble I can be. Let's see how calm and determined I can remain amid uncertainty."

That state means that when there's a change, we can relax and make a very simple decision: What is best here? Then take that next simple step with ease.

**You can find focus in chaos, with practice.**

With a lot of changes, we can have difficulty finding focus: "It's chaotic. Why is this happening?" Actually, we can find focus, but it takes practice.

The practice is simply this: Pause to consider what you'd like to focus on. If you're feeling chaotic, turn toward that sensation and relax with it. Then, create the space to focus. If the change requires immediate reaction, deal with it, but in most cases, you can allow yourself to focus on the feeling of that chaos.

Even if it's 10 minutes of focus, you can practice it. Clear the space, give yourself one thing to do. Make it your entire universe. Pour yourself fully into it. Come back to this focus when your mind gets distracted. Keep practicing.

**Structure is very helpful, but don't be attached.**

I highly recommend structure as a way to create a little order for what you need to take on. If you need to regularly do some focus work, but also email, messages, finances, chores, planning, and exercise, create spots in your day or week for all of these. It will help you actually get the important commitments done.

That said, when we get too attached to our structures, we can get frustrated when things get messy. Maybe someone sprung something on us. Maybe something unexpected came up. Maybe we don't stick to the structure because we're tired and things get sidetracked. When these things happen, it feels like everything has fallen apart, and then we can get frustrated, discouraged, and lose focus or motivation.

The practice can simply be to hold the structures with as much discipline as we can, but without attachment. That means holding to our plans as much as we're able to, but then when things change, we practice flow:

What needs to be adjusted in the moment when there's a change?

What would be best now that the structure isn't possible at the moment?

Then once we've made an adjustment, we can simply return to the structure as soon as possible.

**Seek joy in the middle of the storm.**

Things can feel very stormy, and for a lot of people, that can bring anxiety and frustration. But what if we can learn to open up to the storm and embrace it?

In my life, I have come to feel awe at the powerful beauty of storms, to delight in their swirls and unpredictability, to see the art in the middle of the gale. When I see this in an actual storm, it reminds me to practice seeing this in the chaos of my daily life.

You don't fully come alive without challenge. You don't fully engage with your senses and abilities without something that demands that you stretch your capacity.

What beauty can you find in the chaos of your life today?

*Leo Babauta is the author of six books, the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers, and the creator of several online programs to help you master your habits. Visit ZenHabits.net*

# Do the Real Thing

It's fine to plan and prepare, but only doing the actual thing will tell you what you need to know

## MIKE DONGHIA

We all have things we want to accomplish and values that we want to live out. But many things can get in our way: busyness, laziness, fear of failure, you name it.

I want to share with you a simple phrase that has really helped me to make progress toward my goals and made my life simpler in the process.

If your goals are unrealistic or you aren't willing to put in any effort, I'm afraid you won't find what you're looking for in what comes below.

But, if you're looking for a much simpler approach to making progress—one that works almost 100 percent of the time, I have one phrase for you:

**Do the real thing.**

That's it.

Stop reading about the topic, researching options, making complicated plans, or anything else you might be doing to prepare yourself and just do the real thing

## The Garage

My wife recently asked me to build a set of shelves for our basement. Instead of getting started that weekend, I created a mental list of all the things that "needed" to be done first.

My garage was a mess—so, of course, that would need to be cleaned.

But upon cleaning, I realized the real problem wasn't the mess, but too much stuff. I would need to do a massive purge.

But some of this stuff couldn't be thrown away, we simply had too many things with wheels—strollers, bikes, mowers, and more. I thought about hanging more of it on the walls. I schemed about storing some of it outside. I researched sheds.

I did just about everything one could imagine besides the job my wife asked me to do.

Several weeks later, swimming in a sea of options (with a still messy garage), I remembered: Do the real thing.

Yes, I had forgotten a far simpler way of living. Look at the thing in front of me, and go straight at it. The real thing in this scenario was embarrassingly easy to see—just build the shelves, and deal with all those other decisions later.

I grabbed my saw, measured my cuts, and built the shelves in a total of four hours!

## Tips for Doing the Real Thing

**Act before you feel ready.**

What if you started with the assumption that you would never feel ready? This might be a stretch, but it's probably closer to the truth than we'd like to imagine. You will never feel completely ready to invite the new neighbor over for dinner. You won't ever feel ready to hit publish on your less-than-perfect idea. You won't ever feel ready for your perfect plan to meet messy reality. But who says this has to be a bad thing?

Instead of seeing uncertainty as something to be avoided, we could choose to see it as an adventure. Embrace the idea of acting before you feel ready and watch new opportunities emerge before you.

**Reduce upfront planning.**

In most areas of life, detailed planning is merely a way to procrastinate, or assume we know a lot more about the world than

we really do. A simpler, humbler approach is to start right where you are with just the amount of knowledge that you have right now. It sounds scary, but you will probably surprise yourself with how much progress you can make. Once you have made progress, you will have the kind of real-world feedback that allows you to plan the next leg of your journey with ease.

**Learn as you go.**

Upfront learning is another temptation. We want to cram as many facts into our brain as possible to prepare for any and every need that might arise. This feels like real work, but it's much safer because it lacks the risk of failure. It also doesn't provide any real-world feedback that helps us to learn and grow.

For example, when I started learning to invest in stocks, I knew I needed to read a few books to create a framework for my decision-making, but I soon went far beyond that. I kept reading and reading, but I wasn't investing. Theories make the world seem so simple, but they lack the tensions and trade-offs that are present in the real world. The longer I waited to do the real thing, the more I was delaying the real education that took place when I started weighing real choices with real money.

**Don't wait for motivation.**

It's not uncommon for me to be generally motivated about doing something, but not particularly motivated about doing it right now. Instead of writing an article, which I generally enjoy once I get going, I'll do some supporting work instead—like outlining my next article idea, looking for a quote to use, or reading a few blogs on the same topic. If I relied completely on motivation to get me writing, I would probably end up as the world's best article outliner.

But thankfully, confidence in a simple truth has enabled me to get real work done. The truth is this—if I do the real thing, motivation will follow. All I have to do is decide to start and stick with it for 10 minutes. Once I started writing this, I felt a growing desire to finish the job. I couldn't have manufactured that feeling if I had tried, but because I knew it would arrive, I was able to push through those initial moments of uncertainty.

**Don't calculate the odds.**

There is a time and place to face the odds, but I don't think it should be until you have spent plenty of time doing the real thing. From the vantage point of abstract plans



There's no perfect plan, especially when you're still learning, so learn from mistakes.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

One little plan can snowball into 50 if you don't focus on doing the one thing you originally set out to do.

**I had forgotten a far simpler way of living. Look at the thing in front of me, and go straight at it.**

and general theories, we really have little idea of what will work and what won't. We don't even know what parts we'll enjoy and which we'll be good at. We certainly don't know enough to throw in the towel.

As my wife and I are starting a blog, we have no idea what it will become. We can't be certain if we'll love blogging, or just the idea of blogging. We're not sure if we're any good at it, or if people will feel that we deliver value compared to all the other great blogs already out there. But one thing we decided amid that uncertainty is that we didn't know enough to say it wouldn't work, and we were up for the adventure. We committed to publishing content and working on our craft for a full year before deciding on the future.

## Do It Today

It doesn't matter if you're learning a new skill, striving toward a goal, or trying to grow as a person—doing the real thing is the simplest and most reliable way to begin.

If you long for simplicity in your life, this is a wonderful place to start.

Decide what is important to you.

Acknowledge the self-doubt and uncertainty you feel.

Choose to do the real thing.

Watch as new possibilities emerge through action.

*Mike (and his wife, Mollie) blog at This Evergreen Home where they share their experience with living simply, intentionally, and relationally in this modern world. You can follow along by subscribing to their twice-weekly newsletter. This article was originally published on This Evergreen Home.*



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

We are inundated each day with more information than we can process. It can overwhelm and discourage us if we aren't anchored in the reason we are here.

# Your Why Matters

Take the time to recognize what propels you so you can navigate the daily deluge

## DANA E SMITH

We are inundated each day with ideas, messages, beliefs, and expectations. We ingest more information than we can actually digest. It can overwhelm and discourage us as we try to navigate this world.

There is nothing wrong with exploring and challenging these varying perspectives, beliefs, and expectations. We are free to correct course when we gain new insight and information to deepen our thinking and curiosity. We should be forever learners, eager to grow.

But when we are bombarded with new information, it's vital to know our purpose and remain connected to it as a compass. Your purpose—your "why"—can change.

**When we know our why, we can be clear and firm with our decisions.**

Your why can and should evolve because we, as people, change and evolve with time.

For that reason, it's critical, on a regular basis, to remind ourselves of that why, to reconnect with it. What is the "thing" that motivates and influences the choices you make and the actions you take?

Here are three reasons you need to pause, reflect, and make sure you are clear on what your why is.

**It Grounds You**

When we know our why, we are rooted deeply in our own vision. We won't be easily swayed by what is trendy or convenient. Knowing your why grounds you in the journey and tensions it challenges you with, helping you navigate the highs, lows, and in betweens.

**It Can Inspire You**

When we know our why, we can see beyond the clutter and doldrums of the day. There are seasons in life that can feel bland. There are seasons that bury us in chaos. We can feel unmotivated and lose sight of what we've been pursuing. Taking time to

reconnect to our why can help. When we remind ourselves of our why, inspiration can meet us and breathe fresh vision and perspective into our process.

**It Sets Boundaries**

When you know what you've said yes to, you also know what you've said no to. You can see what will compromise your purpose. When we know our why, we can be clear and firm with our decisions. We can escape the cycle of second-guessing, and know what is worth tolerating, and when we shouldn't settle.

Having these boundaries can save us from burnout and superficiality. We can do things with deeper intentions than to simply please others or fit in. Having these boundaries can also help clarify spaces that may feel murky.

It's crucial that we touch base with our why. If you don't know what yours is, this is the time to clarify it. If you had some vision for yourself that you now find out of date, reinvent and redefine it if necessary. Let it be a source of inspiration, motivation, and clarity as you dream and live out

**When we remind ourselves of our why, inspiration can meet us and breathe fresh vision and perspective into our process.**

the rest of this year.

*Danae Smith is the founder of This Wondrous Life, a lifestyle blog rooted in pursuing a life lived simply, slowly, and with community. She believes there is more to the mundane than meets the eye. This article was originally published on This Wondrous Life.*



MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you had some vision for yourself that you now find out of date, reinvent and redefine it if necessary.



# Overcoming Regret

These 5 steps can help you walk beyond your past mistakes

Continued from Page 9

Then there are the more complicated regrets that stem from seeds we have sown that grew pain and heartache in others.

Eighteen years ago, I stood by the bedside of my dying father. Six years ago, I repeated the heart-wrenching scene in a different ICU room by my mother as her beautiful life slipped away. Both of my parents struggled much of their lives with a shadow of regret over their own mistakes and failures. Watching both of them draw their final breaths gave me a sense of clarity about the complete futility of regret. Here are five lessons I wish my dear parents had learned before their lives were over.

**1. Accept the reality of the thing you regret.** The mistakes are real. They happened, and history cannot be rewritten. Trying to recuse ourselves from responsibility will only mask the wrongdoing, a futile bandaid. Embracing reality and acknowledging the truth is the first step toward releasing regret.

**2. Forgive yourself.** Show yourself the same kind of mercy you would hope others extend to you when you've wronged them. Stop beating yourself up for doing something you can't undo. If you could go back to the moment before it happened, you would. Open your heart to grace. Relieve yourself of the burden of blame. Forgiving yourself won't negate the thing you regret, but it will free you from its grip.

**3. Make amends.** If the thing you regret has wounded another, apologize with sincerity and without excuse. Do what you reasonably can to mend your actions without crossing into overcompensation. I say "reasonably" because there are those who will demand more of you than is required, especially if they're hurt and want to make you pay for the wrongdoing. This can get tricky

because regret can cloud what seems reasonable. Your own sense of peace is a reliable guide to know when you've done enough.

**4. Forget what is behind you.** Leave the past where it happened. Don't keep talking about your failures and mistakes. The more you give them voice, the larger they will appear. Release anything that reminds you of the regrettable action. I am deeply remorseful over a life decision my husband and I made that wounded the



When wishing you had done things differently overwhelms your thinking, get proactive.

**The mistakes are real. They happened, and history cannot be rewritten.**

spirit of our son. Is there anything harder to deal with than a parenting regret? I have wished a thousand times that we had made a different choice, but what's done is done. Letting go of everything tangible that brings back memories of that time has helped us on our journey to healing. Reliving regrettable actions only perpetuates the misery. Today is too precious to waste on "if onlys."

**5. Do the opposite of what you regret.** We can't change the past, but we can change our lives going forward. Regret is a painful, albeit effective teacher. Learn from it. We will continue to make mistakes as long as we live, but taking note of what regret has taught us can keep us from repeating actions we will be sorry for in the future. Replace regretful contemplation with positive action. When wishing you had done things differently overwhelms your thinking, get proactive. Channel your thoughts into what is uplifting. Read something that inspires you. Do something nice for someone. Reach out with a benevolent hand. Be kind to everyone you meet. Smile.

We all wish we had done things differently at some point, but it's amazing how doing something positive, productive, and constructive can relieve that burden.

**Reliving regrettable actions only perpetuates the misery.**

*Cheryl Smith blogs at Biblical Minimalism.com. Her family sold their home, released 90 percent of their physical possessions, got out of debt, and now share their story and their Christian faith on their blog. She is the author of the books, "Biblical Minimalism" and "Homespun Devotions: Volume One."*



## Made from Purslane NATURE'S OMEGA-3 GOLD

Puritang plant based Omega-3,6,7,9 is made from purslane and perilla seeds. It contains over **61%** concentration of omega-3 – the highest possible without chemical additives, not possible to derive naturally from fish or other plants, and this combined with omega-6,7,9, accounts for more than **90%** of product content!

Purslane is nature's gold mine of omega-3, containing the highest level of any green plant. Besides 0% trans fat and 0% hormones, this product is 100% organic and 100% natural. It has no fishy aftertaste or risk of ocean-borne contaminants. It is also non-GMO. Made in Korea.

Order Online!



Puritang Green Vegetable Omega 3, 6, 7, 9 Inspired by Nature. Made from the Heart.

[www.Puritang.com](http://www.Puritang.com)

THE  
EPOCH  
TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION

**HELP IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!**

[TheEpochTimes.com/help](http://TheEpochTimes.com/help)



It's quick and easy!  
You will never have  
to wait again.

UPDATED

FROM THIS PAGE YOU CAN:

**FIND ANSWERS FROM A COMPREHENSIVE FAQ SECTION**

- Troubleshoot common problems
- Learn our terms and conditions

**USE OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE LIVE CHAT**

- Tell us your subscription inquiries or concerns

**SUBMIT REQUESTS ONLINE\***

- Report delivery and other subscription issues
- Provide editorial and other feedback

**ACCESS THE CUSTOMER PORTAL**

- Manage your subscription account

\*Cancellations are processed on the hotline only.