

W2W

**You Deserve
Abundance**
Kelly Haskins

**Thriving
Financially**
Kristin Prieur

**Put On Your
Dancing Boots**
Suzanne Young

Pastor Shearese Stapleton
Positive Parenting for Trauma-Informed Families



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note from our editor

"Abundance is about being rich, with or without money."

~Suze Orman,



Debra K. Collins
Publisher



Mimi Matthews
Editor



Jennifer Gardner
Creative Director

theme

Abundant Living

One of my perks as editor is getting to read the articles before anyone else. I absolutely love how each of our amazing writers approaches from a different viewpoint. They don't know what each other has written, yet, because of our theme, they complement each other in wonderful ways.

I'm also often astounded at the different avenues of thought our writers pursue. While using the theme we have set, they write from their expertise, heart, and passion. This issue has so many great articles for you!

Have you ever heard of "Divine Dining"? Debra Loader outlines this interesting concept for us. Joy Dettling shares her latest adventure while writing about living beyond the pursuit of money. Lynn Turner talks about how abundant living affects our mental health. Suzanne Young encourages us to put on our dancing boots and create a new story in our lives. And many more! Give yourself the gift of time, and approach with curiosity the words our writers have given you.

The staff at Women2Women hopes your summer has gone well and that you were able to grab as much "abundant living" as you possibly could. If not, perhaps with the suggestions and information from our writers, as the new season approaches you will be able to.

Much love,

Mimi



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Would you be interested in being an Ambassador for Women2Women?

We are looking for women interested in collaborating with us on a variety of different projects throughout the year. If you support what W2W stands for and like to be out in the community, this could be you! Please email our publisher, Debra, at deb@w2wmichigan.com if this sounds like something you would be interested in.

contributing writers

Lynn Nicole Turner • Suzanne Young • Mimi Matthews • Tarnesa Martin • Arlene Crane-Curns • Debra Loader
Jennifer Gardner • Jennifer Beard • Kelly Haskins Stonerock • Joy Dettling • Kristin Prieur

W2W

Women *Inspiring* Women *for Good!*

Our Mission:

Women2Women Michigan was created to connect women with women for their homes, gardens, businesses, entertainment, health and nutrition, the list is endless. They want to be informed and connected in their communities. Event-driven marketing makes education fun and rewarding. You can reach these women in a heartwarming environment at Women2Women Michigan events and through our magazine.

DO YOU KNOW A MICHIGAN WOMAN WE SHOULD FEATURE?

Submit your stories online at w2wmichigan.com. Article guidelines are under the magazine tab.

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Women make the majority of purchasing decisions. They buy goods and services for their homes, gardens, businesses, entertainment, health and nutrition, the list is endless. They want to be informed and connected in their communities. Event-driven marketing makes education fun and rewarding. You can reach these women in a heartwarming environment at Women2Women Michigan events and through our magazine.

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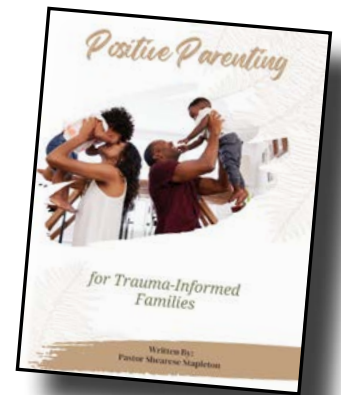
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The Keys to Becoming Your Best

Every Sunday I reflect on the past week, in preparation for what's to come. Amidst thoughts of flu bouts, stomach bugs, a family getaway, and unexpected home renovations, I found myself contemplating the pursuit of goals. In that moment, a sentence emerged in my journal, a culmination of swirling thoughts.

"The victory isn't in the outcome; it is in being one of the brave few who takes a chance."

This notion had been brewing within me for days. I had embarked on a new goal and ran into the challenges of life in my pursuit. Before long, I was thinking about what it will mean to me to reach it, even if delayed.

Often, we think of victory as an outward facing achievement such as a new job title or living in the exclusive neighborhood. We judge the validity of the reward on appearance and social approval alone. This perspective diminishes the real value of pursuing new challenges. Let's explore a different view of victory and look at the other, and, in my opinion, more important rewards of pursuing goals.

BE, DO, HAVE

The "Be, Do, Have" philosophy presents a paradigm shift from the conventional approach to goal attainment. Instead of fixating on external conditions, it advocates an inward journey. It urges us to first define who we aspire to be, paving the path towards actions that naturally lead to desired outcomes. It's a process of self-transformation from the inside out.

BE

Transformation begins with identity. To achieve our goals, we must embody the persona capable of realizing them. While outward changes may seem the result, it's the internal evolution that drives behavioral shifts. To discern this ideal self, introspection is key:

- Who must I become to reach my goals?
- What traits define this version of me?
- How can I integrate these attributes into my daily life?
- What mindset and approach does my ideal self adopt towards challenges?
- How does my ideal self contribute to others and the world?

- What beliefs must I embrace to align with my desired outcomes?

DO

Once the transformation of being occurs, action naturally follows. Aligned with our ideal identity, our actions reflect this inner shift. For instance, adopting the mindset of a successful entrepreneur leads to entrepreneurial actions—networking, seeking mentorship, continuous learning, and calculated risk-taking. Action reinforces our new identity:

- What actions would my ideal self take?
- How can I incorporate these actions into my routine?
- What skills or knowledge do I need to acquire?
- How does my ideal self stay motivated and resilient?
- What small steps can I take today towards my vision?

HAVE

"Have" signifies the presence of being and doing—the outcomes we achieve. By embodying our desired identity and taking aligned actions, we create conditions conducive to success. Having, then, becomes a natural consequence:

- How does life change upon achieving my goal?
- What indicates true success for me?
- How does this achievement enrich my life?
- How do I plan to celebrate and cherish it?

Journaling is key tool for creating awareness which, I believe, is the first step in all growth.

Taking on new challenges means we might fail, but it's worth it to stand out as someone who dares to try something bold. Even if we don't succeed, we prove we're brave enough to keep going. After all, becoming a better version of ourselves is more valuable than anything material we could gain.




Jennifer Beard, owner of Bold Life & Bold Life Academy, guides individuals through transformative shifts in behavior, beliefs, and emotions, unlocking the path to their most extraordinary lives. Visit Jennifer at JenniferBeard.com.

10 Keys for Abundance


1

Practice Gratitude.
Keep a gratitude journal and write down three things you're grateful for each day. Focus on the abundance already present in your life.



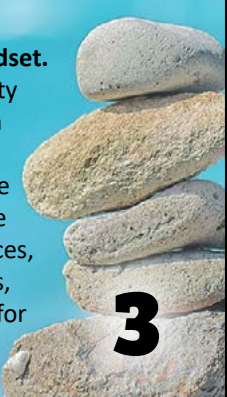
Set Clear Intentions.
Define what abundance means to you and set clear, specific goals. Visualize achieving these goals regularly.

2



Adopt an Abundance Mindset.
Replace scarcity thinking with thoughts of plenty. Believe that there are enough resources, opportunities, and successes for everyone.

3




4

Give Generously.
Share your time, resources, or skills with others. Practice acts of kindness and generosity without expecting anything in return.




"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."
~ Maya Angelou



Surround Yourself with Positivity.
Spend time with positive, successful people who inspire and uplift you. Limit exposure to negativity and pessimism.

5




Invest in Personal Growth.
Continuously learn and improve yourself through education, training, and self-development activities.

6



Visualize Success.
Regularly practice visualization techniques. Picture yourself living a life of abundance, with all your goals achieved.

7



Take Inspired Action.
Act on the opportunities that come your way, even if they seem small or insignificant. Trust your intuition and take proactive steps toward your goals.

8



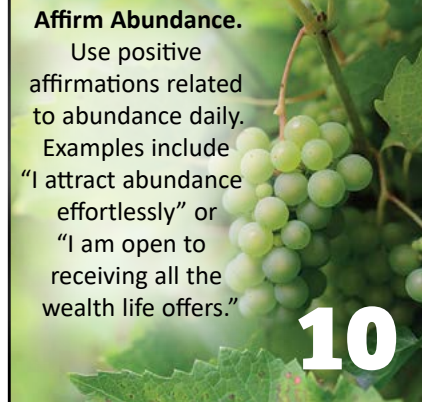
Practice Mindfulness.
Engage in mindfulness practices to stay present and aware of the opportunities and abundance around you.

9



Affirm Abundance.
Use positive affirmations related to abundance daily. Examples include "I attract abundance effortlessly" or "I am open to receiving all the wealth life offers."

10



Jennifer Gardner is a wife and mother of two girls. She loves being creative with the ladies of Women2Women Michigan Magazine.

Living Wholeheartedly

To me, abundant living is wholehearted living. Some of the words to describe living wholeheartedly are enthusiastically, graciously, and warmly. But my favorite is authentically. I like to think that defines me...now.

Brenè Brown wrote a whole book about this, but I'd already decided to make living this way a priority by the time I read her book. My purposeful decision was the result of feeling like I had put my "real" self on hold for most of my life. Which meant downplaying who I am and minimizing my gifts, my personality, and my desires.

When I came out of that oppressing cave, I chose to begin living life with gusto!

These days women are being encouraged to set boundaries and say "no" more in order to allow ourselves the things we need—time, rest, healing. And I'm all for that. Boundaries are necessary to prevent burnout and being taken advantage of.

However, I want to encourage you to also say "yes" more—to those things you long to do, to fun, to new adventures, to LIFE!

If you are offered an opportunity, instead of automatically turning

it down, ask more about it. Take some time to consider how it would affect you.

"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people just exist."

~ Oscar Wilde

Maybe this opportunity would:

- Improve your life
- Fulfill a purpose in you
- Bring some fun into your life

There is always the possibility that when you do something new you will feel like you were "made for it". You will feel fulfilled and "glow-y" inside, like I do when I am speaking to a group and they are in tune with what I'm saying.

We often need to be stretched (outside of our comfort zone) to learn something new about ourselves. I absolutely do not like roller coasters, but when I bungee jumped from the tall arch at Six Flags Over Texas and became a pendulum swinging high over the park, I felt exhilarated! Who knew

I would LOVE it, and want to do it again (and again)? I'm so glad I said "yes".

Abundant living means living with eyes open, heart wide open, and embracing what comes with curiosity and wonder. It means grabbing hold with both hands and hanging on for the journey of your life.

If you are ready to grab hold, Brenè has an inventory you can take to see how much gusto (or wholeheartedness) you have.

brenebrown.com/wholeheartedinventory

As a side note, I took the inventory *after* I wrote this article, and even though I still have improvements to make, I'm pleased with the growth I see in myself.



Mimi Matthews is in the "encouragement business" as the owner of Empowerment Cards by Mimi,

which features greeting cards that inspire and encourage. She is also a speaker, workshop leader, writer, and our editor. Visit her shop at www.etsy.com/shop/EmpOWordmentCards, her blog at www.particularpassions.me.

Pastor Shearese Stapleton

In 2015, during the water crisis, I was homeless and had a lot of uncertainty. However, I learned that the situation did not dictate *who* I was or would become.

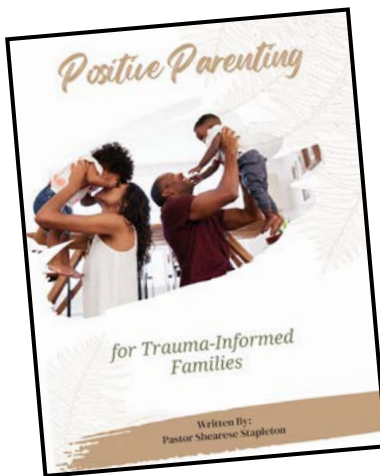
My support system was pretty strong, but as you may know, even supportive people don't always see eye to eye, so I had to find my own way. I had to separate myself from people for a time for my mental health and well-being. Some people are considered to be triggers, and in order to protect your peace you have to keep yourself out of situations that can bring you harm.

For me, harm meant my blood pressure would go up thinking about things all the time so much it consumed me. I couldn't sleep. I didn't feel as if I belonged. This was my experience and it put me in a place where I can talk to others about it and help someone else who may be going through some of the same experiences.

The changes in my life took a toll on me. You know how they say that you never know how strong you are until being strong is all you have? I say that my strength is because of God and His love for me. If not for God I don't know where I would be to this day.

WHO AM I?

Born prematurely at 2 pounds 3 ounces I was determined to survive. By age two I had dimples at my knees! This start created the determined woman that I am today. I am an ordained pastor from Flint, a licensed Family Recovery Coach, a Certified Trauma-Informed Parenting Coach, and a Certified Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Master Trainer with the Michigan ACEs Initiative. I'm also in pursuit of my BS in Behavioral Science from Belleville University.



I am the author of a book titled *Positive Parenting for Trauma-Informed Families*. I wrote this book for the parents of Flint and Genesee County who had been affected by the water crisis and the world pandemic to provide tools and insight on parenting strategies.

I'm the mother of three wonderful adults. My gifts are singing and creating. I'm now fifty-one years old and have come to a place in life where I understand the plan for my life. I will preach, teach, and also create space where people feel and reciprocate love and acceptance.

WHAT I DO FOR WOMEN?

I remind them that they are fearfully and wonderfully made and that even though life can be hard at times they can do hard things. I teach them how to set goals and also boundaries with themselves and people. I also have created an environment that is safe for women, mothers, and their families--including fathers--called the Family Safe Space Office.



BACKGROUND TO MOTHERS OF JOY INSTITUTE

The nonprofit that was birthed in 2021, Mothers of Joy Institute for Parenting and Family Wellness, actually started in the basement of a shelter when I

witnessed some women having a discussion. They were not happy about the conditions that they were living in and how people were speaking to them. They were feeling like people were talking *at* them and not *to* them. (No one should treat you badly because of a life situation. If anything, they should help you to come out of it. I know we make decisions and some of us get ourselves into trouble, but if you are going to talk about it, be a part of the solution and not the problem.)

So they asked me what would you do in this situation and I said we have to talk to people in a way for them to *hear* us. Don't holler or threaten. Don't put our finger in their face or snap our neck back because we know we are right. But truly have a conversation where your tone is low and where the person can hear you. Because if you're hollering, they can't hear you.

In 2017, I had been certified as a master trainer in Adverse Childhood Experiences, which was a turning point in my life. This training helped me to look at people in crisis, like those in my family and myself, in such a way as to understand that it's not what happened *to* you, it's what happens *inside* of you that makes you respond the way you do. So in 2021 when I was given the opportunity to start a nonprofit, it literally worked with everything that I had learned up until this point. This organization was geared around moms who were experiencing homelessness and who also were affected by the Flint water crisis.

I received a grant from Community Foundation and was able to open for business after the pandemic. We are still going strong! I'm not saying we haven't had any struggles or that it hasn't been hard, but we are still in the game in 2024. We opened what



is called a “family safe space office” where families can come and have a cup of coffee, have a conversation, learn some coping skills, and talk about what may be happening in their lives and how to get connected to resources that will help them and their children.

WHY ARE MY LIFE EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT?

I believe my experiences in life have given me validity to help other women and families.

Experiencing some of the same traumas that the families and the women I come into contact with helps us relate to one another. After my divorce, becoming homeless, and going through hard times, I experienced depression. The diagnosis I was given was Major Depressive Disorder, recurrent. Because of my ignorance I thought recurrent meant that I could be depressed over and over again.

But I’ve found that, as with any illness or diagnosis, there are levels to it.

Sometimes I find myself not wanting to be around people and I’m very much a people person. And I thought that that was wrong. But remember how

earlier I talked about protecting your peace? You know, even in the Bible it says that we're supposed to steal away and that means just to take some time to regroup and to rest and to be with ourselves. A lot of people don't like themselves, so they don't like being alone because it makes them have to think about and deal with situations.

brain will do what it feels like it needs to in order to protect you. That's why when people say that they don't remember, their mind is doing what's necessary to protect them from harm, from reliving something that can cause them stress or strain. God made us so unique that He even made us able to heal ourselves in such a way. That's why alone time is so important.



“...it's not what happened to you, it's what happens inside of you that makes you respond the way you do.”

I've learned that when I take time to be alone I can understand things better. Like why I couldn't get along with someone or why we had a disagreement. Or perhaps I can remember things I may have forgotten about a situation. The

SOME THINGS I'VE LEARNED & WANT TO SHARE FROM MY LIFE STORY

- When you fall down, don't look at it as failing, but see it as an opportunity to do things better than you did the first time. If you've never failed you'll never know what it means to stand strong. I used to always want to win. There's nothing wrong with wanting to win, but I've learned more lessons in failing than I ever have in winning.

- Pay attention to who stands by you when you're at your lowest

point, who calls to check on you, who listens to you when you are pouring out your heart. Those people are far and few between. Because many people are with you when you're up on top and you have the money and you have the things. My strength truly comes from God,

but also a select few people that I confide in. I've learned over the years that you don't need a whole lot of friends. You just need a select few who will keep your best interests at heart and will truly help you along the way.

- Truly be mindful of what you need for *you*. You are not being selfish when you take care of yourself. You are not being prideful when you step away from a thing that you know is not providing you with good intentions. And it is truly okay to say no, especially if it's going to take you away from something that you built, something that you worked hard for, something that is your life's work.

ABOUT MY BOOK

Positive Parenting for Trauma-Informed Families was written during a time when I started learning about positive childhood experiences (PCEs). Using PCEs is how we help mitigate the adverse childhood experience and ultimately prevent them from occurring.

For example, when my children were younger there were not a lot of books that told me that I needed to listen to them. But with everything we are now learning, this book was put in place to give parents—especially our parents here in Flint and Genesee County—small instructions, small strategies, and small understandings to some very complicated issues. I wanted to provide these because I know how it feels to not know something and yet be expected to know, because, “You're a parent”. However, we are learning every step of the way.

Mothers of Joy Institute for Parenting and Family Wellness, INC.

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This book is a part of our curriculum at MJI. It is a tool for parents, educators, pastors, and leaders to understand how to look at what is going on with someone, to learn how to handle conflicts, and how to be able to say you're sorry.

You can buy the book by donating \$15 to www.mothersinstituteparentingwell.com. The donate button is right on our website and the book will be shipped to you. Or if you are local, delivered to you and signed by the author.

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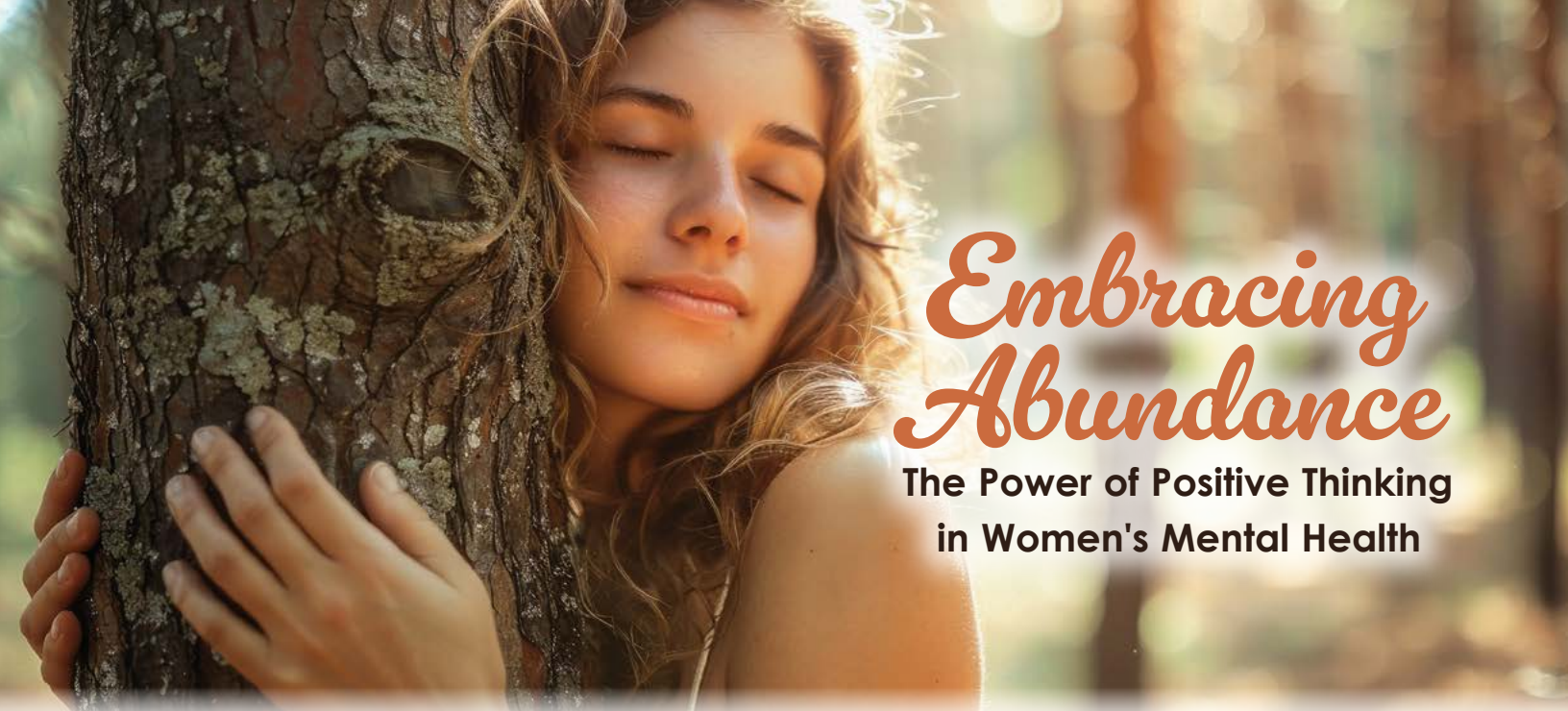
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Article: www.flintside.com/features/mothers-of-joy-institute-for-parenting-and-family-wellness.aspx

I'm So Proud of You ACEs Campaign: <https://miace.org/projects/public-education/im-so-proud-of-you>

"I've learned more lessons in failing than I ever have in winning."



Embracing Abundance

The Power of Positive Thinking in Women's Mental Health

In the ever-evolving landscape of mental health, one concept stands out like a beacon of hope amidst the stormy seas: abundance mindset. This isn't just some mystical mumbo-jumbo; it's a game-changer, especially for women navigating the labyrinth of their mental well-being. So, grab your mental surfboard, because we're about to ride the waves of abundance and positive thinking, exploring how they shape the mental health journey of women.

First things first, what's this abundance jazz all about? Picture a buffet table overflowing with delectable treats. That's abundance. It's the belief that there's more than enough of everything good in the world—love, success, happiness, you name it. Now, tie that to positive thinking, and you've got yourself a powerhouse combo.

For women, who often find themselves juggling multiple roles and societal expectations, embracing abundance can be revolutionary. Think about it. How often do we get trapped in the scarcity mindset, convinced there's never enough time, money, or opportunities? It's like living life with blinders on, unable to see the vast ocean of possibilities stretching out before us.

But when we flip the script and adopt an abundance mindset, suddenly the world becomes our oyster. We start seeing setbacks as temporary detours rather than roadblocks. We recognize our own resilience and capacity for growth. And guess what? That shift in perspective can work wonders for our mental health.

Take stress, for example. It's no secret that women often bear the brunt of stress, whether it's from work, family, or just trying to keep up with the demands of daily life. But here's the kicker: stress isn't inherently bad. It's our perception of stress that can turn it into a silent killer. With an abundance mindset, we're better equipped to reframe stress as a natural part of life, one that can even fuel our growth and development.

And let's not forget about self-esteem, that elusive creature that often seems to dance just out of reach. When we approach life

from a place of abundance, we recognize our inherent worthiness. We stop comparing ourselves to others and start celebrating our own unique strengths and talents. Suddenly, that little voice in our head that used to whisper "not good enough" gets drowned out by a chorus of self-love and acceptance.

But here's the thing: embracing abundance isn't just about rainbows and unicorns. It's about acknowledging the shadows as well as the light. It's about embracing the full spectrum of human experience, from joy and gratitude to sadness and fear. Because let's face it, life isn't always sunshine and roses. And that's okay.

So, where do we go from here? How do we cultivate this abundance mindset and harness its power for good? The answer lies in practice—daily, intentional practice. It means starting each day with a grateful heart, focusing on the abundance that already exists in our lives. It means catching ourselves when we slip into scarcity thinking and gently guiding our thoughts back to abundance. And most importantly, it means surrounding ourselves with a community of like-minded souls who lift us up and remind us of our inherent abundance.

In the end, abundance and positive thinking aren't just fluffy concepts reserved for self-help books and Instagram quotes. They're real, tangible tools that can transform our mental health and reshape the very fabric of our lives. So, let's raise a toast to abundance—to the belief that there's more than enough goodness to go around, and that we are worthy of it all. Cheers to embracing abundance, one positive thought at a time.



Lynn Nicole Turner is a seasoned mental health professional with 20+ years of experience. Specializing in suicide prevention and high acuity patients, she is a trusted counselor, addiction treatment specialist, and certified life coach. Lynn's dedication extends to mentoring young women and advocating for the vulnerable in mental health. www.linkedin.com/in/lynnnturner

Thriving Financially

Empowering Women to Achieve Abundant Living



When I think of abundance, I think of maximization and living life to the fullest. To me, abundance is a mindset and a way of life. From a financial perspective, abundance comes from mindful habits and goal-oriented strategies aimed at maximizing your financial future, so you can live a more abundant and fulfilling life. Here are some great tips to help you achieve financial abundance:

EMBRACE A GROWTH MINDSET

“She believed she could, so she did” ... R.S. Grey. This quote epitomizes what we need to know about mindset. You are only capable of what you put your mind to. Furthermore, you can only grow as far as you allow your mind to see is possible. When thinking about your finances, whether it be where you are or where you want to be, keep a positive state of mind. Tell yourself you have the capability to create a solid financial plan and stick to firm goals that will lead you on a prosperous path.

PRACTICE MINDFUL SPENDING

Being mindful of how you spend your money is crucial for achieving financial abundance. Differentiate between your needs and wants. Focus on spending money on things that truly add value to your life. Create a budget that aligns with your financial goals and stick to it. Track your expenses to understand where your money is going and identify areas where you can cut back. This will

help you save more and invest in your future.

PRIORITIZE SAVING & INVESTING

Building wealth requires a commitment to saving and investing. Start by creating an emergency fund that covers 3-6 months of living expenses. This fund will provide a safety net for unexpected expenses and prevent you from going into debt. Once your emergency fund is in place, focus on long-term savings goals, such as retirement. Contribute regularly to retirement accounts like a 401(k) or IRA, and take advantage of employer matching programs if available.

CONTINUOUSLY EDUCATE YOURSELF

Financial literacy is a powerful tool for achieving financial abundance. Continuously educate yourself on personal finance topics such as budgeting, investing, and debt management. Read books, attend seminars, and follow reputable financial blogs and podcasts. The more knowledge you have, the better equipped you will be to make informed financial decisions.

SET SMART FINANCIAL GOALS

Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) financial goals is essential for achieving financial abundance. Break down your long-term goals into smaller, manageable steps. Track your progress regularly and adjust your plan as needed. Celebrating small milestones along the way can keep

you motivated and focused on your ultimate financial objectives.

CULTIVATE A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY

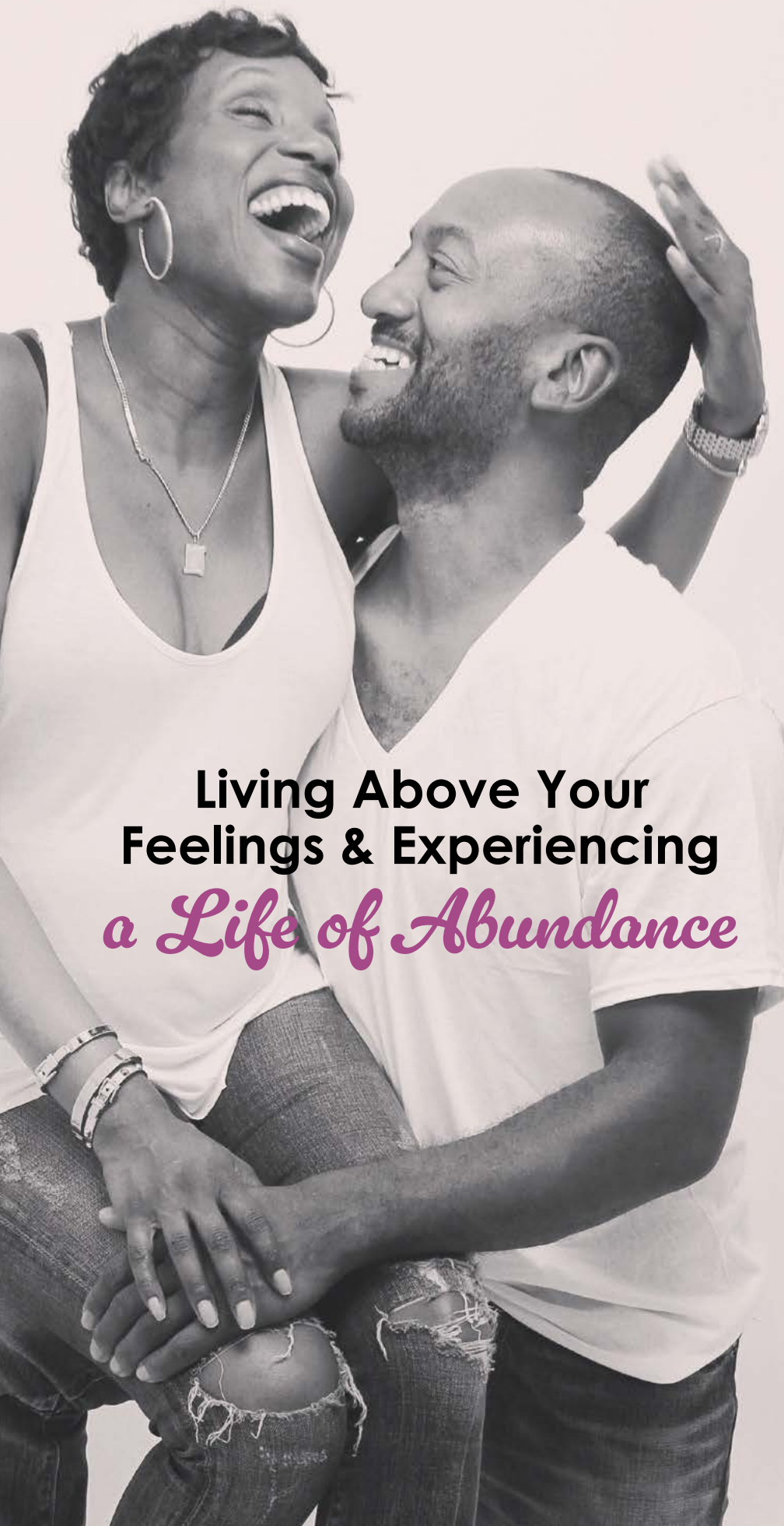
Having a healthy relationship with money is crucial for achieving financial abundance. Avoid negative financial behaviors such as overspending, relying on credit cards, or living paycheck to paycheck. Instead, practice gratitude for what you have and focus on the positive aspects of your financial situation. Being mindful of your financial habits and attitudes can lead to better financial decisions and a more abundant life.

As you can see, achieving financial abundance is a journey that requires a positive mindset, mindful spending, and strategic planning. By embracing these tips and making intentional financial decisions, you can pave the way to a prosperous and fulfilling life. Remember, financial abundance is not just about accumulating wealth, but about living a life of purpose, security, and joy.



Kristin Prieur is Director of Compliance Services for Key Bridge Compliance, a consulting firm serving many Investment Advisers and Financial

Planners. She is an active contributor to Women's empowerment endeavors in the Flint, MI area and has a passion for providing financial education to women.



Living Above Your Feelings & Experiencing *a Life of Abundance*

I still remember the comforting word that God spoke to me when I was struggling with being in a loveless marriage and trying to navigate through the pains of feeling alone, rejected and unwanted. My life was in emotional, mental and social turmoil because I was always trying to hide my pain, mask my tears and believe that my love was enough for him. But deep down inside I knew he no longer loved me, desired or wanted to be with me, way before the day he filed for divorce.

On June 13, 2012, I was writing, reading and studying God's Word. I was crying out to him for help, clarity, insight and wisdom. God spoke to me and said, "Okay. I get it. I get that you are married to a man that doesn't tell you he loves you, a man that doesn't hold your hand, a man that rarely shows you signs of affection, but it's time to learn how to live above your feelings, so that you can prosper into the plans I have for you and experience a life of abundance." I'm sharing this because back then I thought living a life of abundance meant wealth, material possessions and receiving affection from a person.

Years later, I am learning about the meaning of abundance and starting to embrace the words God spoke to my spirit years ago. One of my passions is coaching and empowering women to become better versions of themselves, despite obstacles, divorce, losses, fears and grief that may have caused them a season of emotional turmoil. I understand our feelings can be very strong, hurtful and sometimes out of control, but we do not have to let them rule our lives. I believe with all my heart that if we become intentional about our feelings, we can learn to manage our emotions and successfully learn to live a life of abundance, which includes mastering, managing and navigating through life challenges while being emotionally healthy.

It's imperative in this season that we as women learn how to control our emotions, and not be led by negative thoughts that are trying to forfeit our future of the abundance of life that God has for us. Routinely, women come together to talk about our relationships, careers, dreams and what's impacting our feelings. Whether we are feeling good, bad, happy or sad it's challenging for us because it's so hard to get to a place of total contentment, control our feelings, and stabilize our emotions.

It often seems like our feelings have a mind of their own and that they don't need our permission to fluctuate; they merely seem to do as they please for no specific reason that we can find. Maybe it's hormonal, maybe it's insecurities, maybe it's fear or maybe it's just that we have not learned how to selfcare and prioritize our emotional health.

I know we have all experienced going to bed feeling just fine physically and mentally, only to wake up the next morning feeling tired and irritable, asking ourselves why do I feel like this? What's wrong with me? Why am I not enjoying life, when I have no reason not to. I have a good job, healthy children, a nice place to live, clothes and shoes in my closet etc. Then suddenly, we shift to the negative thoughts and losses that validate our insecurities. Yes! I have clothes in the closet, but I need to lose weight. Yes! I have a nice place but I'm single. Yes! I have healthy children, but they are adults and have their own life. Then we get on the phone and call anybody that will listen to discuss our negative emotions and thoughts. Not realizing we are using our precious time to self-sabotage and focus on the negative things of life.

I know thinking positively is not always easy but if we are going to live in the abundance that God has for us, we must replace our stinking thinking with positive thoughts, and know that our life in God goes beyond the ordinary. It's a life that can be marked by joy, peace, love, purpose, and fulfillment, irrespective of material possessions or outward circumstances. It's about mental, emotional and spiritual transformation that gives you the permission to embrace where you are right now in life, and the ability to let go of the past and unhealthy thoughts so that you can move forward and become complete by being you.

This issue focuses on abundance. The word "abundant" derives from the Latin "abundantia", which translates to "fullness, plenty". In modern language, abundance typically refers to a large amount of something, whether it be money, food, time or other resources, But the spiritual definition of abundance carries a much deeper and more profound meaning. As written in the bible, John 10:10 records Jesus saying, "I have come so that you may have life and more abundantly."

In other words, our thoughts of positivity should be driven from an emotional place of joy, love, peace, purpose and fulfillment not only for others but for ourselves. It's time we release the negativity and reclaim our thoughts that are associated with us living in Abundance.

Living Above Your Feelings Abundance Tips:

- 1 Understand your definition of abundance and how it applies to your life.
- 2 Embracing abundance requires a shift in mindset and daily practices. It should be more than a topic, but a lifestyle.
- 3 Abundant living is a journey of ongoing mental, emotional and spiritual development.
- 4 Abundant living is about genuine relationships, mutual respect, support and love.
- 5 An abundant life is also marked by unwavering faith in God's promise.

Living an abundant life doesn't mean we won't face challenges or hardships. However, it means that through these trials, we can hold onto God's promises, grow spiritually, and deepen our relationships with others in the community. So, as we reflect on the meaning of abundance, let's strive to live our lives in fullness, not defined by the expectations of others or social media standards, but by a heart overflowing with love, and a mind enriched with divine clarity, insight, wisdom and a positive attitude.

If you are ready to master your emotions, bounce back, heal and win, please feel free to reach out to me for personal coaching, group coaching or information on how to receive a copy of my book All Is Not Lost. I believe I will be able to help you reclaim your power and activate your journey to personal empowerment.



Tarnesa Martin R.N. is a life and personal development coach who leads sessions in health awareness, education, and self-care that focus on enhancing one's capabilities for becoming a better version of themselves. She is an author, speaker, educator, and leadership mentor. Her business is Empower To Live Better, LLC, and she may be reached at empowertolivebetter@gmail.com.

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The Magic Yarn Project



There is an amazing group of big-hearted, creative, and generous people in our midst. They are the hands and heart behind **The Magic Yarn Project**. You might even know someone who is a part of this group! This organization is comprised of thousands of volunteers who make wigs and hats for children suffering hair loss, whether it's from chemotherapy, alopecia, trichotillomania, or burns.

The volunteers do everything from crocheting hats and accessories, decorating envelopes that accompany each wig or hat with the names of each person who contributed toward making it, putting together flowers that go on several of the wigs, and cutting yarn to be used as hair on the wigs. Many of the wigs are Disney princesses and the hats are super heroes and cartoon characters.

The organization was started in 2015 by two nurses from Alaska. Wigs are mailed to hospitals and cancer centers in America and 53 other countries, and also to individuals requesting one. To date the project has sent out over 56,000 wigs and hats in the last 9 years.

Do yourself a favor and take a few minutes to look at these wonderful creations at www.themagicyarnproject.com. You won't believe what some yarn, creativity, and generous hearts can do!! And maybe you would like to be a part of The Magic Yarn Project too.



Photos submitted by Sandy Barnes

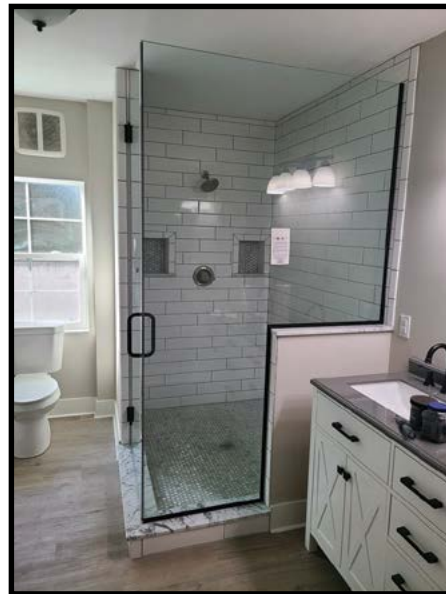
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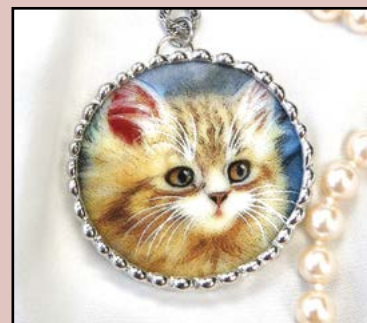
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she means business



Mikayla Gilman is a twenty-nine year old jewelry artist. She transforms vintage porcelain and china into jewelry. One of her specialties is using family loved ones' dishware pieces, some of them heirlooms, to fashion memory necklaces for the whole family. It is important to her to honor the original pieces by knowing their origin and history.

Mikayla has a passion for making life beautiful and poetic and to feel the depth of life on a deeply emotional level. Through her art she feels a deeper connection to being alive. She loves romanticizing the experience of being human with what she wears and adorns herself with. She hopes to do the same for you with the pieces she creates—making life a little sweeter, a little more enjoyable, and a little more poetic.





She'd love for you to join in the journey with her.



Her website:
crystalfrequency.store

Please follow her on Instagram:
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Her shop restocks happen
 about every 5 weeks.

Her online classes debuted June 8th, and teach how to
 make jewelry from broken china and porcelain. You can
 access her classes at: stan.store/CrystalFrequency



Put on Your Dancing Boots



The week before Easter, my coaching client Susan (not her actual name) was invited to go on an all-expense paid cruise to the Caribbean with her boyfriend. She was excited to go on this vacation, but she confided in me that knowing he was an alcoholic, she wasn't sure if she wanted to be around him 24/7 on a cruise ship, where alcohol was endlessly available. She told me that depending on how much he drank, she felt in her gut that the decision to go or not to go could potentially make or break their relationship.

The night before they were planning to go, her boyfriend drank so much he became belligerent and obnoxious and ended up passing out. This was not new to her. It had happened many times over the few years they'd been dating. For the first time since she'd known him, she left him passed out on the couch and went back to her apartment.

This was a big step for her to take. It felt uncomfortable to stand up for herself because she had subconsciously become used to his verbal abuse (as strongly as he had become addicted to his alcohol). Having dramatic fights with him when he was totally drunk had become normal. Then she'd break up with him for a few days and find herself going back to him when he put on his "sweet and kind" mask and proceeded to tell her he would never do it again.

After leaving him passed out on his couch, she went back to her place feeling alone and depressed. She looked at her packed suitcases sitting in the hallway with nowhere to go. She began to cry and sob. During the next 5 minutes, as she released years of pent-up energy, she thought "God please help me, what should I do"?

What she hadn't realized was that after crying hard for any length of time our body will instinctively

make us take a deep breath so we can get reconnected with God's life force energy. As this reflex action kicked in, she suddenly got a strong gut feeling that she should NOT go on the cruise. She had a feeling of peace in her heart and at this moment she clearly heard the words "I have better things in store for you".

She texted me and shared how sad and alone she was feeling. The idea of being true to herself and saying no to her boyfriend was so unfamiliar it felt scary! When she told me she had decided not to go, I texted her back and congratulated her on allowing herself to step into the unknown and listen to her intuition (God's way of speaking to her). She instantly had a feeling of relief run through her body as her consciousness (frequency of her thoughts) shifted from hopelessness to hopefulness.

I congratulated her again and reminded her that by saying no she

gave herself the best gift she could have given herself at this time in her life. The act of self-love and being true to yourself is one of the quickest ways to reconnect with the loving energy of God.

I asked her to take another deep, cleansing breath and focus on something that would make her smile. She suddenly remembered how much she loved to dance and then told me she was going to call a girlfriend to see if she wanted to go out dancing with her that night. After we ended our conversation she acted on this good-feeling idea, and later sent me a selfie of her wearing her favorite dancing boots.

God wants us to be creative and have fun. I quickly texted her back and reminded her that taking the inspired-action step of calling her friend and putting on her dancing boots was a perfect way for her to let God know that she felt his nudge to do something fun and that she was eager and ready to co-create with him.

While dancing to her favorite music, she told her girlfriend that the next day she was planning to look for a hotel to stay in because she

had loaned out her condo to some friends to enjoy during the time she had thought she was going to be on the cruise. After hearing this, her friend suddenly invited her to stay at her place. She had plenty of room in her beautiful condo on the beach, and coincidentally, she was leaving in a few days to visit some relatives in another state so her condo would be available to use for a full week if she wanted to. "Thank you, God," kept running through Susan's mind for the rest of that evening.

The following morning as she was just beginning to wake up, she got a phone call from her daughter, who had rarely communicated with her over the past year. She answered the phone hoping that everything was okay. During the next 45 minutes she and her daughter had the most amazing, heartfelt, deep discussion they had had in a long time. She felt like their relationship had unexpectedly been repaired beyond anything she ever could have imagined.

In this beautiful state of appreciation, she felt an impulse to see if she could register for an online course to renew her mortgage license that she had been procrastinating

about. When she called, they said the registration time had closed, but one cancellation had just popped up so she could have that spot if she wanted. She was thrilled to have this opportunity open so easily and effortlessly!

There is a moral to this true story. Beautiful things happen when we say NO to our habitual patterns of tolerating abuse and begin to set boundaries and be true to ourselves. As a result, we learn through firsthand experience how God is always guiding us when we listen quietly to our emotions.

May this year be the year that we all put on our dancing boots and create our new story!



Suzanne Young is an intuitive life coach who specializes in the Law of Attraction. She is also an inspirational speaker, author, and co-owner of Personal

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Finding Abundance

Beyond the Pursuit of Money

IN THE PURSUIT of freedom and happiness, and as someone who marches to the beat of her own drum, I've spent years trying to break away from the conventional rat race and societal norms. To escape, I tried freelancing and starting my own business. However, again and again I found myself in my own self-imposed rat race. I was still focused on reaching an invisible bar of "success" and reaching a certain income for material possessions. I found myself frustrated that I was back to running the same race I thought I had already left.

Realizing how my pursuit of monetary success had trapped me in the endless race for more, I began to examine my relationship with money and scarcity versus abundance.

As I progressed, a huge shift in my mindset took place; instead of focusing on obtaining or owning a certain amount of something, I began to let go of the concept of possession entirely. I started to see life like being a fish in a fishbowl - the fish doesn't carry anything with it, however everything in the fishbowl is within easy reach to the fish. Likewise, I saw that I could possess less, yet still have everything I needed at any given time.

To shift to this mindset has taken a bit of a leap of faith in the supply of the "fishbowl". To believe that if I let go, it will be fine because everything I need is in the bowl. To test this idea further, I challenged myself to rely less on monetary transactions. I started working for donations, trading skills, and bartering. I adopted a mentality of giving without expecting anything in return and being open to whatever comes my way from the universe.

I started to realize that I really could find anything I wanted in this "fishbowl" as long as I recognized it was there. All that was left to do was to identify what I wanted.

This year I knew it was time for a big shift in my lifestyle. I identified my desires: to be connected with nature, grow my own food, and have nourishing interactions with others. I let the fishbowl do its work. Within a month, the universe presented me

with an opportunity to fulfill all of these desires. It was a lifestyle of work exchange, where I bartered my labor and skills for basic necessities like shelter and food. During this time, I was able to do activities that I already enjoyed in my free time, such as gardening, cooking, and living a simpler homesteading life.

However there was something missing in my list of desires and my experience in the "fishbowl" reflected to me that I needed to re-examine the list. I eventually became overwhelmed and burned out at this work exchange and realized that what I truly needed was a balance with rest and relaxation.

As fate would have it, the endless supply of the "fishbowl" manifested during this transition. As soon as I decided to leave that situation, a friend offered their apartment for me to stay in while they were away and unexpected sources provided me with food and even opportunities to garden. I found myself surrounded by supportive people, plenty of time for relaxation and self-care, and opportunities to still pursue my interests. This apartment is where I sit as I write this article. I can already tell that the next opportunity which will be even more in line with my desires is making its way to me and will be revealed in a next chapter.

The greatest gift of this mindset shift has ultimately been allowing me to trust the universe and myself, especially in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty. Now, I understand that the universe is abundant and that my initial ideas of it being limited to how much money I have has been a false measurement. By acknowledging that I needed more time for relaxation, self-care, and creativity, I have found an abundance of it in my life, no monetary transactions necessary and all supplied in the "fishbowl" of life.



Joy Dettling of Ignite Life specializes in helping individuals release unseen stuck stress patterns and embody their true potential. To find out more, visit ignitelife.net or contact joy@ignitelife.net.



A Versatile Superfood
**5 BENEFITS
OF COOKING WITH
GHEE**

(Family Features)

It's easy to fall into a dinnertime rut, cooking the same meals with the same ingredients time and again. When your family is in search of a delicious way to shake things up in the kitchen, consider new ways to cook favorite dishes without completely rethinking the menu.

Replacing tired ingredients is an easy solution when classic recipes become bland and boring, which is a perfect reason to try cooking with 4th & Heart Ghee. As a 1:1 substitute for butter or oil, its spreadable texture makes it easy to use in baked goods, grilled dishes and beyond.

This superfood can do all the things butter can do – like make toast taste awesome and trick your kids into eating broccoli – but with additional benefits. For example, it maintains its molecular integrity at high temperatures, can be digested by lactose intolerant people, supports weight loss, improves digestion and reduces inflammation.

Consider these benefits of choosing 4th & Heart Ghee instead of butter:

- **Grass-fed and pasture-raised:** It's packed with naturally occurring fatty acids and CLA, which can improve gut health and biochemistry.
- **Spreadable and shelf-stable:** Ghee is shelf-stable for up to 12 months and is best kept in the pantry. This means you never have to scramble to bring butter to room temperature quickly when baking or risk mangling your toast with cold butter.
- **High smoke point:** When oil smokes, it becomes a trans fatty acid. With a smoke point of 485 F, ghee lets you cook away without worrying about high temperatures.
- **Natural source of butyric acid:** Butyric acid naturally occurs in your gut and in ghee, helping your body absorb nutrients from the foods you eat.
- **Buttery taste:** Ghee made in the traditional style provides a delicious, light and buttery taste, perfect for this Sweet Potato Bowl with Cilantro, Turmeric Ghee and Lime. It's ideal for a light lunch or dinner as it's bursting with vibrant flavors and wholesome ingredients.

To find more benefits of cooking with ghee, along with recipe inspiration, visit fourthandheart.com.

Sweet Potato Bowl with Cilantro, Turmeric Ghee & Lime

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 tablespoons 4th & Heart Turmeric Ghee, divided
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- salt & pepper, to taste
- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely diced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped, plus additional for garnish, divided
- 1 lime, juice only
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta or goat cheese (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 F.

In large bowl, toss cubed sweet potatoes with 1 tablespoon turmeric ghee, cumin powder and smoked paprika; add salt and pepper, to taste. Spread sweet potatoes evenly on baking sheet and roast 25-30 minutes, or until tender and slightly crispy on edges, turning halfway through.

Cook quinoa according to package instructions. Once cooked, fluff with fork and set aside.

In medium bowl, mix cooked quinoa with black beans, red onion and 1/4 cup chopped cilantro.

Drizzle half the lime juice over quinoa mixture and stir to combine. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

In large serving bowl, top quinoa mixture with roasted sweet potatoes. Drizzle remaining turmeric ghee over bowl. Squeeze remaining lime juice over top. Garnish with additional chopped cilantro and crumbled feta or goat cheese, if desired.

How Mindful Eating Leads to Abundant Living

The What, Why, & How of Divine Dining

Bite by Bite



Ever found yourself rushing through a meal between meetings, grabbing a quick bite at a fast-food restaurant because you're starving? That doesn't sound much like Divine Dining, does it? It certainly doesn't feel like it either. Your belly doesn't feel good, and your soul feels unfulfilled. But what if I told you that even the simplest meal could be transformed into a moment of nourishment and satisfaction through mindful eating, leading to a life of abundance and fulfillment?

WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING?

Mindful eating is about being fully attentive to your food—from how you choose and prepare it to how you consume it. It's about savoring every bite and appreciating the entire eating experience. Unlike dieting, which often consumes a lot of energy and drives guilt, mindful eating encourages you to reconnect with your body's natural hunger and fullness signals, making food choices without fear or judgment. This mindful approach to eating can lead to a more abundant life, filled with gratitude and satisfaction.

Consider your experiences with dieting. Perhaps you've felt these frustrations:

- Dieting consumes a lot of energy.
- Dieting drives guilt and cravings.
- Dieting doesn't address the real reasons we overeat.
- Dieting contributes to ignoring physical signs of hunger.
- Diets are usually all or nothing.
- The yo-yo weight gain, or even more weight gained, than before the diet.

- Restricting ourselves while on a diet and then overeating when we fail.
- Someone else becomes the expert.

Now, take a moment to imagine what it would feel like to be at ease with yourself and the food you eat, without guilt or fear. By developing intuition and intention, we can eat instinctively and feel at ease with our choices. This, my beautiful friend, is mindful eating—a pathway to living abundantly.

WHY SHOULD WE EAT MINDFULLY?

Mindful eating transcends conventional dieting and intersects with spiritual reflection, aligning both our wellness goals and faith-based gratitude. Here are five compelling reasons to eat mindfully and embrace abundance:

1 CHERISH OUR HEALTH AS A GIFT

Mindful eating encourages us to view our health as a precious gift. This perspective shifts our focus from eating merely to satisfy immediate desires to nourishing our bodies with what they truly need. Recognizing that every food choice is an opportunity to honor our body's complex functions and requirements shows respect and appreciation for the health we've been blessed with, fostering a sense of abundance.

2 CULTIVATE A HEART OF GRATITUDE

Eating mindfully allows us to cultivate gratitude for the food on our plates and for the entire journey it took to get there—from the farmers who grew it to our efforts in preparing it. This practice of gratitude enhances our overall sense of well-being and contentment, fostering a deeper appreciation for life's provisions and our interconnectedness with the world, enriching our experience of abundance.

3 LIVE INTENTIONALLY AND MINDFULLY

Mindful eating trains us to make conscious decisions about what, when, and how we eat. This discipline encourages us to live with intention across all our daily actions, leading to a more thoughtful and engaged way

of living. Intentional living aligns with the principles of abundant life, where every action is meaningful and enriching.

4 EMBRACE SELF-COMPASSION & KINDNESS

Adopting a mindful approach to eating teaches us to treat ourselves with kindness and compassion. Recognizing that slip-ups are part of the human experience, we learn to respond with gentleness rather than judgment, alleviating feelings of guilt and paving the way for a healthier self-image and improved mental health. Self-compassion is a cornerstone of living abundantly, as it allows us to grow and thrive without the burden of unnecessary guilt.

5 SAVOR EACH BITE WITH PRESENCE

Mindful eating transforms every meal into an opportunity to savor life's flavors. Fully engaging our senses enhances our dining experience, leading to better digestion and satisfaction with smaller portions as our brain registers fullness signals from our stomach. Savoring each bite reminds us of the richness of God's blessings, helping us live more abundantly.

HOW TO PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING

Now that we know what mindful eating is and why we should practice it, let's explore how to incorporate it into our daily routine. Here are ten tips to help you get started:

1 CREATE A MINDFUL ENVIRONMENT

Begin by eliminating distractions. Turn off your devices and clear away clutter to fully focus on the meal. This helps you tune into the eating experience without external interruptions.

2 ENGAGE ALL SENSES

Before you begin eating, take a moment to appreciate the appearance and aroma of your food. As you eat, pay attention to the texture, taste, and sounds of your meal. Engaging all your senses helps enhance the experience and makes you more aware of what and how much you are eating.

3 EAT SLOWLY

Take small bites and chew thoroughly, savoring each mouthful. Eating slowly aids digestion and allows you to notice your body's satiety signals more effectively, helping to prevent overeating.

4 RECOGNIZE HUNGER & FULLNESS CUES

Learn to listen to your body's cues. Start eating when you feel hungry and stop when you are comfortably full. Avoid waiting until you are extremely hungry or eating beyond fullness, as both can lead to mindless eating.

5 PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Before you begin your meal, take a moment to express gratitude for the food in front of you. Consider the journey the ingredients took from source to plate, the effort of all those involved in the process, and the nourishment it provides. This practice fosters a deeper connection to your food.

6 SET INTENTIONS

Reflect on why you are eating. Is it out of hunger, boredom, sadness, or social obligation? Setting intentions helps to clarify your reasons for eating and aligns your meal choices with your overall health goals.

7 EAT IN SILENCE

Periodically, try to eat in silence. This practice helps to reduce the 'noise' that often accompanies meals, allowing you to be more present when you eat.

8 REFLECT POST-MEAL

After eating, spend a few minutes reflecting on the meal and your level of satiety. Note any feelings or physical sensations. This reflection can improve your future eating behaviors and choices.

9 INCORPORATE MINDFULNESS RITUALS

Use rituals such as breathing exercises before meals to center yourself and prepare for a mindful eating experience. This can help transition your mind from the busyness of the day to the calmness required for mindful eating.

10 USE MINDFUL EATING AIDS

Tools like hunger scales can be helpful. These encourage you to assess your hunger and fullness on a scale before, during, and after eating, helping you become more attuned to your body's needs.

One effective tip for eating mindfully, even when you're in a hurry, is to take a few deep breaths before starting your meal. This simple act can serve as a "mini-meditation," helping you to center your thoughts and bring your focus to the present moment. Taking deep breaths helps to relax the body and mind, making you more aware of your eating process, and allows you to briefly check in with your hunger and fullness signals before you begin eating.

Mindful eating is more than a set of practices; it's a celebration of life's simple pleasures and a commitment to honoring ourselves with each bite we take. Whether you're sitting down to a leisurely dinner or grabbing a quick lunch on the go, there's always a moment to pause and be present with your meal. The act of taking a few deep breaths before you begin can transform even the most rushed snack into a peaceful interlude in your day. This is the heart of Divine Dining—finding joy and contentment in the act of eating, acknowledging the nourishment and flavor in every morsel, and enriching our entire lives. So let's carry this spirit of mindfulness with us, making each meal a deliberate, fulfilling experience that contributes to a balanced and satisfying life. With each mindful meal, we're not just feeding our bodies; we're nurturing our well-being and embracing abundant living.



Debra Loader is a Christian Health and Wellness Coach, a Christian Life Coach, as well as a National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC). She helps women

integrate their Christian faith into their health and wellness journey to find greater motivation and resilience. You can contact Debra at debra@debraloaderlivingwell.com or 810-287-4096.7



You Deserve an Abundant Life!

Abundant is an adjective that means “plentiful” or a “large amount.” Basically, if you have abundance then you have “more than enough.” So, if you have an abundant life, then you have a life in which you have more than enough.

I am sympathetic to those that cannot claim they are living an abundant life. Sometimes living an abundant life, or *not*, is often the result of decisions made for us or is outside of our control. However, other times our own decisions have affected our quality of life and whether we could define it as an abundant one or not.

I *have* lived an abundant life and I know some of the factors that have contributed to that reality. I want to share some of those lessons because, at any given time, we can choose to make different decisions and make changes in our lives in order to begin living an abundant life.

I have to first acknowledge that the greatest contributing factor to me living an abundant life came with the decision to invite Jesus Christ into my life at 15 years old. That decision changed the trajectory of my life. I did not grow up in a Christian family. The only time that I heard the name of God was when my dad was really mad. My dad was never physically abusive with me, but he *was* verbally abusive. I often think about the fact that my brother, who was only 1 ½ years younger than me, did NOT live an abundant life. He spent a good portion of his life in jail. Therefore, I raised his three children for eight years. However, our lives could have been reversed. I could have gone his route in life, and he could have gone mine. I often think to myself, “There, but for the grace of God go I.” We were raised in the same home, with the same parents, and, yet we lived starkly different lives.

A second decision that I made was to seek the wisdom of others in all areas of my life. I sought wisdom for getting good grades in college by learning from fellow students’ the skills of organization and planning. I also read a book on getting straight A’s. I sought wisdom from couples when I married. I sought wisdom from those that had already successfully raised their own kids, when I had

children. I sought wisdom from managers and business owners in my career and when I started my own business. Wisdom is more than knowledge. I like to think of wisdom as knowledge applied. You can have a lot of knowledge on a subject and still not know how to apply it to your life.

The third factor that has guided my life is this single scripture of Ephesians 5:15. It declares, “Live purposely, worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise, sensible and intelligent people, making the most of our time because our days are short.” Wow! Now, that’s a loaded scripture. Let’s break it down. To live purposely is to have a sense of direction and meaning in life by actively engaging in activities that align with your values and goals. To live worthily is to conduct oneself in a manner that deserves respect and honor by living a moral life, defined by integrity. To live accurately means to live with precision and correctness by aligning your thoughts, feelings, and actions in reality. It means making deliberate choices. It requires being fully present and conscious of one’s life and its effect on others. We are to live wisely and think logically, and make intelligent, thought-out decisions as opposed to being “unwise and witless.” Finally, that scripture acknowledges that we should make the most of our time on this earth because we don’t have much time.

I hope that some of these lessons on living an abundant life resonate with you and that you can apply some portion to your life. My hope and prayer for every reader is that you live an abundant life. There are women out there like me that would welcome any opportunity to help you get there. You are worthy and you deserve an abundant life!



Kelly Haskins Stonerock was raised in Clarkston. She has been a resident of Goodrich for 29 years. She is presently the CEO of BatsAndTraps.com, an animal removal company that services Genesee County and it's surrounding communities. Kelly has five children of her own and she raised

three other children. She was featured on ABC's television show, "Wife Swap" in 2005. Her episode is available on Hulu, Season 2: Episode 11.

Abundant Living Is Family

What a joy it is to live at Houghton Lake, the largest inland lake in Michigan. We have had so much family fun -- they all look forward to spending time here.

On our first Fourth of July holiday at our lakefront cottage, twenty-seven people came up to spend a week with us -- both family and friends. Our son, Ron, his wife, and their two children drove up from Florida. There weren't many times any more when all four of our kids were together. We rented two other cabins adjacent to ours to sleep everyone and some of the grandkids slept in a tent in our front yard.

We had the best time that week. It was one of my favorite times at the lake and holds so many sweet memories. The guys enjoyed fishing, and everyone loved our speedboat. No telling how many tanks of gas went through our boat that week, but a lot. Our grandson, Michael, caught the biggest fish, and everyone wanted their picture taken holding Michael's fish.

Then there was all the laughter the night a skunk let a stink bomb under one of the cabins. It was really pungent, and the aroma brought all of us out of our cabins in the middle of the night.

On the fourth of July, Jack and I cooked steaks with all the trimmings for all twenty-seven. Such wonderful memories -- always filled with love.

On the other hand, I have a family member who won \$8.7 million and never enjoyed it.

Jack and I always enjoyed attending the Crane Family reunions. Years ago so many were attending that we rented a pavilion, usually the one in Linden. It was a huge affair that we looked forward to -- seeing everyone, catching up on the news, always an abundance of food. We even had a committee who planned games for the kids and bought prizes to hand out. Each year we honored a family member as "King for the Day" or "Queen for the Day." My year to be honored was 1983.

Over the years, family members have passed away, some have moved away, and some of the young people have just lost interest. But I have an interesting story to share of our last gathering. We had ten people attending -- five couples -- and one of those ten people had just won \$8.7 million dollars. I cannot divulge their identity, but I guarantee you we were all buzzing about it that day.

Our small group met at The Heritage House in Chesaning, Michigan, for lunch. Eight of us were stunned as this revelation was announced. Who could have imagined that someone in our family had won! That only happens to other people!

The lucky couple said they were walking downtown in their city, and in the drugstore window, they saw a sign that read "Buy your Lotto tickets here!" They went in and bought one ticket.

Back in that day, most winners had their picture in the newspaper holding their check, but this couple did not want their identity known. They had grandchildren and were afraid someone might try to kidnap them for ransom.

At the lunch table that day, the mister in the couple said he was going to have new windows put in their house. The misses said, "You better wrap a new house around those windows!" The last we knew, they never did. They were unable to enjoy their winnings because of fear.

To me, abundant living is being surrounded with the ones you love, enjoying life to the fullest. No amount of money can buy that.



Arlene Curns is an author, encourager, and matriarch of a family of 44, spanning five generations. She is enjoying life in northern Michigan surrounded by family and friends. She can be reached at estimada27@aol.com.



Our cabin at Houghton Lake.



I'm "Queen for a Day" in 1983, my siblings; Agnes, Edna, Don and me.



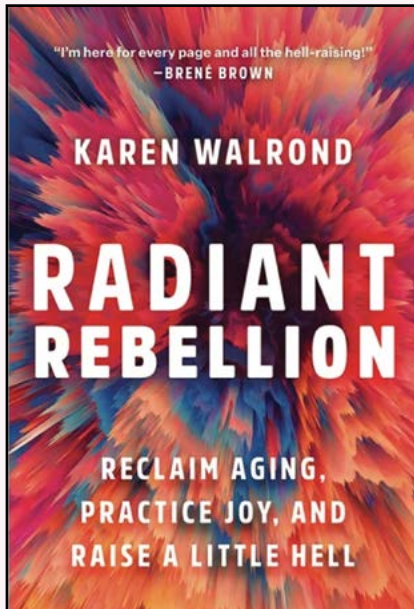
Photo of Jack and me enjoying life at Houghton Lake.



Crane reunion; the lotto winners are in this photo. Jack and I are 2nd from left.

Book Club Classics

Books that Change You



Radiant Rebellion

Reclaim Aging, Practice Joy, and Raise a Little Hell

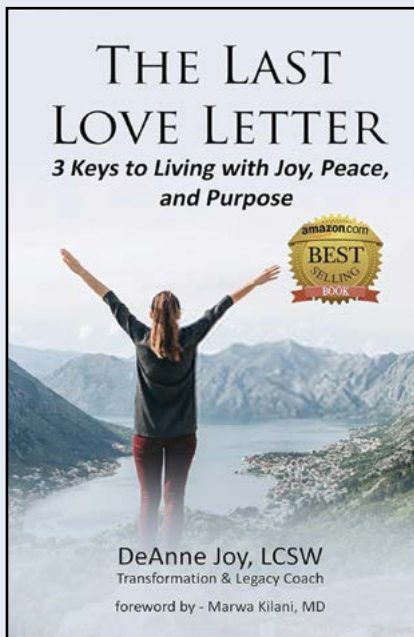
by Karen Walrond

What if aging is something to aspire to, not to dread? What if together we could forge a radiant rebellion against the idea of aging as a season of decline?

Join Karen Walrond, author of *The Lightmaker's Manifesto*, in this intriguing investigation into how we can reclaim aging, cultivate joy, and resist ageism.

Internalized ageism--bias against our future selves--is not our only option; we can write a different

story of aging than the one we've been handed. With wisdom from luminaries who light our way, Walrond helps us radiantly rebel against the fads and assumptions that hold us back, redefine the adventure of getting older, and create a shining future of expanded potential. We might even raise a little hell while we're at it! A resources section offers journal prompts and strategies for creating a handbook for your own radiant rebellion.



The Last Love Letter

3 Keys to Living with Joy, Peace, and Purpose

by DeAnne Joy

We are not born with an expiration date stamped on the bottoms of our feet. Life can change on a dime and tomorrow simply isn't promised. Yet, we tend to walk through life as though our time here is infinite.

What if, rather than fearing or avoiding death, we used it as our gauge for how we live life TODAY? If today was your last, would you be happy with how you lived it? Have you lived fully, loved deeply, and made a difference?

As a clinical therapist, end-of-life social worker, and transformation coach of 25 years, DeAnne reveals the wake-up call she experienced after tragically losing her mother to a severe brain injury. She shares the crucial, healing role that her mother's advance healthcare directive played, and how it led her to teach others about the gift of advance directives and living with no regrets.

Stay Ahead of MEDICARE FRAUDSTERS

Every day, criminals target older Americans with one goal – to steal their Medicare numbers and other protected health information. To fraudsters, this information is just as valuable as credit card information. These criminals steal Medicare numbers and unlawfully bill Medicare for medical services that were never provided to the patient or overbill for provided services.

When criminals commit fraud, and falsely bill Medicare, people's medical records may become inaccurate and they can suffer delayed or even be denied care. In the end, Medicare fraud costs taxpayers billions of dollars every year. Each dollar lost to fraud takes away resources intended for people with Medicare.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Fraudsters are getting creative and new scams are continually emerging. The best thing you can do is beware of people who contact you for your Medicare number or other personal information. You may be contacted by phone, text or email by someone posing as a Medicare representative, a health care provider or even a medical equipment company. If someone you don't know asks for your Medicare number, hang up or delete the message – this is a scam.

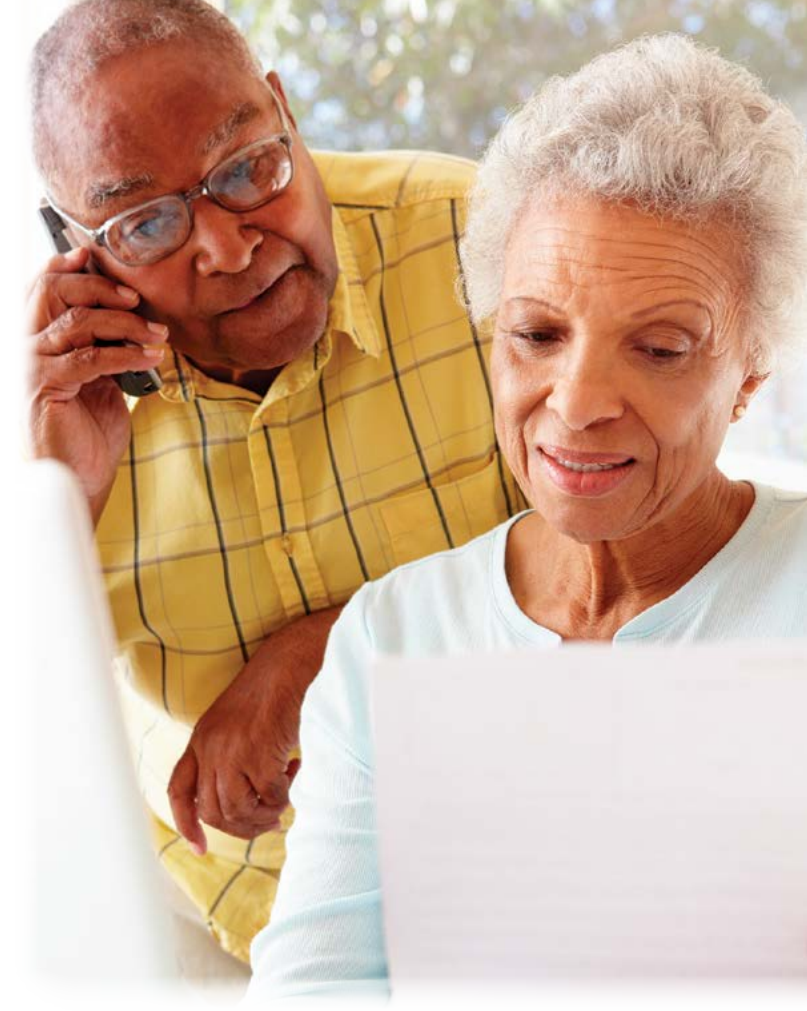
Consider these tips to help protect yourself against Medicare fraud and stay one step ahead of fraudsters:

- Guard your Medicare card just like your Social Security card and credit card.
- Only share your Medicare information with your trusted health care providers.
- Be skeptical of free gifts, free medical services, discount packages or any offer that sounds too good to be true.
- Always check your Medicare claims statements to make sure they are accurate. Call 1-800-MEDICARE if you suspect you or Medicare has been billed for a service you did not receive.

WATCH OUT FOR MEDICARE HOSPICE FRAUD

Beware of scammers offering older Americans in-home perks, like free cooking, cleaning and home health services, while they are unknowingly being signed up for hospice services. The scammers then unlawfully bill Medicare for these services in your name.

Criminals are using every avenue they can to sign you up including door-to-door visits, false advertising, phone, text and email. Hospice care is for people who are terminally ill



and only you and your doctor can make this serious decision if you need end-of-life care.

Remember this advice to avoid hospice scams:

- Your doctor is the only one who can certify you're terminally ill (with a life expectancy of 6 months or less). If you are not terminally ill, you should not receive hospice care.
- Never accept perks or gifts in return for signing up for hospice services.
- Medicare will never provide "free" services like housekeeping.
- Be suspicious if someone offers you free services like housekeeping or cooking in return for your Medicare number.
- Medicare will never come to your home.

REPORT MEDICARE FRAUD

Reporting Medicare fraud protects you and millions of other people with Medicare and those with disabilities. If you or someone you know has experienced Medicare fraud or suspect an offer you've received is a scam, report it as soon as possible. You will never be in trouble for reporting fraud.

To learn more, visit [Medicare.gov/fraud](https://www.medicare.gov/fraud). To report potential fraud, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock. (Family Features).

Smart Starts for a Healthy Heart

Improve hydration, skip added sugars with better-for-you beverages

How you start your morning can impact the rest of your day. If you're looking to incorporate healthier choices into your morning routine, try a concept known as "habit stacking." Building tiny, healthier habits into routines you already have, like enjoying a morning beverage or breakfast before you check your email instead of jumping right into the day's tasks, can make it easier to stick to a new habit when it's built into an existing routine.

If you already enjoy the routine of breakfast to start the day, consider swapping sugary drinks for beverages without added sugars like unsweetened green or black tea. When

incorporated as part of an overall healthy diet, unsweetened tea can help support heart health.

A small handful of ingredients makes a big splash in Green Tea Berry Banana Smoothies, ideal for an on-the-go breakfast. For a little refreshment any time of day, simple Sparkling Green Tea Cranberry Spritzers offer a solution with 0 grams of added sugars while non-alcoholic Green Tea Mojito Mocktails provide natural sweetness with 100% fruit juice.

Discover more ways to improve daily routines at Heart.org/eatsmart. (Family Features)



Green Tea Berry Banana Smoothies

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association
Servings: 4 (1 1/2 cups per serving)

- 3 cups water
- 8 single-serving green tea bags
- 16 ounces frozen mixed berries (about 3 cups)
- 2 medium bananas, peeled, cut in half and frozen
- 1 cup fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons fresh-grated peeled gingerroot (optional)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract (optional)
- 2 teaspoons chia or flax seeds (optional)

In small saucepan over high heat, bring water to boil. Remove pan from heat. Submerge tea bags. Steep 4 minutes. Discard tea bags. Let tea mixture cool 30 minutes. Pour into pitcher. Refrigerate 2 hours, or until chilled.

In food processor or blender, process tea, berries, bananas and yogurt until smooth. Add gingerroot and vanilla, if desired, and process until smooth. Pour into four glasses. Sprinkle with chia seeds, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving (without optional ingredients): 136 calories; 1 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, trans fat, polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat); 3 mg cholesterol; 23 mg sodium; 29 g carbohydrates; 5 g fiber; 18 g total sugars (0 g added sugars); 8 g protein.



Green Tea Mojito Mocktails

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association
Servings: 4 (1 1/2 cups per serving)

- 4 cups water
- 4 single-serving green tea bags
- 32-40 sprigs fresh mint, plus additional for garnish, divided
- 2 cups ice cubes
- 1 cup 100% white grape juice
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice (about 4 medium limes)
- 1 medium lime, cut into four wedges or lime zest twists (optional)

In small saucepan over high heat, bring water to boil. Remove pan from heat. Submerge tea bags. Steep 4 minutes. Discard tea bags. Let tea mixture cool 30 minutes. Pour into pitcher. Refrigerate 2 hours, or until chilled.

At serving time, add mint leaves to four glasses. Using muddler or wooden spoon, mash mint leaves several times to release juices. Don't mash into pulp. Add ice.

Stir white grape juice and lime juice into tea mixture. Pour into glasses. Garnish each with lime wedge and mint leaf.

Nutritional information per serving: 45 calories; 0 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, trans fat, polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat); 0 mg cholesterol; 7 mg sodium; 13 g carbohydrates; 0 g fiber; 10 g total sugars (0 g added sugars); 1 g protein.



Sparkling Green Tea Cranberry Spritzers

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association
Servings: 4 (1 1/2 cups per serving)

- 4 cups water
- 4 single-serving green tea bags
- 1 cup 100% cranberry juice or 100% cranberry-pomegranate juice
- 2 cups ice cubes
- 1/2 cup seltzer (flavored or plain) or low-sodium club soda, chilled
- 4 orange slices or lime wedges (optional)

In small saucepan over high heat, bring water to boil. Remove pan from heat. Submerge tea bags. Steep 4 minutes. Discard tea bags. Let tea mixture cool 30 minutes. Pour into pitcher. Stir in cranberry juice. Refrigerate 2 hours, or until chilled.

At serving time, put ice cubes in four glasses. Pour tea mixture into glasses. Top each serving with seltzer. Garnish with orange slices.

Tip: To create cranberry-flavored ice cubes, fill ice cube tray with 100% cranberry juice and freeze.

Nutritional information per serving: 32 calories; 0 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, trans fat, polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat); 0 mg cholesterol; 4 mg sodium; 8 mg carbohydrates; 0 g fiber; 8 g total sugars (0 g added sugars); 1 g protein.

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