

WOMEN INSPIRING WOMEN FOR GOOD!

W2W

WOMEN 2 WOMEN
MICHIGAN MAGAZINE

COMPLIMENTARY

Adventures

Are You Full Of Zeal?

STACEY KIMBRELL

Stepping Out of Her Comfort Zone

TRINA CARSWELL

Find The Fire

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What If She'd
Had Magical
Powers?

Misha McKenzie

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Dear Friends,

What new adventure have you scheduled for yourself lately? Oh, you haven't yet? Well, our writers have some great ideas for you!

Autumn in Michigan is a great time to go exploring and hiking. We have an abundance of apple orchards, wineries, and beautiful hiking trails that give you great outside adventures. Vacations and beach opportunities have slowed down so you might investigate indoor events like operas and dance recitals, or even attending a performance from a genre that is new to you (Flint's beautiful cultural center offers many options!).

For many of us this season brings a time of inward reflection and growth which can also bring new adventures. Perhaps you'd like to begin putting your thoughts into writing through poetry or even a blog. Maybe now, with things slowing down a bit, is the time to start treating your body to yoga. Any time we try something new it's an adventure!

We hope you have a wonderful fall, and let us know about your adventures!

Much love, Deb and Mimi

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W2W

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Women2Women Michigan was created to connect women with women for good to encourage, support, have fun, do business and provide links for women's resources.

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“THE PURPOSE OF LIFE, AFTER ALL, IS
TO LIVE IT, TO TASTE EXPERIENCE TO
THE UTMOST, TO REACH OUT EAGERLY
AND WITHOUT FEAR FOR NEWER AND
RICHER EXPERIENCE.”

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT





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WHAT IF SHE'D HAD MAGICAL POWERS?

Author Misha McKenzie



Who are you?

I'm a forty-nine (soon to be fifty) year old wife, mother, grandmother, dog mom, biker chick, office manager, and oh yeah, I write paranormal romance novels. I graduated from Genesee High School in 1988, then went on to attend Baker College of Flint where I completed my Associates Degree in Business Administration - Management/Marketing.

How would you describe yourself?

I would describe myself as a mostly quiet person. I was painfully shy as a child and didn't say a whole lot. I'm still a fairly quiet individual, but if this journey I've been on with my books has taught me one thing, it's to stretch myself out of my shell.

Growing up, it would nearly kill me to stand in front of a group of people to speak out loud. I'd get hot and clammy, my voice would shake, I'd get pale, then red in the face—it wasn't pretty. Now, I address a ballroom full of friends and readers at book events that I attend with no problem. I've actually come to love it. I get to talk with people who, like me, love to lose themselves in the worlds created within books.

Where are you from originally, where do you live now?

I grew up in the small town of Genesee—it's about ten minutes north east from downtown Flint—most have never heard of it. It's so small that our graduating class had less than seventy people in it. Definitely one of those schools where you know everyone. A lot of my family still live in the area—countless cousins of all kinds still dot the landscape. I'm one who has never really moved too far away, always within a minute or two of town.

My sons, and now my granddaughter, have all gone to the same school as I did. An interesting fact is that my mother also attended Genesee High School, making my granddaughter the fourth generation to walk those halls.

I do love to travel, though. My husband and I will usually try to take several camping trips a year, finding new places around the

state to visit. Some we'll load our motorcycles and take day trips to ride this beautiful area. A favorite by far, is Traverse City, that's a camping trip we do every summer. We had to miss that trip this year, but for a very good reason. We were able to go to Europe for a ten-day dream vacation in July. We spent a little time in Paris and then toured Germany before heading back home.

My publisher is spending some time in Germany and offered us a place to stay while we were there. It was incredible and all of my social media was inundated with pictures from the entire trip. It was an amazing experience and has whet our appetite for even more travel.

How do you describe what you do professionally?

Professionally? Well, technically, my nine to five is that of an office manager at a construction company. It's in my spare time that I write paranormal romance novels. But it sounds so much more exciting to turn those around and say: I write romance novels, and in my spare time I'm an office manager at a construction company.

I love my job though, and it doesn't seem possible that I've been there since 1998. My youngest son was a little over a year old when I started and he's now twenty-two and out on his own. When I look back at it, I've been writing just about as long as I've been there since it was only a few short years after I began working there that I set those first words to paper.

What is your expertise?

None, really, lol. I never had any inkling that I wanted to write. I think just having read voraciously all my life, I had ideas floating around in my head waiting for the right time to get out. I have taken a few courses and seminars to improve my writing over the years, but nothing formal. My writing was rough at first, but with the help of a patient publisher and dedicated editors, I've picked up on a lot of the rules that I ignored in high school English class.

Though, they'll tell you commas are still my downfall. They've explained it to me many times and I've read how and where to use them, but a solid grasp on it still eludes me, lol. Too many exceptions to the rules, I guess.

What's your personal story?

I was born in Flint on January 24, 1970, at Hurley Hospital. I was brought home with my parents Jim and Vivian Stevens, and two older brothers, Jim and Carlo, who were quite a few years older than me. I was the baby of the family and also the only girl, yay me, lol. Just a little doted on.

Still a toddler, my parents divorced and I, along with my mom and two brothers moved into a trailer park in the Genesee School District. Growing up in that park in the seventies was so much fun. I had a great group of friends my own age and we had the run of those streets (when I was old enough, of course). Bike rides, playing in the woods, building forts, bringing home stray baby (wild) animals, lol. The only hard and fast rules were to not leave the park for any reason

and to be home when the street lights came on. So many of those same girls I ran with, I am still great friends with today.

When I was about eight, my mom met the wonderful man who would become my new dad, Jim Hart. They married soon after and, at nine years old, we all moved to a house a few miles down the road to the middle of Genesee. It was right across the street from what had been the only gas station in town. I loved it because I could run across the street and grab a pop or chips or candy whenever I wanted.

My circle of friends expanded as I was able to walk or ride my bike to so many more houses in my new neighborhood. I spent the next few years getting through school, dating, hanging out, going to bonfires, football games, playing sports, going to dances, and soon driving all over town with my friends.

On December 31, 1986 (I was 16, going to turn 17 in January) I went to a New Year's Eve party with a one of my girlfriends, and I met this guy, lol. Man, he was so cute. He was older (19) and in college. So cool.

We started talking on the phone and then dating through the rest of my high school career, and beyond.

Thirty-three years (twenty-five married September 3rd), two wonderful boys, and a granddaughter later, we're still going strong. There were bumps here and there, of course, but we stuck it out. When you want something, you don't give up.

Why do you do what you do?

Unbeknownst to me for a long time, I love writing. I have no idea where it comes from, but I have fallen in love with writing the twists and turns and the hot and steamy romance of it. And there's nothing better than when people come up to me at book events and tell me how they've just finished a book I wrote and how much they loved it. It makes it all worth it. All the days of looking at a blank screen trying to come up with the next scene, not so hard.

And I especially love the looks I get when someone who has known me for years as a quiet and reserved person, reads a hot steamy sex scene that I wrote, lol. As they say, it's always the quiet ones you have to worry about. You never know what's going on in our minds.

How do you do it?

As far as where it comes from, I have no clue. But once triggered with that first book, it just kind of snowballed. Now, my brain is always developing new ideas, new scenes, and new characters. People are always talking in my head; I have no control over it.

It'll be so bad sometimes that as I'm working on my current project another idea or scene will take root in my mind. It'll poke and scream and holler at me until I have to stop what I'm doing, open a new document, and type out what's there. The shifter series did that to me. I had to get that whole opening scene out and down on paper before I could get back to what I'd been doing.

It's crazy, but it's also amazing.

And as with most authors, I'm sure I'm on some watch list somewhere with what I have in my computer search history. How to cut a throat, what does it look like, how to pick locks, which herbs can poison, the list goes on and on.

How did you get into it?

It was later in life, and quite by accident.

I'd never had any driving need to write anything. I've read everything I could get my hands on for as long as I can remember. My mom likes to tell people that I didn't think I could go to kindergarten because I didn't know how to read. Needless to say, I was taught before school started and have never stopped.

One day, in my early-thirties, shortly after beginning a job as an office manager at a local construction company, I was without anything to read. That didn't happen often as the back of my car at the time was always filled with books from libraries and local used books stores, but on this day it had.

I'd stumbled onto the genre of paranormal romance some years earlier and fell in love with it. The possibilities were endless. So, with nothing else to occupy my mind, I began to wonder what it would be like to have magical abilities.

I say that two little words started it all—what if. What if I woke up one day and had powers?

That led to: where had they come from? Why are they showing up now? What will this mean to my life? Who am I? What am I? Suddenly, I had so many ideas. I think having read so many books gave me a basic understanding of how to tell a story of my own.

I wrote the first fifty pages of *Magic Found* in secret. I didn't tell anyone what I was doing. Finally, curiosity got the better of me and I needed to know what others would think.

I called my mom, who had moved to Florida for the winters, and told her what I'd done. I sent her those first pages and held my breath until I'd heard back from her.

She loved it and asked where the rest was. I had to disappoint her and tell her there was no more. But over the next year or so, I'd write more and give them to her.

I worked on that first book for a long time, but when it was finally done, I knew I had to keep going. Another character had told me he needed a book too.

As a side note. I have come to find out that I am a complete pantsner. In writing there are basically two types of authors—plotters and pantsers. Plotter is exactly what you'd think. But we, of the pantsner variety, like to fly by the seat of our pants when writing. I don't really know where a book is going until I write it. Makes for some interesting plot twists. Even for me.

Anyway, as I started book two in what would become *The Magic of the Heart Series*, more years passed. It took probably a good ten before I got up the nerve to send out queries to publishers and agents.

Another five years go by with more 'no thank you's' than I can count. I reach out to a friend of my cousin who has a small publishing company in Georgia and ask if I can send him *Magic Found*. He agrees, and I hold my breath again as he looks it over.

He turns it down.

It hurt, but I take that in stride and keep writing. Now I have half of book three done and every few weeks I send out ten to fifteen more queries. About six months later, I get an email from my cousin's friend. He wants to take another look at it.

I email it to him again and await word, anxiously—no one has ever taken a second look. Those few days were nerve-racking, let me tell you. But I finally heard from him.

He wants it! It's going to take a lot of work to make it publishable, he qualifies, but he'll work with me. And then offers me a contract.

A contract! For a book I wrote. Holy crap!

I cried all the way home from work. I called my mom and cried with her, and probably cried when I told my husband. I'm sure he just shook his head.

That was in July of 2013, and for the next six months I worked with editors to polish up my manuscript.

On my birthday, January 24, 2014 *Magic Found* hit. It was incredible and scary and mind blowing all at the same time. I'd go to Amazon and plug my name into the search bar and, boom, there it was. Amazon knew who I was, lol.

But now came the scariest part of being an author—waiting for the reviews to come in. Knowing your baby is out there being judged by people you don't know is by far the worst part.

I'd stalk my own Amazon page waiting to hear what everyone thought. Some were bad and those made me sad, but the majority of what people had to say about it were wonderful. *Magic Found* actually made it to Amazon's Best Seller list a few months later. And I, Misha McKenzie, quiet kid from small town USA made it into the top one hundred authors on Amazon. So crazy.

It was ramping up to be a wild ride. In that first year alone, the other three books in the *Magic Series* were published. And in the years since, seven more books have been written. That's eleven books published with my name on them!

Next after the *Magic Series* I wrote a fun little e-novella about a coven of sister witches who take action against some bullies and manipulators. Followed quickly by another four-book series called *The Burke Witches*. My most recent books (two so far) are a part of my mountain lion shifter series titled *The Lost Creek Shifters*.

I'm currently working on two different projects. Book three in the shifter series and also a new witch book—whether that turns into a series or not, I won't know until it tells me.

What has been your biggest lesson or insight?

To never give up. If something is important to you, never give up on it. I have stacks and stacks of letters telling me that my manuscript wasn't what they were looking for. For over five years all I got were 'sorry, no thank you'.

All it takes is one yes for your dreams to come true so don't stop until that happens.

Tell us about your books.

Overall, my books are happily ever after love stories filled with suspense, drama, laughter, and the paranormal (whether that be witches, shifters, ghosts, or other otherworldly entities). Each complete series has an encompassing arc that flows from one book to the next, culminating in an epic climax of good vs. evil. Each book within the series has its own adventure to challenge those characters and keep you on the edge of your seat.

I think if one thing links all of my books, it's family. The good, the bad, and the ugly. Because when it all comes down to it, what do you have if you don't have the people around you who love you and support you?

Why should I buy your book? What is unique about it?

A lot of myself ends up in my books—personal journeys, battles, goals, and experiences help to flavor the work with something unique to me.

When I was writing *Magic Found*, I expanded on the fact that I'm adopted. I didn't know where I came from. I didn't know who my birth parents were. What if (there're those words again) I'd come from a long line of witches?

My heroine, Marissa Spencer, in *Magic Found* was abandoned at a church as an infant (I wasn't, lol. I was born in a hospital). She grows up never knowing where she came from, who her family is. So, when her magical gifts show up when she's thirty years old, she has to embark on this emotional and dangerous journey to find out who she is, and why someone is now stalking her. And, of course, her hot PI boss jumps in to help.

A fun and unique fact about my e-novella, *RavenStorm*, is that each of the nine women in that coven are actually members of my family—my mom, cousins, sisters-in-law and a niece. When I can up with the concept, I tasked each one of them to come up with their own witch name, with a caveat that it had to begin with the same letter as their own name. I took it from there and gave each of them a story that is hilarious and heartfelt.

My Burke witches are a set of quadruplets, two sets of identical twins. Two boys and two girls. Who isn't fascinated with high order multiples? I wanted to see how the fact that these four were not only twins, but also quads effected their magic. Would sharing a womb unify them differently? How would that connection to each other differ from the other witches I'd written about? Exploring that was a lot of fun.

Where and how is your book available?

My books are available at all major online book selling sites. Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and Apple iBooks. You can find a link to all those and all my social media on my website.

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<https://twitter.com/MishaMcKenzie>

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What are your future goals?

I would like to keep writing for many years to come. I joke that I'm working on my retirement. I figure as long as I can somehow get words into the computer, I can keep creating more worlds in my books.

On a much grander scale, I'd like to make it on a few more best seller lists. And who knows, maybe have a movie, or two, made from my books.

Do you have a favorite quote you would like to share with our readers?

What I say to most people who tell me they've written something and ask how to get published is just to not give up.

I started my first book over twenty years ago, spent countless hours on my computer looking for someone who would take a chance on it, and suffered rejection after rejection. But through it all, I never gave up on it. It may have taken a while, but I'm here now and loving every minute of it.

That applies to every aspect of life. Professionally or personally, if something is important to you, don't give up on it.

The quote that I have to remind myself of on a daily basis is something that Nora Roberts said in a chat that I sat in on with her.

"Stop making excuses, just write.

Stop bitching, just write.

Stop f*#king around, just write."

THE STRONG AND THE BRAVE

Throughout my life, several people have been diagnosed with cancer, and as I watched them deal with their diagnosis, not only have I been moved by their fierce determination to live, but by the grace in which they dealt with their fears, and in some cases, their death.



Both my grandmother and mother were diagnosed with breast cancer, and they handled their situations quite differently. Grandma slipped away without too much of a fight – accepting her situation and welcoming her fate at an advanced age.

Mom, on the other hand, raged against her sentence and endured radical surgery that altered her physical form. She lived until she was 91 and died of old age, not cancer. She wasn't quiet about anything and fought loudly during that period of her life.

A gentleman, with whom I currently work, was told within the last month that he too had cancer. It began in the prostate and spread. His pain was severe, but he never once complained. When he needed to find a place to rest, he simply went home to recover. But each day he returned with vigor and a quest for life that few may have. As he awaits treatment plans, his spirit remains unbroken.

And then there was Carol, a nurse that cared for our special-needs son. One Thanksgiving she found a small lump on her breast and by January, it was the size of a grapefruit. She lived for about two years after the news and spent every minute

of that time praying for others and doing good through her church and network of friends. She was radiant and beautiful and one of the people whose life will forever change who I am and how I will face difficult journeys if they seek me out.

Cancer and other terrible illnesses are bound to occur in people we know and love. How they handle the news and the way in which they live their lives afterwards, can often be inspirational and teach us the greatest lesson of all.

Each day, no matter how many days we have, should be lived with vibrancy, joyfulness and an unending effort to do more, be better, and care for both ourselves and others.

I miss my family and friends who lost their battle, but I take their gifts with me everyday and am determined to live a full, crazy, impossibly messy life with gusto and love!



◀ Helen Hicks is an award-winning administrator and motivational speaker living in the Detroit area. You can reach her at helenk7306@hotmail.com.

*"Wildflowers can't be controlled, and neither
can the girl with a soul boundless as the sky,
and a spirit as free and wild as the ocean."*

Melody Lee, Moon Gypsy

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ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

Wow what an awesome title, right!?! That title alone prepares you to go on an adventure! And it's so fitting because life is supposed to be adventurous! However, an adventurous life is something to be created. Since you are a creator who's here to create, you can do that for yourself!

Can you remember when you were a child and dreamed about adventures you wanted to pursue? Before the adults said otherwise and talked you out of them? (Unless you were one of the lucky ones and those who raised you encouraged you.) Did you want to do gymnastics, go sky diving, bungee jumping, climb a mountain or go to college? Or maybe travel somewhere you've always dreamed of going and ride an airplane for the first time. Consider doing so now! What's keeping you from your adventure? Perhaps you can pray and ask God/Spirit to help you be more adventurous and open-minded! If you're afraid of adventure, ask your angels to help you get over that! Because life is supposed to be fun!

I believe that the spirit within us is asking for more adventure and wants to experience that adventure through you! Age is not a factor unless you think it is. Here's an example: a one hundred three-year-old woman always desired to go skydiving and she did at one hundred three! She had assistance with doing so, but she lived out a dream she'd always had! I desire to travel and see the world and I'd

like to do so within the United States and outside of it. We live on such a glorious and beautiful planet with so much to see, experience, and learn about! I also look forward to experiencing the different cultures, people, and food.

Ask yourself the question, "What is it that I've always wanted to do or experience and haven't yet?" Perhaps it's one of the things mentioned above, or something else—even starting your own business, ministry, or spiritual practice. I know of a woman who at age eighty-five got certified to become a health coach and then starting marketing herself. Another, a ninety-year-old woman, is a yoga teacher. These are examples of people living their dreams who prove that age isn't a factor for them!

So, where do you go from here? Where is your adventurous spirit? Think about it, meditate on it and take some inspired action!



▶ Katina Love is the author of the book "Awaken To Natural Wellness", she's a Self-love and Life Purpose Coach, and the creator of the "Awakening With Katina Love" talk show/podcast. Check out her website www.katinalove.com.

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Joan Clarke at jclarke@ccsgec.org or 810-232-9950 ext. 710



ARE YOU FULL OF ZEAL?

One of my favorite four letter words is Zeal. This word has been on my business cards for the past fifteen years and it generally sparks a conversation because most people don't seem to know the meaning. The word Zeal implies an energetic, unflagging pursuit of a goal or devotion to a cause. It is the intense emotion to be excited, live with passion, excitement, fervor, and to live with enthusiasm in all things.

In most circumstances we have a choice! Like it or not, you choose to be fearful or courageous, cautious or adventurous, meek or bold, to live intentionally or just let life happen. You get to choose to clean your house, go to school, or drive to work with the conscious choice to be happy, whether you are filled with excitement or not. Throughout your day, you may have to really reflect on what you say to yourself! Are you always in a state of mind that allows thoughts of "I can't", "I don't know how", "I don't have", or "I'll try". Or do you operate from the mindset of "Lack of", as in friends, money, time, etc. If you are brave enough, ask a close friend, parent, or spouse that you respect to constructively evaluate you.

You may indeed have a lack of time or money, however, let's stop telling our brains what we don't have and focus on what we want in our lives. I am a realist, but I do believe that "Life and death are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18:21). What we speak usually seems to happen. I remember when my boys were growing up, I would say, "Don't spill that." And guess what happened, every single time? They would spill. A better choice would have been to say "Hold it tight" or "Keep

it upright." If you keep telling yourself you're too sick, ill, dis-eased, no one loves me, I don't have friends, I'm too shy, I can't lose weight, I'm not talented enough..., then you'll have no hope and why would things ever change for you while in that mindset?

Let's intentionally choose our thoughts and actions to be that of an audacious, brave, passionate, loving, grateful, and venturesome nature when speaking over our own lives and everyone around us, always edifying and building up one another.

▶ Stacey Kimbrell is a Natural Health Professional, Chemical Awareness & Essential Oil Advocate, International Speaker and Author of Living Balanced. Stacey loves to provide a simple and practical approach to living a healthy, chemical-free lifestyle. DRINK, THINK & DO! 810.423.5721 Stacey@staceykimbrell.com LivingAnointed.com



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EMBRACING YOUR INTUITION AND REGAINING YOUR POWER

I literally don't tell people what I do," says Dianna O'Grady, a gifted psychic medium and intuitive life coach. "They authentically find me and the timing is always divine."



Gone are the days when intuitives were shuffled off to the shadows or abstracts of society. As Dianna explains, what she and others like her do is not meant for a carnival sideshow. "I'm not here to delight or entertain," she says. "I'm here to deliver and receive – not to change your mind or your course."

She sits casually – her energy a blend of sophistication and girl-next-door – in her Essential Wisdom suite in Howell, MI., awaiting the arrival of the day's clients. Dianna greets her visitors like longtime friends, putting everyone at ease as soothing music plays in the background. The suite is welcoming with comfortable chairs and soft lighting – the feng shui is spot on.

"I say a prayer. I ask for the best possible message for the person I'm going to read, and then I am open to receive." According to Dianna, a reading should always leave you a little better – energy should be uplifted. "It doesn't matter what information is coming to you. There should be an exchange of positive energy that helps brighten your disposition. You should feel better having had the experience."

When Dianna was 4-years-old, she looked at her left hand and wondered to herself, "Who am I this time?" Awakened to her intuitive abilities, she realized she was different than most people around her, even if that difference was mostly in being aware of those gifts. As a teenager, she tried to deny her abilities, but she found there was no escaping reality. By her 20s, Dianna learned to embrace her psychic talents.

"I just accepted it's a part of me. It's who I am," she says. "When I finally stopped running from it, it felt like picking up an old familiar book and starting where I left off."

Since those early days, Dianna has assisted many people in finding their path to self-enlightenment and discovery. In her line of work, she finds that people genuinely want to

heal and feel better on a daily basis. They've tried pharmaceuticals, herbals remedies, therapy, and everything else without long-term success and often with unwanted side effects.

"It's incredible ... the people who work with me get better, and it happens quickly. I'm teaching them that they have power over their lives and I'm helping them to reclaim that power."

Through classes and personal mentoring, Dianna coaches her students to elevate their thinking and dip into their well of intuition. She guides them into taking control of their own inner dialogue through meditation, self-discovery, and readings.

"It still amazes me ... the way it works," Dianna says. "There is communication in the subtlest of things. We are in a constant state of communication and creating. We have to always be aware and be responsible for the energy we bring to everything. Always check your vibration."

A quick visit to her website reveals a list of classes and services to help people learn about energy and gaining the skills necessary to embrace one's own power. Dianna teaches that in order to receive information in a pure way, we have to deal with our thinking. All thoughts have power to affect your vibration. In her lessons, she asks people whether they want the energy from their thoughts to create a negative vibration or a positive one.

"Love from your soul center out," she says. "You're not waiting for someone to tell you you're okay or that you are amazing. Just be you, authentically. We don't need permission from anyone else to be happy or to embrace our inner self."

► *Kim Hytinen is a Michigan native, freelance writer, dreamer, and lover of interesting vintage and antique goods. As a former small business owner, college administrator, and the mom of three teens -- one of whom is special needs -- Kim's experience adjudicates her propensity to writing on a variety of topics.*





FIND THE FIRE

Are we born with a sense of adventure, or is it nurtured?

This is a question I've often pondered. The answer that I usually come up with is: we are all born with a desire to explore new places, different ideologies and teachings, meet new people and experience different cultures. But just as with unbiased acceptance and unconditional love, it gets squelched, unlearned and swept aside as we mature into "responsible adults".

Remember what it was like watching a child as they experience freezing snow for the first time, see their first fluttering butterfly, flashing fire fly or giant airplane flying overhead? Their eyes grow large with wonder, their faces glow with delight as they bubble over in sheer awe.

Close your eyes and go back to that place. Where everything was new and astonishing. Where your world was fresh, unexplored and absolutely delightful. A time when the color of the sky at sunset, took your breath away or the shape of a cloud made you take a second look or a feather's tickle made you giggle. A time when rainbows thrilled you to your

core and your lover's kiss buckled your knees. Where your mother's arms were the safest place in the universe and your father's laugh made you laugh. Ah, the simple purity that was once ours.

This is the adventurous spirit that we were all born with, all of us. This is the same ember that needs to be fanned until it bursts, once again, into flame, burning passionately, deep within never again to be put out, by anyone or anything.

This is the fire that will allow us to see our world through new eyes, those of a more vibrant, perhaps less opinionated, more open and free person. A person who anxiously wonders what miraculous adventures await each morning upon rising. Eyes who see the beauty of a rainy day and basks in the fading sunshine of fall. Eyes that are open with a heart that feels only love and a mind that knows no judgment.

If we allow ourselves to live this way, it will be a glorious new adventure.

For all is fleeting, you know? Like a beachscape's ever-changing shoreline, today is not like yesterday and tomorrow will be different yet. If you chart a more fun-filled course, and make the changes happen and be aware of your new-found lightness, your adventure can begin.

You can redefine your sense of sense of adventure, every day, by making simple changes.

FIFTEEN FIRE IGNITERS

- I. Take a new way to work.
2. Brush your teeth with your non dominant hand.
3. Read a book, you loved as a child, and discover nuances you were too young to understand, same with a movie.
4. Appreciate this very minute, breathe it in, as if it were your last.
5. Go for a nurture hike.
6. Find a butterfly, an air plane and a rainbow to enchant yourself.
7. Try to see the good in every person and the lesson in every trial.
8. Fall in love again.
9. Cry with joy.
10. Love unconditionally.
11. Include yourself.
12. Write a song and /or poem.
13. Dance to music that takes you back to a more carefree time, really feel it!
14. Keep a happiness or adventure journal.
15. Smile. Love. Laugh.

Make every day a day to remember. Live each moment in the present allowing yourself to have the adventure of a lifetime...with all of the emotion and total awe of the child that lives inside of you...everyday! The child who dwells unjaded and wild deep within your soul. You know her. She's there. Find her.

I wish you so much love and happiness as you walk upon this joyous journey of life.

Write a song and dance to it. For this is your music, your time, your adventure, after all.

"All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost." J.R.R. Tolkien

Dedicated to the memory of Michael Lee Hopkins Jr.

► *Deborah St.Hilaire has been a women's empowerment/life coach since 2010. She can be reached for personal and group coaching, speaking engagements and retreats. thedivalution@gmail.com or 419.366.8091*



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THE HEART OF THE ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT



Our sense or spirit of adventure likely changes as we change, age, and take on different life responsibilities. If we want to maintain our adventurous spirit, no matter what that currently means to us, we must give some attention to it. We can have conversations with friends and family about what adventure means to them. We can daydream about past and future adventures. We can meditate and connect with our true inner adventurous spirit. We can even simply ask ourselves what next adventure we'd like to manifest.

I asked my nine-year old great nephew what he thought about being adventurous. Smart and spot on as most kids are, he replied, "It's exciting to explore and see things you've never seen in your life." He is like me – we like to try lots of things and don't always stick with one thing long. Our adventurous spirits are always looking for not only new, but different, types of experiences.

Kids are experts at adventure—just about everything is new to them! They are learning so quickly as their brains and bodies develop. As we get older, less things seem new. When we mull over ideas, many elicit a response of "been there, done that." It can become challenging to think about ourselves as adventurers as we get busy with the daily activities of the life we have chosen. It can help to think back to our youth and remember what things sparked the curiosity and imagination of our younger adventurous spirit.

When my four-year old great nephew meets new people (of any age) and plays with them, he often calls them "best friend." Of course, that is better than "hey, you." His young adventurous spirit likes to make lots of new "best friends" everywhere he goes. He enjoys repeating experiences and games with new people.

I have recently been longing to rekindle my adventurous spirit. I've been looking at calendars and commitments and scheduling open times for travel. Travel, especially alone, to

new places and exploring beaches in warm, sunny climates is my ultimate adventure. It's also the heart of my adventurous spirit. A couple of years ago I spent a month on St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. While I loved it there, I may never return because there are so many other islands to explore. For me, I like to have the next fabulous experience in the next place.

So, how about you?

What is at the heart of your adventurous spirit? Is there something you've been longing to do again?

Can you think of ways to keep your adventurous spirit alive in your everyday life?

Spend a few minutes daydreaming about your next adventure before going to bed tonight. Enjoy the adventure in your mind, feel the spirit of your mind and body as you explore. If daydreaming isn't for you, ask a friend or a child what they think about being adventurous. It could start a great conversation!

► Tina Nies is a Certified Life Coach and a Vision Board Coach. Her passion is building and strengthening self-love as a foundation for success. She is an author and is known as the "Empress of Love". www.facebook.com/40daylovestest/ <http://www.40daylovestest.com/>



FIND SOME TIME FOR YOURSELF

5 SELF-CARE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WELL-BEING

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

(Family Features) Between hectic schedules, ever-growing to-do lists and caring for others, it can be easy to put self-care on the backburner. Committing to a healthy diet, getting adequate sleep, reducing stress, exercising regularly and unplugging from your devices can help keep you healthy, both mentally and physically.

Consider these self-care ideas from the sleep experts at Mattress Firm to help bolster your well-being.

Nourish Yourself

While eating well may seem like an obvious self-care tip, it's not always easy to change your eating habits or replace fast food and sweet indulgences with healthier options. However, properly nourishing your body with the right foods, like fish, leafy green vegetables and berries, can help you maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk for diseases such as diabetes, improve your memory and reduce inflammation, among other short- and long-term benefits.

Get a Good Night's Rest

Getting a proper night's sleep – most experts recommend 7-9 hours for the average adult – can have a positive impact on how you feel both mentally and physically. Having both the proper routine – limiting caffeine and sugar intake before bed and reducing distractions such as TV or smartphones – and the right mattress can be key to ensuring your bedroom is the sleep oasis you need for quality rest. If you need help when it comes to selecting a mattress, the experts at a retailer like Mattress Firm can help you find the right mattress based on your [sleep position](#) or [aches and pains](#) from a wide selection of mattress sizes, features and accessories that won't break the bank.

Practice Relaxation Techniques

Whether you have a few spare minutes or an entire afternoon of free time, finding a quiet place to relax and practice meditation or yoga can help you reduce stress and anxiety, become more self-aware and create a sense of calmness during even the busiest of days. Try setting up a secluded area in your home (or office) where you can concentrate on your practice and really listen to yourself.

Unplug and Unwind

With 24/7 access to the internet, social media and television, it can be easy to create bad habits associated with the always-connected, smartphone-obsessed world. However, screens – and the blue light they emit – have been proven to negatively impact sleep and mental performance. Setting aside some time – aim for a couple hours in succession – each day to unplug from your devices and their distractions can lead to better sleep, productivity, emotional wellness and creativity.

Make Sure to Move

While it's important to take care of yourself mentally, taking care of your body can be just as important to provide peace of mind. Finding time each day to get in at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, whether it's a full-blown workout, a walk around the neighborhood with your dog or a bike ride to a favorite destination, can boost your mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and help keep your waistline trim. Find a regimen that works for you, be it multiple short active periods or one long gym session, and make it part of your daily routine for an easy way to boost both your physical and mental well-being.

Find more tips and ideas to take care of yourself at [MattressFirm.com/blog](https://www.MattressFirm.com/blog).

BECOMING ADVENTUROUS

I must admit that when I was a small child, I was a very happy, adventurous spirit. I clearly remember the excitement I found in exploring my world and trying out new things. Around the age of 8, I decided that I wanted to explore the idea of smoking cigarettes. Both of my parents smoked and I couldn't understand why they seemed to like it so much because I hated being around their secondhand smoke.



One morning I took 2 cigarettes out of an open pack, along with a pack of matches and I went outside to play. When I got several blocks away from our house, I selected some big bushes to hide behind. I nervously squatted down and proceeded to try to light a cigarette. The match burned out with no results but the second time around I was successful. Much to my surprise, I started violently coughing. This coughing and choking was so bad that I peed my pants. I was so embarrassed and humiliated by this experience I ran home and played outside on our swing set until my pants dried.

This was when my adventurous spirit began to wane and my journey into low self-esteem began to grow.

I felt bad about myself because I had stolen the cigarettes and ashamed of myself that I had wet my pants. As a result, I began a habit of being very hard on myself and worrying what other people thought.

By the time I became a teenager, I had fallen into a pattern of being a follower. I'd follow other people's advice before thinking for myself, doing what everyone else wanted me to do. This habit continued for the next 25 years.

At age 34, I got a phone call that changed my life. My girlfriend from Boston reached out to me. She told me she was having fun and making great money selling

UndercoverWear lingerie at home parties. She planted a seed and said, "Suzanne, maybe you might like doing what I'm doing?" She thought that it might be fun for me to get out with the girls once in a while and also make a little money for myself at the same time.

It had been a long time since I'd allowed myself to think about becoming adventurous. I had been a stay-at-home mom raising 4 children and I had been tolerating verbal abuse and alcoholism for 15 years. I doubted that my husband would be willing to come home from the bar to be with the kids in the evenings, but I appreciated that my girlfriend believed in me and thought I'd do very well at it.

The night I decided to tell my husband I wanted to sell UndercoverWear, he quickly came up with several reasons why he didn't want to give me the money for this risky (in his opinion) idea. The first one was that I knew nothing about sales or lingerie and the second reason was that I was too fat to be a successful sales person.

I was used to his criticism and judgment so rather than argue with him, I decided to sit in silence. What I didn't know then was that the Universe and LoA will always support you when you surrender and let go of the outcome. And sure enough, during the silence a thought popped into my head, "If you give me the money, I will be successful." The thought felt good, but of course, I had no idea how I would do this. A few minutes later, he finally said, "Fine, here's the money, but you will never be successful!"

The good news is, the Universe did support me and within 3 short years, I had built a structure of 150 women and 10+ managers and I was making as much money as my husband, a well-paid automotive engineer! Not only did I prove to myself that I could become successful despite my husband's prediction, it eventually enabled me to end our 20 year marriage and happily raise my 4 children as a single parent for the next 10 years.

I remember what it felt like to feel stuck in a rut with no clue on how to move forward. I believe that you too can become an adventurous spirit! The ideas I used to help myself become adventurous are here to assist you in my book, www.stepsintoalifeofjoy.com.

Albert Einstein once said, "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." New experiences keep us moving. Are you ready to move? Would you like to start a new business or a whole new life?

The beautiful energy of our thoughts is always available to help us effortlessly attract everything we want. Why wait? Life can be easy and fun when we use the Law of Attraction for leverage.

► *Suzanne Young an intuitive life coach. She specializes in the Law of Attraction and empowering others by helping them learn how to reconnect with their Inner Guidance. She is also an inspirational speaker, author, and co-owner of Personal Success Programs, since 2007, with her husband Kevin Young. You can email her at suzanne@psprograms.com and their website is www.psprograms.com. Her office number is 248-349-6225.*




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Curiosity Leads to Adventure

I've never outgrown the four-year-old "why?" stage (along with the "who" and "how" stages)—always curious, always asking questions. I'm sure it used to drive my family nuts.

Being adventurous isn't limited to *doing* things. Being adventurous has a lot to do with your heart and whether you are curious and imaginative and full of wonder (with a bit of confidence thrown in).

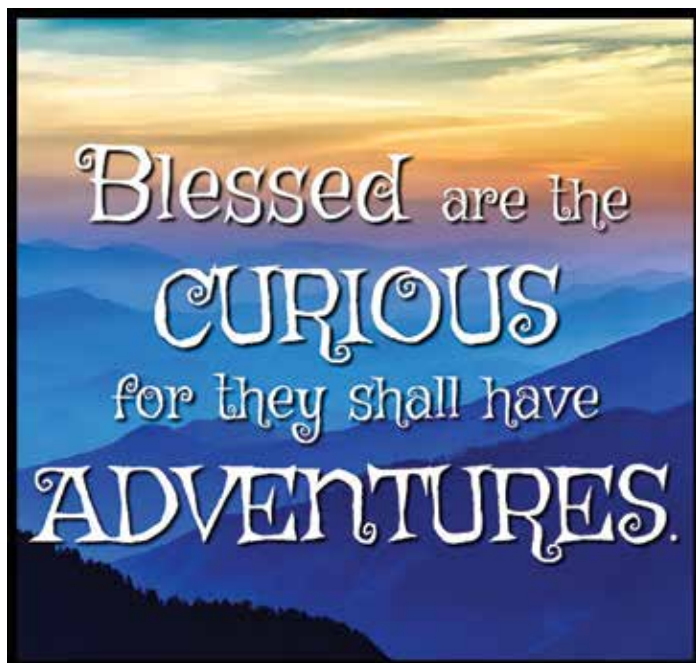
My kids and I go camping in a tiny 1974 ten foot camper that I pull, park, and set up myself, because my adventurous spirit hollered at me one day and I just HAD to find a way to camp with them. As a single mom in the late-fifties age range, I needed something I could handle on my own. Thus "Itty Bitty" entered our lives and we have had great adventures these last ten years, trying to discover somewhere new each year.

It was while we were in the Upper Peninsula that I took one of my most favorite photographs of my children. I passed an interesting road off into the woods and voiced aloud, "I wonder what's down there?" After backing up and unloading my children I directed them to walk down the road and hold hands. My daughter asked if we'd get in trouble. I told her I didn't know but I doubted it. I treasure that picture so much! You just have to be curious.

One of these days I want to travel to the factories that make things. I want to see how lipstick, toothpicks, crayons, and many other things are made!! As a child my family visited the Hershey factory and the Kellogg's factory and I have never forgotten how amazing that was. While it was really great to learn how those things were made (did you know that in the summer Hershey used to put some kind of wax in their candy to keep it from melting in the heat? Hmmmm, I wonder if they still do?) my curiosity about things has only grown!

I've become entranced with Google maps where a person can click on the satellite view and see all kinds of things! One of the things I loved about my bungee jump (which became a huge swinging arc across the Six Flags amusement park) was being able to see all of that way up high. Now I can get the same kind of view by looking at satellite images. (I *still* want to do it again, though! Google doesn't give you quite the same effect!) Have you ever wondered what your community looked like from a bird's eye view? You haven't? Well, I guess you need to click on Google maps, type in your address, click on the satellite view and see what your neighbors are hiding in their backyards.

Besides going on vacations with my family every summer, where my sense of travel and longing to see new places was deeply imprinted in me, I went on many adventures by reading.



During the summer months especially I'd consume as many books as I could carry home from the library. I learned so much about our world, history, people, ideas, and places by reading so much. These days I love crime mysteries that keep my mind sharp. Sometimes I even guess who did it before the end of the book.

These are just a few ways that being curious has allowed me to engage in adventures. Maybe you'd like to cultivate your own curiosity by asking several questions and tracking down the answers. Or create a "curiosity journal" where you jot down things you wonder about as you go through your day. Of course you have to *notice* things in order to do that. So, live your life with eyes wide open, wonder in your heart, and a curious spirit. It's a great way to live!

► *Mimi Matthews believes in the power of words to change lives. You can read her life stories and uplifting posts on her blog <http://particularpassions.me/> and buy her encouraging and empowering words on unique cards and gifts on her Etsy shop here: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/EmPOWordmentCards>*





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Stepping Out of Her Comfort Zone



This is Trina Carswell's story. She has been there. Experienced it. She willingly tells her story because she wants to help women who are enduring the same difficulties, and she wants God to receive the glory of how she's changed

Trina was number four out of fifteen kids, suffered severe poverty, hunger, neglect, and abuse. It seemed to Trina that her mom was pregnant every year, and she says it was easy to get lost in that. Her mom couldn't protect herself, much less the kids, from her very abusive husband, thus Trina experienced sexual, emotional, and physical abuse, calling her home the "house of horrors".

At the age of thirteen she decided to start finding her way and seeing what was "out there" away from the home situation. She became pregnant at age 13, only a child herself. At fifteen she gave birth to her second, at seventeen gave birth to her third, always taking her babies home to her mama. (She says she learned a lot about what a woman of God looked like by watching her mom. Trina's mom was a woman of integrity in how she treated people

with kindness and how she taught her children, even while in trauma herself.)

Even though she was in counseling, Trina was still living in the house of horrors, and was "looking for love so bad. If a guy would show me attention I'd think, "There it is!" It became a vicious cycle. In the midst of this, around age 15, Trina hooked up with a drug user and began using crack/cocaine. Although she had been away from him when she'd been pregnant and gave birth to her daughter, when she returned to the area she looked him up, and the drug use began again. This man continued the abusive behaviors of her father, so it's what she'd known.

At five months pregnant with her fourth child, she stopped using drugs "because of God's deliverance". She knows her mom was praying for her, but she hadn't yet surrendered her life. But in the midst of the drugs that

came into her home, and neglecting her kids because of her dependency, she stopped—cold turkey. She says it was a miracle that her baby was born clean and Trina has been clean for over 25 years.

Of course, she says, she still had other issues. She'd been abandoned, terribly abused, and to confound the issues, she looked different from the rest of her family so her siblings teased her saying she'd been adopted, which she'd believed for several years. Trina just wanted to be accepted, and she was trying to find that in men.

At this time she became part of a church where the women just wrapped their arms around her and cared about her. At this point she was the single mom of five children, was going to school, and working. These women took her and her children along to events, paying their way, checked in with her to make sure she was doing alright, and completely supported her.

But because Trina had some deep issues concerning her father, when he died she "kind of went into a little whirlwind" and left the church, during which time she became pregnant again, this time with twins. She'd planned an abortion, but after talking with her mom decided not to. Her mama, who came back from Arkansas to help her, had said, "If you can feed six you can feed eight". Trina laughs as she says she's been running for her life ever since. These sons are now sixteen.

In 2007 Trina's friend told her about a receptionist position opened at **Carriage Town Ministries** and arranged an interview for her. Trina's self-esteem was pretty low. She only saw herself as a high school dropout (she'd since gotten her GED), and a single mom who was basically homeless (living with five kids in her sister's living room), so she really didn't expect much. But the executive directive at the time recognized her potential and saw what all those years of experience had given Trina—a heart to help others in difficult circumstances. So, at that first interview Trina was hired, and not as a receptionist, but as a director!

Even though Trina didn't know how to cook, she was hired as director over the kitchen, which she finds quite humorous. She said that when the community would see Miss Trina's van at CTM after hours, they knew she was cooking and that they were having hot dogs.

Trina supervised the kitchen and all the community outreach, including the food giveaway, clothing room, and donation center. Several years later, when the position of director of women opened, Dr. Dallas Gatlin, current executive director, offered the job to Trina, because he knew she "had the heart for it". She accepted the position, realizing she had no idea what she was doing—this was a completely different setting with women and children and dorms—so she gratefully welcomed and allowed her staff to teach and lead her.

After working eight years with the women, she was approached a year ago to also become the director of the men, which she agreed to do. Trina says that there's a lot to learn, and that even though she has seven sons she has a lot to learn about men. She calls the male residents "our leaders of the community" when speaking with them, because Carriage Town is just a stop along their journey.

Trina says that without Carriage Town she doesn't know where she'd be. It saved her life, taught her to be accountable and to consider how her actions would affect others. She loves being at Carriage Town. It's like a family, and she knows that being there is her purpose.

Trina's and her husband's dream is to have a center that helps families of addicts, saying there are programs in place for the addicts themselves, but their families need a way to get healthy and need tools in place to help process through the anger, disappointment, and betrayal when the person has a relapse. Trina and her husband have walked (are walking) through this process of healing, and their heart is to help others do the same. We admire what Trina is doing with other women and wish her blessings in what her future holds.

Carriage Town Ministries offers a place to stay, either in a women/family center or a men's center. A meal is served every day of the year. CTM offers a baby care class for parents, health screening services, and computer classes. Their clients create a Personal Success Plan (PSP) that helps them establish not just goals, but also a plan for achieving those goals. Some are able to secure jobs before leaving.

If you'd like to learn more about Carriage Town Ministries or would like to get involved, visit their website at <https://www.carriagetown.org/>. Read about their **Fall Benefit Dinner** too, and join me there!



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Live Life

WITH EYES AND HEART WIDE OPEN!

It seems that many of us go through life flinching, with our arms flung across our eyes, wary of what might be coming our way. We guard our hearts against deep, emotional interactions in order to stay safe. Because for us to embrace living with our eyes wide open and with our hearts made vulnerable might seem like a death wish.

In fact, it is a death.
A death to fear.
To living boxed in.
To feeling less-than.

In order to receive all this world holds for us, we need to partake of it to the fullest! And how can we possibly do that if we are shying away from experiences and emotional investment?

As long as we are afraid of feeling deeply--whether it be grief, remorse, loss, rejection, or joy, fulfillment, love, and excitement--we cannot reach our full potential in life. And most likely we won't have the satisfaction of a truly fulfilled spirit.

Most people welcome the "positive" feelings, but really, really do NOT want to feel the "bad" ones. Perhaps as a child we were taught that feeling anger, sadness, disappointment, and depression was wrong and that we needed to "buck up Buttercup" or "act like a man". Whatever our reason—besides the obvious one that they hurt—most of us do not welcome those less-than-desirable emotions. And this stifles us.

Picture a bubbling brook gurgling its way through the countryside and liken those "bad" emotions to the sediment and rocks found in it. What is that stream without the rocks and sediment? Stagnant, because IF it is gurgling through the countryside, following the course as it's meant to, there WILL be sediment and rocks in it! Same with us: living in our flow and to the fullest means "rocks and sediment" mixed in. True, opening our hearts to emotions makes us vulnerable, and allows us to experience "bad" emotions too. So we have to be brave! We have to risk it.

But isn't that what living an adventurous life is really about? Taking the risk and not living with regret.

Perhaps you have already heard that when you experience deep grief you are also able to experience an abounding joy. When the well of our spirit is deepened by allowing even the undesirable emotions to be felt, there is a larger space for all the wonderfully nourishing ones as well.

And really, why would you want to stifle yourself from feeling life? We have a depth of resources within us, usually just barely tapped by us. Working through difficult emotions

to let our light shine can produce some of the most amazing pieces of our lives yet.

Our world is over-saturated with visual assault which can actually cause us to become numb. We have seen it all, bombarding our senses at a rapid-fire pace. A prime example is the weather channel's flashing of the top stories. Or the movie theater's practice of showing the loudest, fastest-moving clips during previews. Perhaps we have all grown a bit too numb.

That much visual impact on a daily (hourly) basis causes desensitization.

But isn't that what living an adventurous life is really about? Taking the risk and not living with regret.

So how in the world do we return to seeing with "new" eyes? Eyes that are wide open?

Turn it off!!! Seriously, stop bombarding your senses with so much visual garbage. Be brave enough to stand the silence. Be brave enough to spend time outside without ear buds in your ears. Take a chance on going to dinner with a friend and actually looking them in the eyes and talking! No telling what you will discover about each other. And while you are there, notice your surroundings and the people next to you (who each have a story, you know). How can we possibly have room in our spirits to desire adventure if it's full of

the garbage our world shoves in our faces and ears every day? Make room!

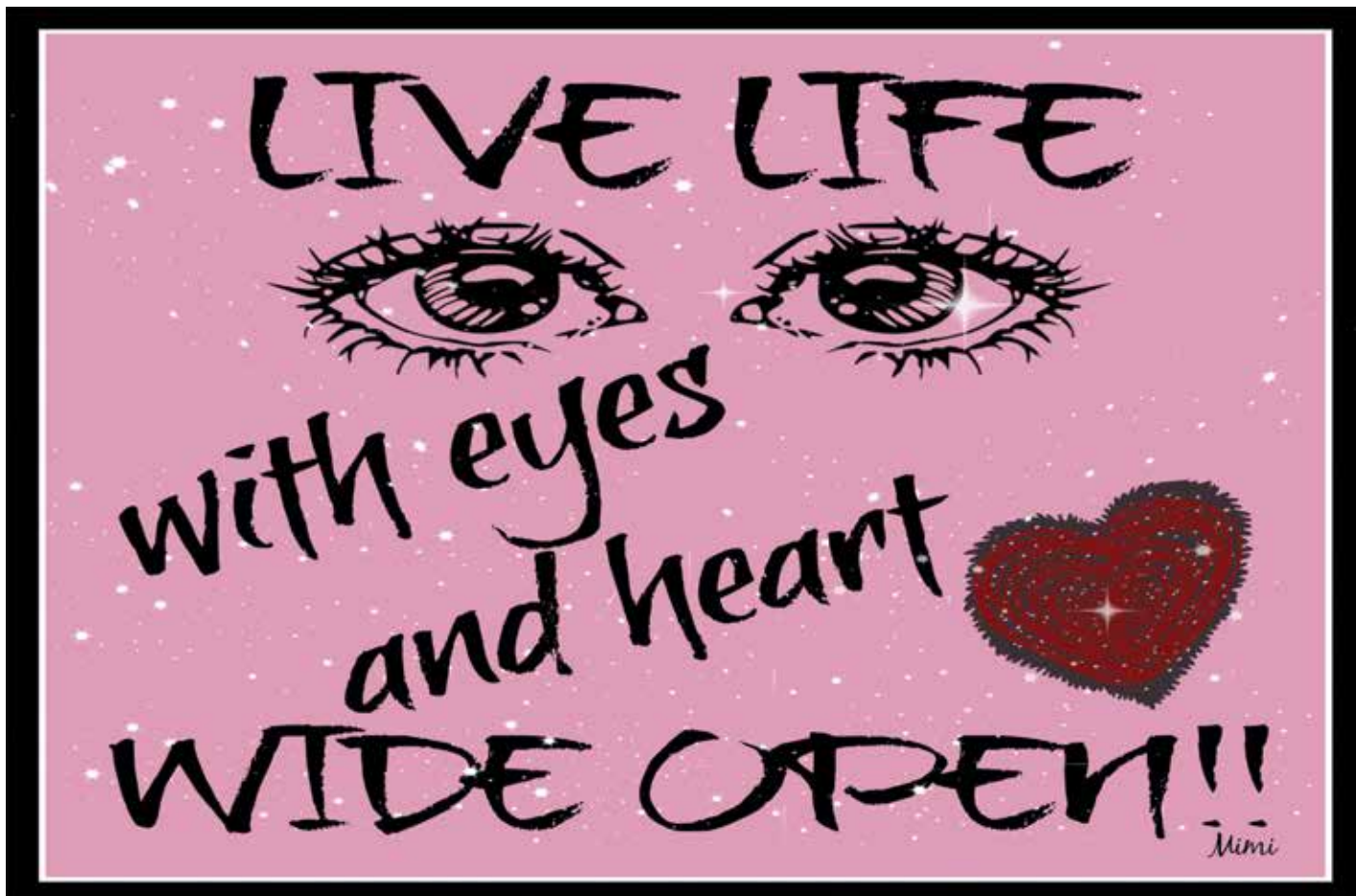
You can experience life fully by meditating, visiting art galleries, having lunch with a friend, being "fully present" with your family or a loved one, hiking (without devices), even--daringly--taking a "vacation" from your electronics. Find what works for you. You will know what works when you do it--your spirit will be at rest and rejuvenated. Then...

Once you begin to look around you in wide-eyed wonder, you will discover treasures, opportunities, and reasons to be awestruck, which will enhance your life. It takes bravery to embrace living with your eyes and hearts wide open, but be encouraged and choose it.

Be BRAVE!

You will find that a whole new world awaits you!

► *Mimi Matthews believes in the power of words to change lives. You can read her life stories and uplifting posts on her blog <http://particularpassions.me/> and buy her encouraging and empowering words on unique cards and gifts on her Etsy shop here: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/EmPOWordmentCards>*



A STUFFED TOMATO SNACK

(Culinary.net) Whether you need a quick appetizer or something to snack on, these Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes make for an appealing bite.

Find more snack recipes at Culinary.net.

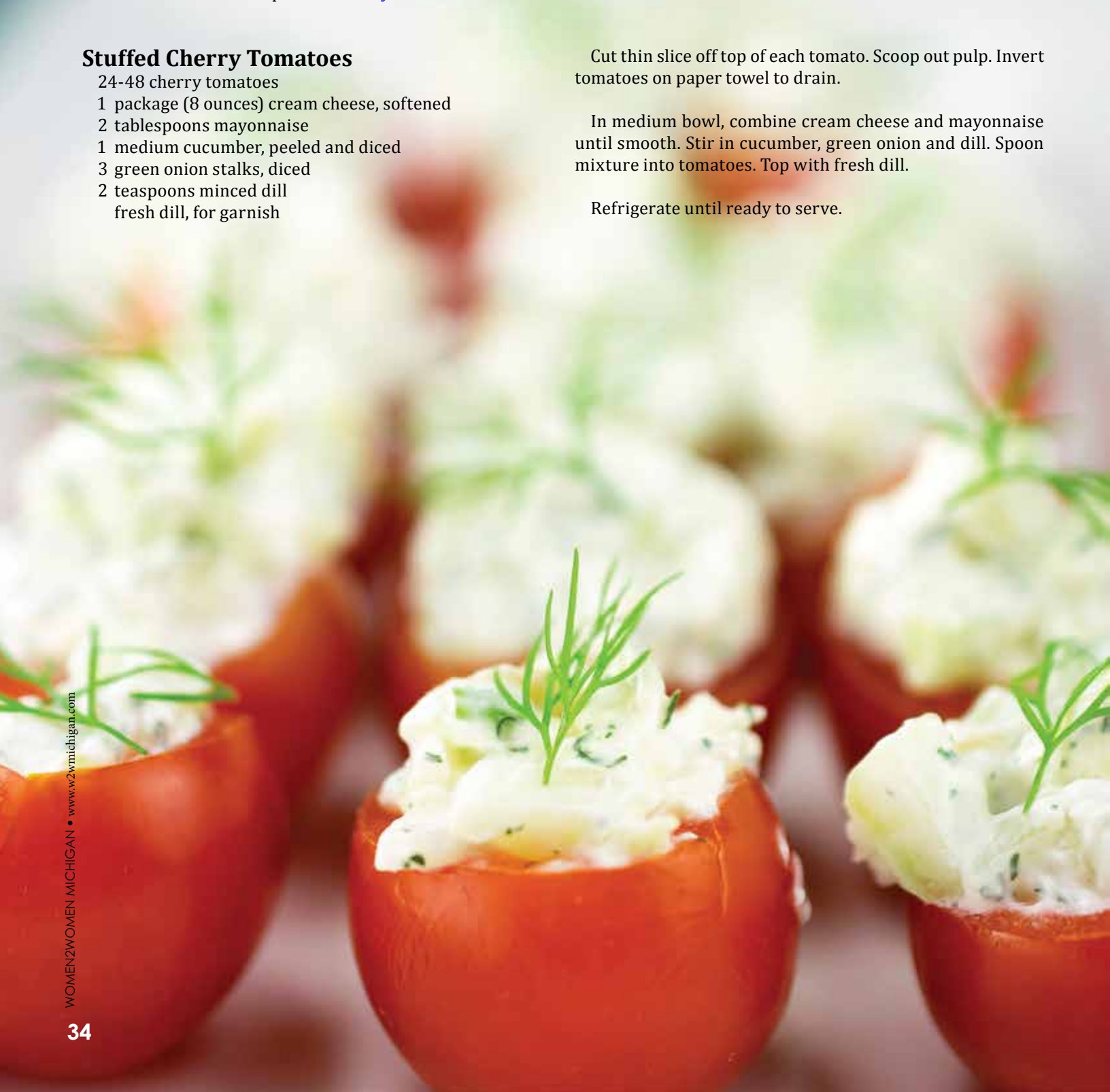
Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes

- 24-48 cherry tomatoes
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled and diced
- 3 green onion stalks, diced
- 2 teaspoons minced dill
- fresh dill, for garnish

Cut thin slice off top of each tomato. Scoop out pulp. Invert tomatoes on paper towel to drain.

In medium bowl, combine cream cheese and mayonnaise until smooth. Stir in cucumber, green onion and dill. Spoon mixture into tomatoes. Top with fresh dill.

Refrigerate until ready to serve.





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