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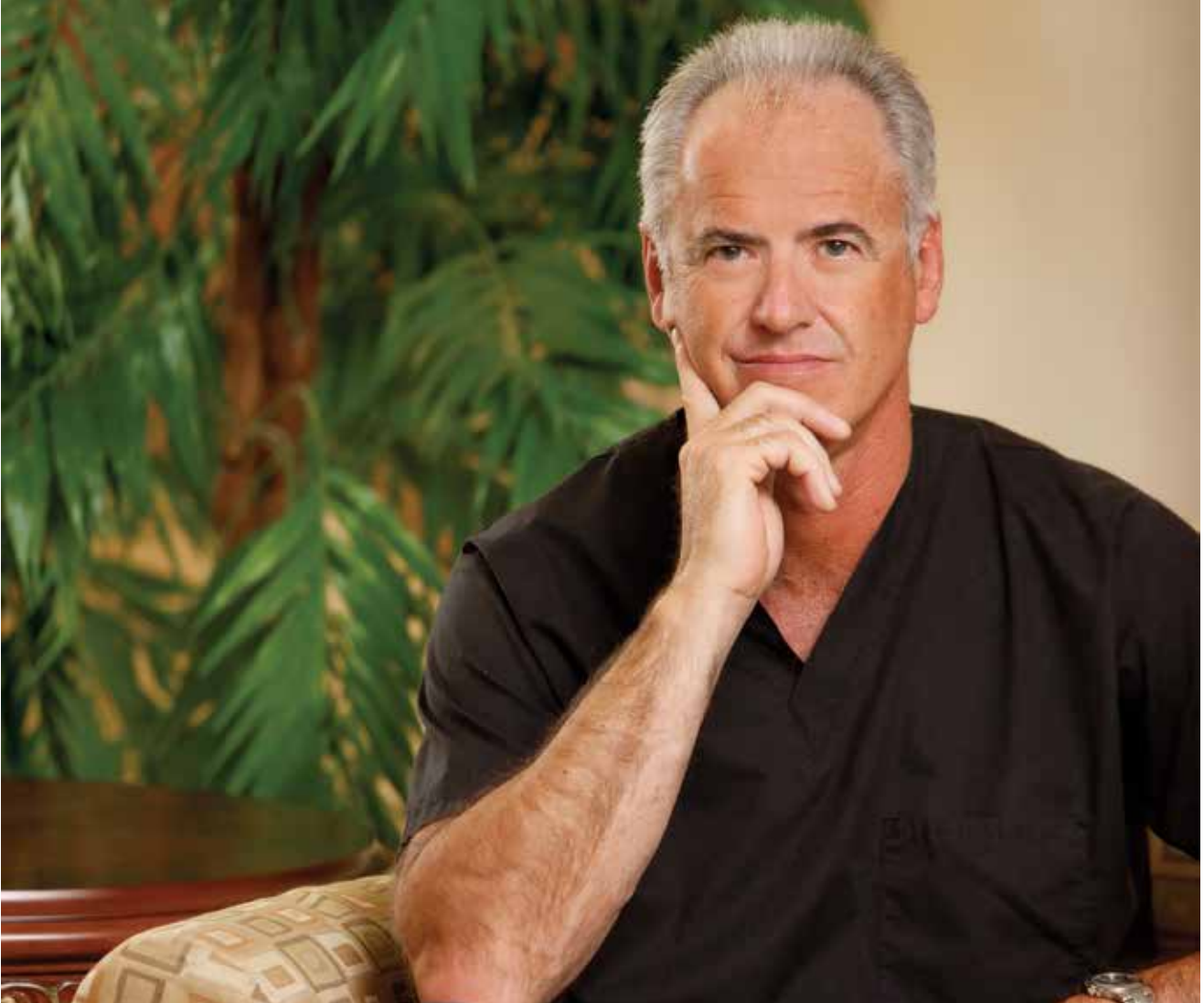
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DR. LEVI YOUNG
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Much like the great masters of art, Dr. Levi Young, of Advanced Cosmetic Surgery in Overland Park, Kansas, calls upon his artistic abilities and his clear sense of seeing the end result of his efforts at his plastic surgery practice. He is an accomplished artist with charcoal sketches and watercolors as his favorite media. “My abilities as an artist do set me apart from competition because I’m able to provide highly individualized cosmetic results that exceed patients’ expectations. My artistic nature lends me the ability to analyze each patient and develop the best plan for the desired outcome,” Dr. Young noted. “My artistic ability is an incredible asset in the operating room and enables me to see and create the best aesthetic results. I am as invested in the final look as the patient

because it’s a reflection of my life’s work.” Dr. Young obtained all of his medical education in the KC area and he is a lifelong Kansas City resident. With his Board Certification in Plastic Surgery, he specializes in a wide range of cosmetic procedures from breast augmentation, abdominoplasty and mommy makeovers to breast lifts, rhinoplasty, facelifts and eyelid surgery. To accomplish his outstanding results, Dr. Young builds an individualized treatment plan for every patient that is well explained and set to deliver amazing results. “I build a personalized care plan for each patient. My staff and I are dedicated to providing a great experience for all patients.”

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AMY K. PATEL M.D.
LIBERTY HOSPITAL

Dr. Amy Patel is a breast imaging radiologist transforming the face of value based care for women in the Kansas City Metro and nationally. As Medical Director of The Breast Care Center at Liberty Hospital, Dr. Patel and her team have built a comprehensive breast program with cutting-edge technology serving the Northland to Northwest Missouri/Southern Iowa. She is an Assistant Professor of Radiology at the UMKC School of Medicine and her research interests include breast health policy/equity, digital breast tomosynthesis and artificial intelligence. She is the current President of the American Association for Women in Radiology, serving as the youngest President in its 42 year history. She is the current Chair of the American College of Radiology(ACR) Radiology Advocacy Network and

RADPAC, where she leads 40,000 radiologists and radiation oncologists as they fight for equitable access to radiologic care for patients. At the Missouri state level, she was involved in helping pass the bill ensuring annual screening 2D and 3D mammography coverage beginning at age 40 in average risk women as well as the more recent bills ensuring coverage for above average risk women in 2022 and diagnostic breast imaging coverage without co-pay or deductible in 2023 in accordance to ACR recommendations. As a result of these efforts, she is the 2021 recipient of the Kansas City Medical Society's Patient and Community Advocate Award. She was also named the 2022 Kansas City Chiefs Fan of the Year due to her community impact and love of the team. ♦



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DR. JOSEPH CAMARATA

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Dr. Joseph Camarata received his Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) from the University of Nebraska and his Doctor of Medical Dentistry (D.M.D.) from the University of Pittsburgh, graduating from the programs with Distinction and Honors. He completed his plastic and reconstructive surgery residency program through the University of Texas Health Science Center and completed his oral and maxillofacial surgery residency through the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Camarata held the position of Chief Resident in both programs. Dr. Joseph Camarata is dedicated to providing the highest quality patient care through honesty, kindness and personal respect. His integrity and commitment to his profession is why he is such a success. Dr. Camarata takes the time with each patient to discuss questions, concerns, goals and expectations. He treats every individual as a person of worth, dignity and value, as they work together to achieve their aesthetic goals. ♦



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At LeBlanc & Associates Dentistry for Children, owner Dr. Michael LeBlanc, along with his team of Pediatric Dentists, Dr. Emily Meyer, Dr. Stefanie Curtis, Dr. Mary Le, Dr. Bryan Henrie, Dr. Brianne Kerns, and Dr. Kyle Pedersen, is committed to offering the best dental care and experience for your children. Founded by Dr. LeBlanc 18 years ago, the practice mission remains the same: cultivate a fun, positive, and inviting dental experience for children that will set them up for a lifetime of dental success. We are passionate about patient education and feel privileged to help empower parents to guide their children along a path of good oral hygiene.

Dr. Michael LeBlanc is Board Certified by, and a Fellow of, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, member of Omicron Kappa

Upsilon National Dental Honor Society, member of the Kansas Dental Association, former chairman of the New Dentist Committee with the American Dental Association, and served as President of the Local Dental Society. Along with being involved in many community outreach programs like Team Smile, the Ronald McDonald House, and missions efforts, he has dedicated his career to ensuring all children who walk into the practice receive the best dental care that they deserve.

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Dr. Laura Ray is board certified in family medicine and has a keen interest in hormone replacement therapy. She believes that every patient deserves to be in a partnership with a provider whom they feel connected to and feel they can trust with their life. Each patient has the right and responsibility to be fully involved in their healthcare, giving

her the opportunity to practice medicine with her patients, not for her patients. By treating the whole patient with warmth, understanding and compassion, Dr. Ray's goal is to ensure a more positive outcome for everyone. For information on hormone pellets, visit your-cfc.com. ♦

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INSPIRATIONS

Alejandra Villalobos-McAnderson: "You're never stuck."

Alejandra Villalobos-McAnderson calls upon energy medicine to heal with a spectrum of modalities, from Reiki sessions to identifying limiting beliefs and releasing long-held trauma in body and spirit. When your whole self is in alignment, she says with compassion, it is easier to make intuitive, heart-based decisions with confidence.



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THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Photography by Amber J Deery



Sometimes it feels as if it's not one thing, it's another. Whether it's experiencing random small catastrophes, some sort of ailment or illness after another, or just the craziness of a busy lifestyle, it's easy to get wrapped up in the thick of it all. We find ourselves run down and sometimes become physically ill, unhealthy. It seems as if it all comes crashing down on us at once. Obviously, it doesn't, but it feels that way. It seems that our physical health typically takes priority over our mental health.

Long COVID has definitely taken a toll on me. It started out with my noticing only the physical symptoms. The insomnia, racing heart and chronic fatigue, maybe the worst of many symptoms, were physically wearing me down, almost to the point of numbness. For two years now, yes, two long years, I primarily focused on working with my team of doctors to get some relief, some improvement.

I, like so many of us, got so focused on how I was physically feeling, I didn't take the time to check in on my own mental health, or really acknowledge it. It was not on my priority list. The persistent way my body was feeling is probably what triggered an emotional, very frustrated and defeated, meltdown. Sure, I had moments when I took a little time to focus and work on my mental well-being, but I would

usually shed a few tears and move on, so I thought.

I have finally realized that my mental health is just as important as my physical health. The physical harm Long COVID has had on me has been rough, but the emotional and mental impacts have been just as brutal. I have just recently gotten to a place where I not only realized it but am taking the time and putting in the work to improve how I feel mentally.

Recently, I had a session with this month's cover story, Alex, with Villalobos Vitality. It was eye opening, and closing, all at the same time. I have never been able to com-

pletely shut off my brain; it tends to be more like thoughts popping like popcorn. For the first time, I felt completely and purely relaxed and light. It made me realize that I need to spend more time working on trying to reach that level of mental freedom.

We all have our goals. Some want to start training for the first marathon, lose a few pounds, or eat more protein, yet don't set mental health goals as well. We often take time out of our day to get in steps or a workout, but we should also make time to improve our mental health. Find something that relaxes you and frees your mind. We all need it.

Cherish It,

Tammy

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JAZZOO!

An ocean of entertainment was had at the Kansas City Zoo's largest annual fundraiser, Jazzoo! Party animals from across KC gathered to enjoy unlimited food, drinks and entertainment, all while raising money for the zoo. Funds from this event provide food for more than 1,700 animals at the zoo for an entire year and help provide educational opportunities for children in our community. This year's theme was the octopus in honor of the brand-new, 650,000-gallon aquarium opening this fall! ♦

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The KidsTLC Open was a huge success thanks to the 140 golfers who teed up for a good cause. The decadent day on the stunning links at Shadow Glen Golf Club included a mimosa wall, cocktails and bloody marys from J. Rieger & Co., food stations throughout the course, elite golfer gifts and creative contests. The culmination was a light dinner and awards ceremony in the clubhouse with presentation of the coveted green jackets for the winning team! ♦

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Real gardeners never fail to take an opportunity to see new or different ideas to implement in their own gardens. They are always ready to learn new ways of combining plants and the hardscapes that make their own homes and gardens uniquely special. Despite a drizzly day, nearly 400 folks came out for the Garden Club of Shawnee's June 10 Garden Sampler Tour. Even while dodging rain drops, visitors enjoyed seeing five private gardens of Shawnee. Garden club volunteers frequently heard visitors exclaiming, "Such a lovely time!" and "So many different, but beautiful gardens!" Thank you to the many that came out to enjoy the lovely Garden Sampler Tour gardens. Stay tuned for the tour in 2025! gardenclubofshawnee.org. ♦

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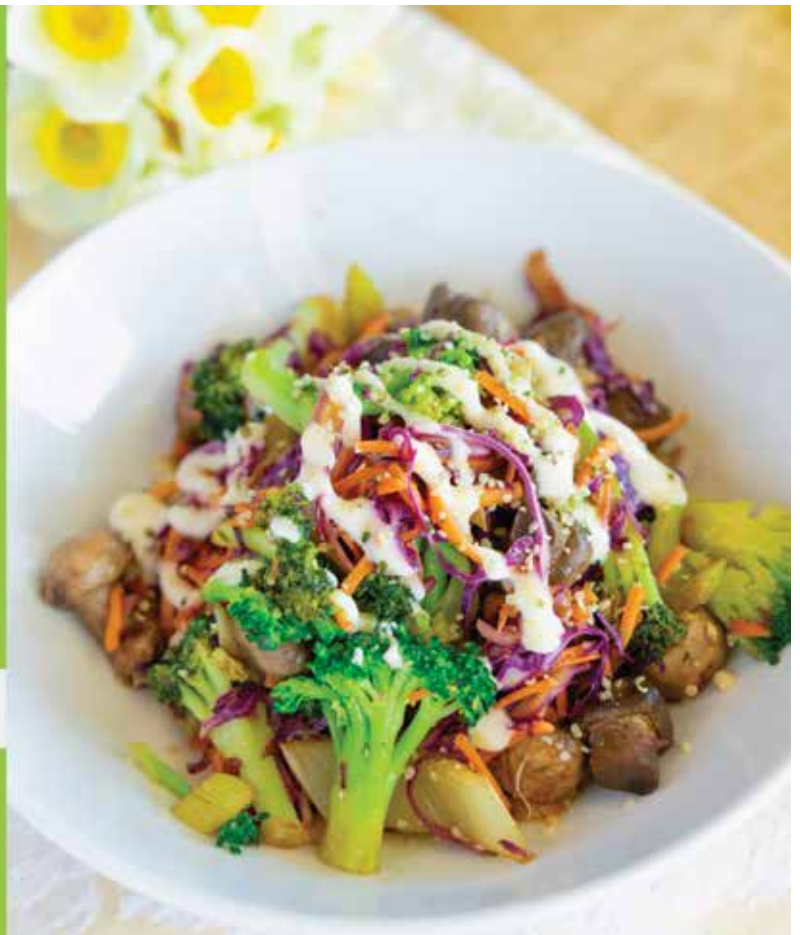


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KANSAS CITY FASHION WEEK

Kansas City Fashion Week celebrated another successful season this spring with its Fall/Winter '23 Showcase March 4 to March 11. Held at Union Station, Kansas City Fashion Week LLC is Kansas City's largest multi-day fashion event showcasing collections from regional and national designers. In addition to four runway shows, Kansas City Fashion Week included a vendor market with over 30 local vendors and a black-tie kick-off party, Bubbly & Bowties, at Kansas City Country Club. Kansas City Fashion Week will return for another season, showcasing looks for Fall/Winter '23 in September. For more details, visit kcfashionweek.com. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK MASON, ELI STACK, MARGARET NORCROSS, MARK MCCURNIN, VIJAY AINAPURAPU, TOU YANG, TORREY PURVEY AND SHANNA MACK





TABUKNITS *boutique*

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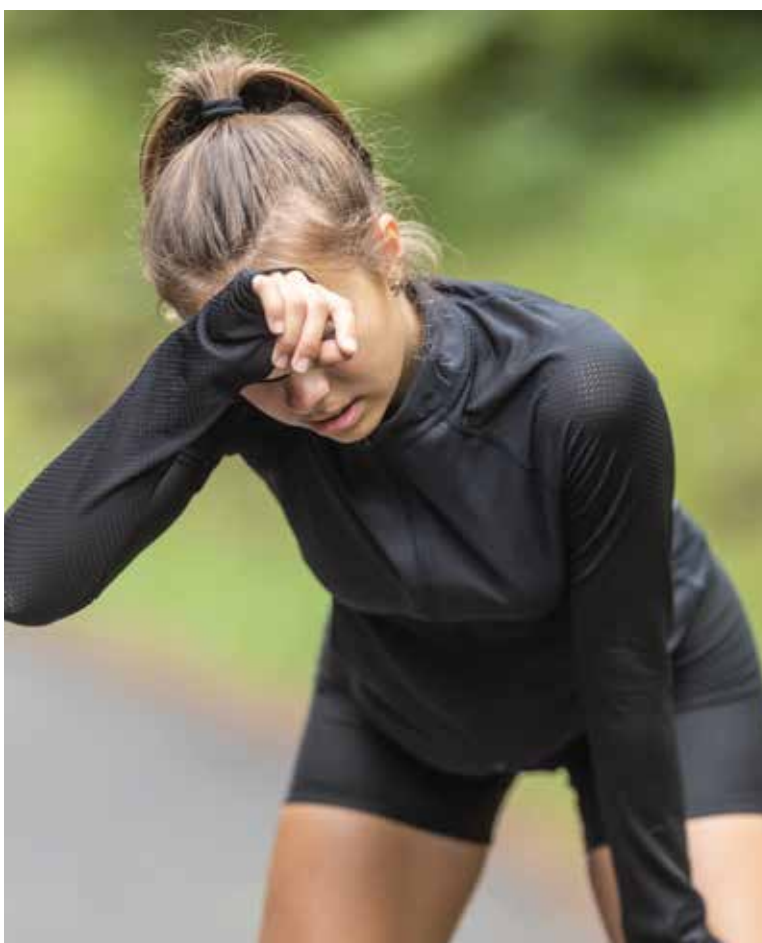
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FEELIN' HOT, HOT, HOT! AVOID OVER-HEATING THIS SUMMER

BY LISA BUTLER

By this time each summer, we are knee-deep in heat waves and possible record temperatures, and this year will be no different. As extreme warmth increases in the United States, climate projections indicate that the “dog days” of summer will be more frequent and intense each decade. This year, the CDC predicts over 67,000 emergency department visits due to heat and over 700 heat-related deaths.



The good news is that heat-related illness and death have lessened over the several years. Experts say it could be due to better weather forecasting, earlier warnings of heat systems and better access to air conditioning. But extreme heat occurrences remain a cause of preventable heat-related illnesses that vary in seriousness and symptoms. Some of the most common medical heat issues can be one or more of the following:

HEAT RASH

Also known as prickly heat, this red, stinging rash develops when you're hot and sweaty. It's most likely to show up in areas where sweat gets trapped, such as inside your elbows and behind your knees.

HEAT CRAMPS

Painful muscle cramps can strike when you're exercising in hot weather. They develop when you sweat so much that your body loses salts and fluids.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

More serious than heat rash or cramps, heat exhaustion occurs when your body can't cool itself through sweating. At the first sign of heat exhaustion, it is important to take steps to help decrease body temperature and cool down. Move to an air-conditioned place. Take a cold shower, spray a cold garden hose or place cold compresses on the skin. Drink plenty of fluids; think chilled water, a sports drink containing electrolytes or other nonalcoholic beverage without caffeine. Remove tight or extra clothing layers.

If symptoms don't improve after about an hour of rest and fluids,

calling a healthcare provider is the next step. If symptoms worsen, call 911 or go to the emergency room. Left untreated, heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke. Injury and death can result from heat stroke and related conditions.

HEAT STROKE

Sometimes called sunstroke, heat stroke is the most severe heat-related illness. During heat stroke, a person's body temperature climbs quickly to dangerous levels. Often, people with heat stroke stop sweating. Unlike heat exhaustion, a heat stroke requires immediate medical attention. Since heat stroke is much more serious, timing is important. Recognizing heat stroke will determine how quickly someone will receive help and treatment. Signs of heat stroke may include dizziness; fever over 103 degrees Fahrenheit; fatigue; headaches; changes in behavior such as confusion, agitation and slurred speech; heavy sweating or dry skin if sweating has stopped; nausea and vomiting; rapid breathing, heart rate or pulse.

If heat stroke is suspected, it is vital to act quickly. Call 911 immediately and move the person to a cooler place. Use cold compresses, wet towels, a cold shower or other methods to reduce body temperature.

Summer wouldn't be summer without hot outdoor activities but playing it smart is important. To maintain a safe body temperature, we must get rid of excess heat. These tips may help you keep your cool while enjoying your favorite seasonal fun.

Wear the right stuff. Whether you're exercising or doing yard work, choose loose, comfortable clothing. You want to be able to move freely while keeping protected from the sun.

Sun block, sunscreen-treated clothing and brimmed hats add an additional layer of protection. Wear sun block even if it's cloudy and look for sunscreens that say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on the label.

Plan accordingly. Try to limit outdoor activity to when it's coolest, such as morning and evening hours. Take a break in the shade to give the body a chance to recover.

Let fluids flow. Regardless of how active you are, drink more water and drink before feeling thirsty. Avoid alcoholic and sugary drinks and sip on a sports drink to help replace electrolytes and salt.

Manage your risks. Anyone is at risk to the health effects of heat, but some are more vulnerable including pregnant women, people with heart or lung conditions, older adults, young children, athletes and outdoor workers. People who take diuretics or other medications are more susceptible to heat effects, as well as those who have experienced heat illness in the past. Talking with a doctor and using proper precautions can keep people safer when spending time outdoors.

Watch body cue. Being lightheaded and dizzy are the first signs of heat issues. Listen to your body and your instincts.

Having fun-in-the sun is definitely one of the best things about summer, but heat can test our bodies and our systems. Heat-related illnesses are preventable. Knowing the symptoms and what to do if you or a loved one show signs of having issues will help you keep your cool when the heat is on. ♦

SOURCES: ephtracking.cdc.gov, health.clevelandclinic.org, mayoclinic.org and medstarhealth.org.



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ALLIANCE MASSAGE THERAPY

MASSAGE AND EXERCISE IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

BY COREY HUNTSUCKER



Q

What can I do about my back pain?

A

There are several answers to this question depending on what the root cause is. For most of my clients, it comes down to the dreaded exercise. As we age, we are fighting gravity more. It is important that we keep our muscles toned to keep our body in alignment. With the increase in sedentary jobs and use of technology, our posture goes into a head-forward, rolled-shoulder position. This position causes a shortening and flexing of our anterior muscles (abdominals and pectorals), and a lengthening and weakening of our posterior muscles (rhomboids and spinal erectors). Your body will always try to keep your head in an erect position, so the weakened back muscles are working harder. In order to counteract that, I recommend stretching the anterior muscles and strengthening the posterior muscles. This does not have to be heavy exercise; I work out my back like most people do their abs, with high reps and low weight, especially the muscles that surround the spine and help keep it erect.

Q

What is an orthopedic massage?

A

A relaxation massage generally involves one massage modality, or technique, to relax the body, but orthopedic massage is a comprehensive approach to pain, correcting soft tissue (muscle, tendon, ligament, fascia) dysfunctions. Orthopedic massage uses several massage modalities and begins with an assessment to locate the root muscle, for instance, or other soft tissue causing the pain. The pain isn't always where the problem is. From there, various massage modalities are used to break the pain cycle. A massage therapist will apply the techniques that he or she is most familiar with in order to help break this cycle. I usually finish a therapy session with a relaxation massage to get the body and mind out of the protection mode and relax. ♦



Corey B. Huntsucker is a licensed massage therapist in the state of Missouri with certifications in orthopedic and clinical massage. The basis for Corey's massage therapy is self-care, relaxation being the major key. However, he uses his further education in orthopedic massage to address troubling or chronic issues keeping you from having a quality life. Corey wants to meet you where you are and provide a massage that is tailored to your needs, beginning with discussing your goals for the massage session, and long-term health goals.

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www.kidsmilekc.com

DON'T TAME YOUR CURLS; TRAIN YOURSELF!

BY CASSIDY A. SROCK

Curly hair is having a renaissance. It is appropriate to start with an acknowledgment of generations of black women who were forced to do irreparable damage to their hair to be seen as socially acceptable and employable.

As of this writing, there are only two states in which it is illegal to fire a black woman for wearing her hair naturally: California and New York. Both states passed laws protecting black women's right to wear their natural hair in 2019. Other women, to a much lesser extent, do the same thing to appear professional.

Of those who try embracing their curls, many will end up with frizzy hair and disappointment. Most people who have curly hair weren't ever taught how to take care of it and that's the problem. Taking care of curly hair isn't the same as taking care of straight hair. The entire curl community owes a debt of respect and gratitude to the early members of the natural hair movement. As black women embraced the natural hair movement, focusing on healthy hair and scalps instead of Eurocentric beauty standards and ignorance, it grew. Now there are communities of curlies from all walks of life swapping tips and tricks about how to get their hair to be what it was meant to be: beautiful.

For the smoothest transition from fighting your curls to loving



them, I recommend joining a curl community. There are entire websites dedicated to the triumphs and tribulations of people's curl journeys. It will be a journey. Chemical and heat damage take time to repair and new techniques take time to master.

Curl communities are the best places to go to find out your curl type. Your curl type is the basic shape of your curl: wavy, curly or coily. Each of those has subgroups. It gets very specific. The information is out there, you just need to know if you have the right information. Reading a book on taking care of Tibetan mastiffs won't do you any good if you have a Jack Russell terrier at home. Joining a group or following a content creator with your hair

type is the best way to get specific guidance about your hair.

Luckily, there are a few rules that transcend types and apply to all curlies. I've gathered a few, such as, you should only wash your hair once a week. When you do, massage your scalp either with your fingers or a silicone shampoo brush. This will get rid of product build-up, improve circulation and promote hair growth. Don't worry; you

can shower more often, just don't shampoo.

Cotton pillowcases and terry cloth towels are not your friends. These fabrics will snag your hair and cause knots that can do a lot of damage. They will also rob your curls of moisture because they are designed to be absorbent. Curls need a lot of moisture. You should upgrade your cotton pillowcase to satin or silk. Your tresses will glide across your pillow and your facial skin will thank you as well. As for the towel, trade it in for a micro-fiber hair turban or an old T-shirt. Curls love old T-shirts.

There are a lot of brushes claiming to be the end-all-be-all for curls. The more strokes you take to detangle your hair, the more likely it is to break. Some favorite brushes of the curl community are Tangle Teezer's Ultimate Detangler, Denman's Tangle Tamer line and the Felicia Leatherwood Detangler Brush. The namesake and creator of the Felicia Leatherwood brand and brush is a black woman at the top of her game. If you want to splurge a little on a nice brush and put your money where your morals are, I'd go with Felicia. If you need a budget brush, look for one that is lightweight with flexible teeth.

When and how you detangle matters. Brush your hair while it's still soaking wet. Try flipping your head upside down if you can. Brush in your leave-in conditioner, your styling product, then wrap your hair in your T-shirt or turban. The best way to dry your curls is to allow them to air dry but there are alternatives online and some of them are inspired!

Once you've shown off your glorious mane all day; it's time for bed. You need to minimize how squished your curls get while you get your beauty sleep. There are bonnets, braids, buns, pineapples and the tried-and-true T-shirt turban. It boils down to what you can tolerate. Most of those are self-explanatory except the pineapple. It's an incredibly high ponytail secured with a preferably satin scrunchy. If you ask me, they're pretty cute!

So, now you have a jumping-off point. Go find yourself some curl friends and get to know your natural curls! ♦

SOURCES: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curly_Girl_Method, naturallycurly.com, curlmaven.ie and kurlify.com/en/curly-girl-method/freshening-up-your-curls-in-between-washes.



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KidsTLC

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT



BY CHRIS WESTWATER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY

When you think of health and wellness, do you factor in your mental wellbeing as well as your physical capabilities? “Summer is a great time to do a little inventory,” said Dr. Erin Dugan, CEO of KidsTLC, a nonprofit whose goal is to transform lives in our community through access to mental and behavioral health services that support the whole family.

Take a deep breath and make sure that you’ve prioritized yourself and your mental health,” she said. “Before things gear back up and the school year gets started and kids are running a million different places, make some time for yourself.” Erin’s been the CEO for KidsTLC for five years and she knows what she’s talking about.

HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

KidsTLC was founded in 1972 by Johnson County Young Matrons who wanted to assist abused and neglected children. The

organization has grown to provide support and services to children and families “experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges, developmental trauma and autism.” Erin said, “We really believe in the continuum of care and in step-up and step-down services. We have kids that live on campus 24/7, and when they’re ready, they might step down into our intensive outpatient program, where they come after school four nights a week and their parents are involved. Then they can step down to visit a therapist one or two days a week with parents joining in every other week. And they can also step up if they need more services. There’s a continuum of care all in one place



includes mentoring and providing a culture of wellness. “It’s a tough world right now and caring for others is a hard job, but we show our staff that they matter to us,” Erin continued. “We’re interested in their wellness. If we want them to help others with their mental health, we’ve got to show them we care about theirs. Taking care of our staff is as important to us as taking care of the kids and the families that are part of KidsTLC.”

WELLNESS FOCUSED

Erin suggests you “do a personal inventory of your own mental health and reach out if you need help. Just like going to the doctor for sports physicals before we start the soccer season, let’s start reaching out to therapists and counselors and making sure we’re mentally well.” She wants to normalize taking care of your mental well-being as much as you care for your physical health and your loved ones’ health. “I can’t emphasize enough that, just like KidsTLC says we’ve got to take care of the staff that are taking care of the kids, families need to make sure the parents are taking care of themselves as well.” That includes everything on the spectrum of health and wellness, from eating right and exercising to taking time for self-care and reaching out to experts and doctors for help when you need it.

For more information about KidTLC, visit kidstlc.org.

as their needs are met.” The majority of services are provided at the KidsTLC Campus, which can be seen on the east side of I-35 just south of the Olathe Santa Fe exit.

“For our residents that live here on campus, we have a school run by the Olathe Public Schools, staffed by school district personnel and teachers, that uses the district’s curriculum. It’s a fantastic partnership,” Erin said. “They go to school every day, get a high-quality education, and yet remain on a therapeutic campus so they can really continue to receive those intensive services.”

Additionally, KidsTLC has “an outstanding clinic for children with autism, serving kids from 18 months to typically about 12 years of age. We keep our staff-to-client ratios at one-to-one as we utilize applied behavior analysis, or ABA, speech and occupational therapies to work on a variety of skills to get them school ready,” Erin described.

A CULTURE OF CARE

KidsTLC’s business is caring for children and families. To Erin and the KidsTLC leadership team, the staff who work there are equally important. “We use the phrase on campus ‘making sure we’re taking care of the people that are taking care of the kids,’ and it is a really large focus and priority that we attend to our staff. This includes the staff’s mental health and making sure they feel safe emotionally,” Erin said. “We have a director of holistic wellness, and we take our staff’s health seriously.” KidsTLC provides wellness stations, where a selection of water, fruit and protein is provided to keep their staff physically healthy. “We check in regularly to see how to make our staffs’ lives better so that they’re more focused at work and on the work they do.” This

SAVE THE DATE

Help transform lives in our community by participating in KidsTLC’s largest fundraiser, Benefit23.

Date: October 7, 2023

Location: J. Rieger & Co. distillery

Details: 6:00 p.m. VIP cocktail hour; 7:00 p.m. registration

Attire: Cocktail or elevated pajama party

Activities: Custom cocktails, delicious food stations, creative photo opportunities and virtual and live auctions. ♦

Alejandra Villalobos-McAnderson

"You're never stuck."

BY CINDY MCDERMOTT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY SHANNON HUGHEY OF HELLO LOVELY
SHOT ON LOCATION AT VILLALOBOS VITALITY LOCATED IN
YOUR WELLNESS CONNECTION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes mental health as "a wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking and behavior." The World Health Organization pronounces mental health as more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities, but an integral part of overall health, and there is no health without mental health. In the United States, the National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that 1 in 5 adults experience mental health problems each year.

Troubling family dynamics, whether interpersonal, economic or social, throughout an individual's life can have an immense impact on the root causes of mental health. But Alejandra Villalobos-McAnderson, owner of Villalobos Vitality, calls upon her deep family heritage—her lineage and ancestry—to help others in need, especially those attempting to improve their mental health. A licensed holistic energy medicine practitioner, mindful leadership and corporate energy coach, Alex guides athletes, entrepreneurs, high-performing business leaders and many others to embrace intuitive and powerful leadership practices. She refers to herself as an Energy Medicine Woman, a healer, with generations of learnings to call upon.

"I began as a Reiki master but I noticed that my healing techniques started to evolve past the boundaries of Reiki. It wasn't only bodywork but a lot of healing. I started to be more comfortable with my roots, connected to my ancestors working with the elements, the land, reconnecting with nature and using those energies," said Alex. "My grandmother is a healer and uses herbs and knows about plants and home remedies. My mom heals through the Catholic Church and does retreats with hands-on healing. It's in our bloodline but it has manifested through me in energy work. I can read energy in my clients' bodies or their businesses. Humans are energized beings and energy is always flowing. When people come in to talk about their business, I can feel where it's stagnant and whether it's management or marketing. I can feel where the flow stops in the business and we work together to get it moving again."



“The biggest thing in teaching people to heal is that you have no control over the outside world, but if you have inner peace and connection with your inside world, and the tools that allow you to recharge, reconnect and rejuvenate, then you don’t feel like you’re flopping in the wind. You are centered and connected and there’s power and resilience in that. In my sessions, it’s not a brain thing, but a heart thing.”





CONNECTING TO A HIGHER POWER

Alex's Energy Medicine method is based on the practice of Reiki, which the National Institute of Health describes as the goal of directing energy to help facilitate the person's healing response. It's based on an Eastern belief in an energy that supports the body's innate or natural healing abilities. Alex refers to it as harnessing a higher power by connecting with a person's life force energy.

"In energy work, we don't believe we have only one body. We have a mental body, an emotional body and an energetic body. Most of the time people are in the mental and emotional, and we're not taught to release. We have these big emotions and they have nowhere to go, so they get stored in the body. We wonder why our shoulders are aching or our backs hurt. Our body is always talking to us," she commented. "When clients come in, we begin to clean it out. It's like a check-in or pit stop on where you are on your path, what are you doing, where have you fallen off and what do you need to do to get back into alignment with yourself, your purpose and your soul. I try to plug people back into their hearts and souls."

Guided meditation, energy work, crystal healing, spirit guides and oracle readings can be some of the tools used by Alex to address a client's mental health in her energy sessions. This work can help people realize that positivity can replace negativity in their lives.

"You are more powerful than you were led to believe, and you're never stuck. There is always a shift that gives us an opportunity to change," she remarked. "You must find your medicine, that's a part of life, but it's not done on your deathbed. Let's heal and thrive while you're still here."

A HERITAGE OF HEALING

Alex was born in Mexico and moved to California when she was six years old. Now, she calls Shawnee, Kansas, home with her husband, Brandon, and sons, Brandon, 14, and Cruz, 8. About three years ago, she started Villalobos Vitality and focused on soul healing through energy medicine, but this was not the career path Alex had initially envisioned for herself. She intended to land in the corner office in the finance industry, but her desire to be a people pleaser left her feeling she was always chasing something that was not there. Alex realized she was doing far too much for others and not enough for herself.

"I was always chasing something because something was missing inside myself. I didn't have the self-love from within. Being an immigrant, I felt that I always had something to prove. I was a great worker, but when is enough, enough?" revealed Alex. "What we're really chasing isn't the outside world but what's within. I found my power and my voice, and I'm never giving that up. I'm connected to the divine and speak to benevolent beings, angels and guides. I said that if this is what I'm supposed to do, I need guidance and support and I need to be led. The success of my business in this small period of time is proof that this is divinely orchestrated."

Alex was able to root herself in a loving family with special skills who contributed to her success today; however, many of her clients were not so lucky. Childhood traumas or haunting memories can make them feel unworthy or unloved, which plants the seeds of dysfunction as an adult. Alex describes this as running on "programs" that no longer serve them.

"Soul healing means going back to any past traumas and wounds that are hidden in the subconscious mind that are stuck in the body, in the dark closet that we throw things into," she advised. "Sometimes it's hard to go into that dark closet because it feels overwhelming. But when someone guides you through past traumas, memories or beliefs that need healing, you can get through them. It's easier to release and heal and put yourself into better alignment."



THE LEGACY THAT WE LEAVE

What you do not heal in yourself will be passed down to your children. Alex refers to it as their “personal inheritance” from you. While most are concerned with transferring wealth to the next generation, Alex stresses that the key focus should be on how you are building a mentally healthy child who contributes to society.

“Many times we think that the biggest legacy that I leave my children is mostly monetary and whether they will be financially safe. But think about what things have been passed down from generation to generation, whether that's an addiction or poor mental health. It just keeps going until someone, and usually that's someone who's deemed different or a black sheep, says no and that behavior ends with me. Truly, the biggest gift you can give your kids is your own healing and dealing with trauma,” noted Alex. “Children are walking with wounds that don't belong to them, and they become adults that feel unworthy. It's interesting to see the generational mess and to help my clients cut those cords and set themselves free.”

Working with a mental health provider or energy healer such as Alex can be a critical tool to employ as one begins the journey of healing. According to Alex, knowing that you want to take that step is critical to your success because you are acknowledging that programs from the past are influencing and running your current life.

“Look at your stuff because the first thing is awareness and you can start to become the ‘observer’ instead of the responder that reacts. Many times it's these programs running our lives and we don't know why we respond the way we do. Ask yourself, ‘Why did that trigger me?’ Now, you take back the power. You can ask the right questions and become the co-creator of your life with God or your higher power,” Alex stated. “Now, others may say that ‘Oh, it's on me?’ It's easier to blame others but it doesn't have to define you. First, think of it as a character in a play and we have the lines and the drama. As you heal, you see that you become the director and then you realize you are the playwright and the creator. You are getting to decide how this play goes and what you want to experience.”

Reflecting on the goodness that nature can bring to a person is one tool that individuals can use in their mental health healing. Alex also points to improving breathing skills with breaths coming from the diaphragm, not the top of the lungs. She also stresses the importance of body movement and soothing music. On a group basis, she recommends healing circles in which communities of people come together and release negativity. Overall, the key is to find opportunities to take care of yourself.

“The biggest thing is to know is that you're never stuck. Your body and mind can heal. In *“The Book of Joy*, they talk about the difference between curing and healing. Curing is finding resolution to the disease, but with healing, regardless of what is going on around you, you still feel good within you,” noted Alex. “The biggest thing in teaching people to heal is that you have no control over the outside world, but if you have inner peace and connection with your inside world, and the tools that allow you to recharge, reconnect and rejuvenate, then you don't feel like you're flopping in the wind. You are centered and connected and there's power and resilience in that. In my sessions, it's not a brain thing, but a heart thing.” ♦



DOC GREEN'S GOURMET SALADS & GRILL

CASUAL, CUSTOM
AND COLORFUL

BY CINDY MCDERMOTT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAVIN PETERS

If you've made a New Year's resolution to lose weight, you're keeping company with most who set these annual goals. About 45 percent promise themselves lifestyle improvements to drive down that scale. It's not an easy task, but those of us in the KC metro can turn to Doc Green's Gourmet Salads & Grill for one segment of a successful strategy.





The casual eatery at 15141 West 119th Street, Olathe, Kansas, features healthy salads, wraps, sandwiches and everyone's favorite comfort food entrees. With a variety of sides, including grilled zucchini and squash or mac and cheese, the options are endless at Doc Green's.

"At Doc Green's, you can eat as healthy as you want to be. Items on our menu can be enjoyed guilt free and you can indulge," remarked Devin Slane, regional manager. "We have something for everyone on the menu. There's a family feeling here at Doc Green's. It's rewarding to hear this from our customers and even our employees. We know that people want to eat as healthy as they can, and unfortunately, there aren't many options for them. But Doc Green's offers great food that's delicious as well as nutritious. We're one resolution that's easy to keep."

Dip your fork into the Dr. Caribbean Salad, featuring romaine, baby spinach, strawberries, pineapple, grapes, cranraisins, almonds and a light Asian sesame dressing, topped with grilled salmon and complemented with mouth-watering pita bread. A top seller is the steak wrap, packed with romaine, sweet corn, black beans, cheddar, mozzarella, sour cream, avocado, grilled beef tenderloin and A1 sauce in a garlic and herb wrap. Check out the Dr. Grilled Veggie loaded with field greens, zucchini, yellow squash, grilled portabella mushrooms, roasted red peppers, red onion and avocado, highlighted by a balsamic vinaigrette.

"When I notice someone's having a hard time deciding on what to order, I recommend the beef tenderloin entree—eight ounces of filet-cut tenderloin," shared Devin. "You get to pick two side items so you can match it with our mac and cheese, grilled



A top seller is the steak wrap, packed with romaine, sweet corn, black beans, cheddar, mozzarella, sour cream, avocado, grilled beef tenderloin and A1 sauce in a garlic and herb wrap.



zucchini and squash, fruit cup, white cheddar mashed potatoes, parmesan-crusted button mushrooms or corn casserole.

“My go-to for new customers is the Dr. fiesta salad: romaine, tomatoes, cucumbers, cheddar, black beans, corn salsa, carrots, tortilla strips and chipotle ranch dressing,” he added. “You can have the crispy chicken tenders or order the grilled chicken for a healthier option.”

Established in 2006 in Wichita, Kansas, Doc Green’s is a family success story. This fresh, gourmet concept was originally a franchise operated by Tammi and Scott Kuthan. The original franchise-operating company dissolved, but the Kuthans continued and adjusted their concept, growing to four locations in the Wichita area.

Customers can choose from a variety of specialty salads, wraps, paninis, sandwiches, soups and sides. Complete meals featuring chicken tenders, roasted turkey, grilled beef tenderloin or grilled salmon will delight the palettes of the pickiest of eaters.



“We feature a fast, casual dining concept. You go to the order taker, select a menu item and move down the line to watch your order being prepared. You’ll receive an order number and our employees will bring the food to you when it’s ready,” explained Devin. “We have a carryout option and express pickup via our website.”

“The open line means that the food is prepared right in front of the customer,” he continued. “The customer also has the option to build their own meal by telling us exactly what they want from our prepared-fresh-every-day selections.” Doc Green’s also features impressive catering options, which have been a popular choice for small businesses, professional offices or other events.

For loyal customers, Doc Green’s features a reward program through its app. “You can customize your order and select every in-

dividual item through the app. Your order will be available for you at express pickup and you miss the line,” noted Devin. “Most importantly, the reward program gives you points that can be redeemed for menu items.”

Devin points with pride to the ambiance that’s been created at Doc Green’s. “We took a lot of time, care and resources for designing and building the lobby. Our decor features succulents and barn wood from the 1870s taken from a dairy barn in Lawrence. Everyone’s been impressed with the earthy feeling and that we’ve created a beautiful restaurant.”

If your 2023 resolution calls for a smaller waistline or even if it doesn’t, enjoy the family-friendly environment and delicious food at Doc Green’s. With this menu offering, you can eat as healthy as you want to be. ♦

To learn more, visit eatdocgreens.com.

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EASY ELOTES

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup finely crumbled Cotija or feta cheese, plus more for serving
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream or Mexican crema
- 1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro leaves and tender stems
- 1/2 teaspoon ancho or guajillo chile powder, plus more for serving
- 1 medium clove garlic, finely minced (about 1 teaspoon)
- 4 ears shucked corn
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS

While grill heats, combine cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream or crema, cilantro, chile powder and garlic in a large bowl. Stir and set aside. Place corn directly over hot side of grill and cook, rotating occasionally, until cooked through and charred in spots on all sides, about 8 minutes total. Add corn to bowl with cheese mixture and coat corn on all sides with mixture. Sprinkle with extra cheese and chile powder and serve immediately with lime wedges. ♦

TIP

1: When husking your corn, remove the silk and husk from the cob, but keep a few inches of the stalk end attached to use as a handle.



After 25 years in creative design and management with Hallmark Cards, Lauren Lane quit to pursue her lifelong passion for food and entertaining. Lauren has reinvented herself at 50 and now pursues her dream of teaching others how to cook easily and entertain effortlessly. Follow her on Instagram, Facebook and her blog so you don't miss any of her recipes and cooking tips and tricks.

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A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright green sleeveless jumpsuit with a V-neckline and wide-leg trousers, is leaning against a brick wall. She has her right hand on her hip and is looking towards the camera. The background shows a brick building and some greenery.

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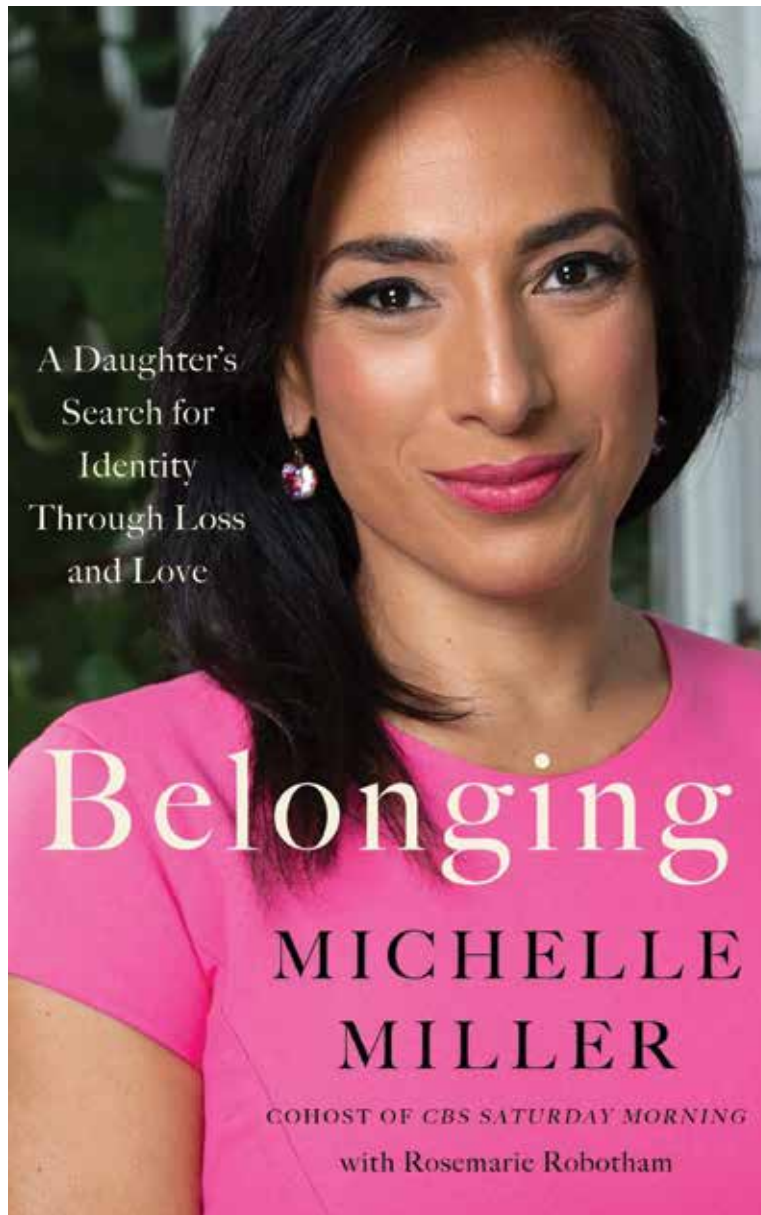




BELONGING BY MICHELLE MILLER

REVIEW BY MARIA RILEY

“I was 24 when my father asked me to search for my mother, so that I might ask the questions that had burned in me all those years without her. In my two-plus decades as a motherless child, I had learned that identity is shaped as much by those who are absent in our lives as by those who stay by our side.”



Michelle Miller Morial introduces the reader to her search for herself and constructing an authentic identity in *Belonging: A Daughter's Search for Identity Through Loss and Love*.

She's recognizable as a cohost of CBS Saturday Morning. Today she belongs, exuding confidence, competence and compassion in the pub-

lic aspects of her life. Miller has spoken candidly about her family of birth for the past few years, and in *Belonging* she offers a narrative of her experience as "a mixed-race Black woman in America when we are finally daring the

hard conversations about race and identity." Miller was raised from the age of six months primarily by her

paternal grandmother, Bigmama, and at four she began asking, "Bigmama, why don't I have a mother?" Her grandmother deftly directed Miller to her father, who replied, "Well, Michelle, your father met your mother, they fell in love, and they had you." The answer was the same until she was 24, her father dying of cancer, and he told her emphatically to seek her mother to learn her genetic and medical history.

In the intervening 20 years, family members dropped hints. One situation concerned hair texture. Miller's was long and loosely waved. In a painfully described incident of bullying and hairpulling by other girls of her age, she asked Bigmama why she didn't have the same kind of hair as her cousins. "Well, your birth mother was White," was the response. When she was nine, her father overheard her telling a friend that she didn't have a mother. Shortly thereafter, her father said to her privately, "Michelle, you do have a mother. You are not motherless, and I don't know why you told Bradford that. Your mother just doesn't live with you." He followed by revealing her name, which triggered Miller's memory of a family photograph of the three of them. A few months later, he took her to meet the woman, an uncomfortable situation for all three, and sparked a conversation between father and daughter about the reasons for the family separation. "I felt an odd sense of triumph at finally scoring from my father a concrete explanation of why my mother had walked away. But in the wake of that I was flooded with a new kind of pain. My mother didn't want me."

Through the angst of adolescence, her grandmother's health begins to fail; she leaves to be cared for by relatives. In Seventeen magazine, Miller notes an advertisement for a seven-week "fat farm" on a local college campus; attendees would be housed in the dorms. "Maybe this was the very thing I had been seeking, though I hadn't consciously decided to transform myself...I was becoming adept at compartmentalizing my feelings...Looking back, I can see this was where my tendency to build walls around my sadness truly began." She describes realizing that becoming a person who could walk into any room and look as if she belonged was a solution. "Even if I didn't feel it exactly, even if I still doubted my right to be there, at least I could muster a passable impersonation of a girl who was confident in where she stood."

Miller found her tribe in high school and chose to attend Howard University, as her father and grandmother had. "I wanted to experience the place that the school's alumni still proudly call The Mecca...Hoping to make my own mark in this pantheon of influential men and women, I had decided that the way I would do so would be through a career in journalism." Over the next 30 years, Miller built her professional networks through stints at institutions in Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Columbia, South Carolina, eventually landing in New Orleans, where the fullest chapter of her life would begin.

I will leave readers with that teaser and one answer. Yes, she had a meeting with her mother and developed a tenuous relationship with her, yet it was one that helped Miller further investigate and clarify her own feelings. The memoir recounts pain, and also great joy, introspection, healing and love.

As of this writing, Miller is in London covering the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. If she ever had a question about being acknowledged and recognized, that has been emphatically answered. ♦

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LEADERSHIP: CHARTING YOUR COURSE

BY CINDY MCDERMOTT

Pew Research Center recently released data showing that women receive 83 cents for every dollar paid to a man. This gender pay gap between median hourly earnings of both full- and part-time workers has remained stagnant in the United States over the past two decades.

Further demonstrating this disparity is Equal Pay Day on March 24, which represents the number of extra days women on average must work to earn what men, on average, were paid the year before. Unfortunately for mothers and many women of color, this day comes much later in the year.

The U.S. Department of Labor attributes some of the gap to not only gender discrimination, but also racial discrimination, the devaluation of “women’s work,” the absence of support for essential family care and more.

Many issues are holding back women as they strive for equal pay but a segment of this problem is a lack of leadership opportunities. Men continue to dominate the top roles and highest-paying professions. The glass ceiling that we have heard so much about continues to exist.

“We call it a glass ceiling and, in some ways. Words are powerful. I’m glad that we call it that because we can see what the possibilities are, and that’s different than in my mother’s generation and even early in my career,” said Angela Scalpello, a highly-sought-after business performance coach based in New York City. Angela has spent decades mentoring and guiding individuals, particularly women, in becoming the best they can be. “I had no idea what those seats of power looked like. The span of control. The impact they have. We call it a glass ceiling and that says we’ve moved into a consciousness that something more is out there if women choose to go for it.”

According to the American Association of University Women, a



non-profit organization that advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research, there is no shortage of qualified women to fill leadership roles. Women make up almost half of the U.S. labor force. They outnumber men in earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees and are nearly on par in getting medical and legal degrees. But from all sectors of the economy and American society, men outnumber women in the highest paying and most prominent leadership roles. However, Angela reports that women can help

themselves by speaking up, which can be out of character and an uncomfortable role for many.

“Women have to be better at asking for what they want, understanding their leverage and their options and the impact they have. They must start owning what it is they contribute and they have to ensure if there’s a role they want, they have to understand the capabilities or experiences they need to get that role. They need their company to help them get ready so that when it occurs, they’re ready. We call that ‘experience to readiness.’ It’s very intentional,” Angela said. “Know what you want, ask for it and then make sure you get the experience to readiness. And much of this doesn’t come naturally for women. I paraphrase Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to be elected to the United States Congress. She said, ‘If there’s not a seat at the table for you, then bring your own chair.’”

“Women have made some strides because companies — not all

because we have so much more to do — but many companies do realize the positive financial and business impact of diverse workforces, whether that's gender diversity, ethnicity, cognitive, race and more. Businesses know they have to have different voices in the conversation because that's who customers are," Angela noted. "We need diversity in thought and experience, and we need different types of leadership. Diversity can do that, and the numbers show that a company does experience better financials. Research shows that diverse teams do better. It's not a single-threaded perspective or way of thinking or life experiences. It matters for the bottom line." ♦

VISION BOARD FOR LEADERSHIP

Angela Scalpello asserts, this must be a well-planned career path with mentors and sponsors assisting along the way. Much of it entails envisioning your future and working to get it.

- Do you see what you want beyond that glass ceiling to put in the effort and hard work to break through it?
- Women must get more comfortable with understanding their value and worth and promoting themselves. Angela points out that some women say that they don't want to be that person. But you must re-think how you look at self-promotion.
- If you don't ask, you don't get what you need. Speak up.
- Don't forget to leverage the skills that you already have. Women have options and more leverage than they think they have.
- You must be intentional in how you chart your leadership journey. Network, be visible and develop your skillset for the future.

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JUST SAYIN'

BY Q104 PERSONALITY JENNY MATTHEWS
PHOTO BY LAUREN FRISCH PUSATERI

I've been speaking publicly about my lifelong struggle with anxiety for a while. I remember when I had my first panic attack in my early 20s and how totally scared and isolated I felt. Those feelings only made it all worse. I wished so much that I had a friend to talk with who understood. Whenever I tried to talk to people about it, they'd just tell me to "relax." Well, it doesn't work like that.

I tried a zillion natural remedies. Nothing worked that well. So, I finally started taking medication for it after dealing with it for 40-plus years. It was a fantastic decision. I know everyone's different, but for me, it's been life changing. One example is that before I started taking it, travel was a huge trigger. Leaving my comfort zone made me a nervous wreck with an instant stomachache. I'm taking a trip (kid-free—go me!) this weekend and I am actually excited about it. I'm not fearful that the plane will crash or something terrible will happen at home while I'm away. That's huge for me.

Health anxiety was my biggest issue. I was convinced I was dying every day of my life. I was so busy worrying about dying that I wasn't really living. An example of my progress in this department is that at my most recent mammogram appointment, the doctor noticed a new spot. She feels confident that it's nothing to worry about but will

check me again in a few months to make sure. I allowed myself to trust her words and I haven't thought much about it until just now. Again, that's huge for me. Before, I would have WebMDd and Google searched until I found whatever terrible diagnosis existed on the internet. The new me realizes that is a complete waste of time and energy and what will be will be anyway.

So, I just wanted to continue to share my journey so that you know you're not alone if you can relate to any of this! I never really thought I suffered from depression, but now I know they go hand in hand and I definitely had my fair share of that, too. Anxiety just covered it up a lot of times. Regardless, I am taking care of myself and doing what's right for me to live my best life. I encourage you to do the same! Mind over matter. Faith over fear. Stay strong. ♦

Jenny Matthews co-hosts *The Morning Drive* with Mike Kellar + Jenny Matthews on Q104 New Hit Country, weekday mornings from 6 - 10am. Connect at www.jennymatthewsonair.com and check out *The Morning After* with Mike Kellar + Jenny Matthews podcast!

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Lisa and Brenden Ourth

WRITTEN BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

Lisa recently moved to Olathe, Kansas, where she and Brenden, her husband, are creating their new beginning. Together the couple has a blended family of three sons, Jay, Reese and Conner, and one daughter, Riley. Lisa just began her 22nd year as a hairstylist and recently opened the doors of her brand new salon, Shear Paradise in southern Johnson County.

Brenden, is a graduate of Devry university. For the last 20 years he has been employed by Midwest card and ID solutions of Riverside, Missouri as the accountability solution sales manager.

"In December 2020 we connected through an online dating site," Lisa shares "We swiped right, then took a chance and met for our first date at The Bar Olathe to watch a Chiefs football game. We have been doing this thing we call life ever since that unforgettable day." The couple enjoys local live music, their kids' sporting events and spending time with friends and family.

For his proposal, Brenden surprised Lisa with a road trip to the Christmas Ranch tree farm in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. "I had mentioned weeks prior I wanted to get a fresh Christmas tree to make real Christmas garlands and wreaths for our friends and family for the holidays ahead," Lisa recalls. "Little did I know it really was a Hallmark movie turned reality after I found the perfect tree to cut down and turned around to find him down on one knee with the prettiest ring I had ever seen. It was magical. A local photographer who was there with her family saw what was going on from afar, and captured our moment without us knowing."

The blissful couple tied the knot, April 8, 2023. Their great friend



Natalie Monnett served as wedding officiant for their wedding vows and a love lock ceremony. Lisa's matron of honor was Eileen Burns; her sons, Jay Jarett and Reese Jarett, and her brother, Billy Dunbar, served as bridesmen. Brenden's best man was Ed Sullivan; Riley Ourth served as groomsmaid and Conner Ourth and Kyle Dubois were groomsmen. Nicki Dubois had the responsibility of serving as chaos coordinator for the days events.

"Our wedding day was more than what we could have ever wished for, from start to finish, all the little details that we thought of during our five-month engagement worked out as we planned. It wasn't perfect, but it was

perfect to us." Lisa's bridal gown was from a very generous former bride that she had met on Facebook marketplace. The Maggie Sottero gown had been preserved by the previous bride, and then she decided that she would let someone else feel the joy of the beautiful gown. Lisa shared that it was exactly what she had been searching for and fit like a glove. Along with the dress, she had shoes in Lisa's size and white porcelain succulent flowers for her hair.

Brenden and Lisa both lost parents at a young age and believe that their mom and dad had the best seats in the house while watching from above. It was evident that they had a hand in the absolutely gorgeous 70° blue sky day that allowed Brenden and Lisa to have their ceremony outdoors on the waters edge at Lake Olathe. The custom-made cedar arbor that Brenden and Bestman Ed Sullivan handcrafted was the perfect backdrop for their family and friends to witness the two families joining together to become one, with love, acceptance and grace. ♦



PHOTOGRAPHY
Lisa Marie Photography

BRIDESMAIDS' GOWNS
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Dan the Tailor Man

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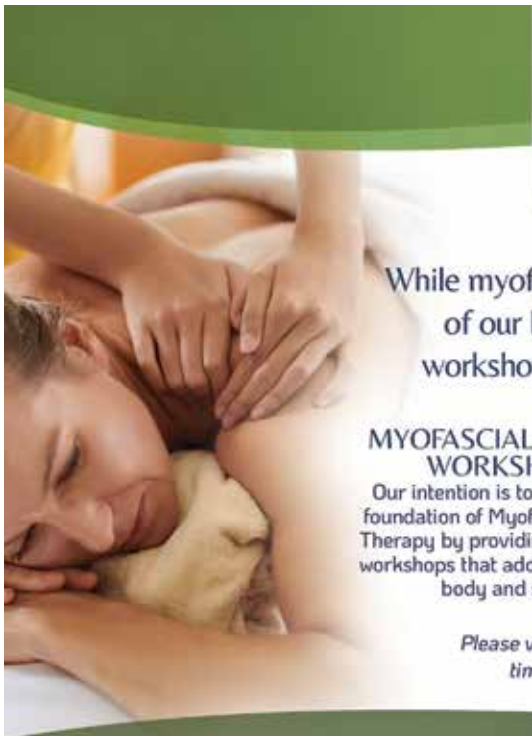
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CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Accuracy in planning is a big help for you now. Be as definite as possible about how things are going to happen, and see how many details you can pin down before the actual occurrence. Try not to allow personal issues to get in the way of what you are trying to accomplish, and if you have to, call in an expert to help you.



TAURUS
(APR. 20-MAY 20)

When things are ready they just happen, and you've been getting ready for something major to happen for a long time, maybe without even knowing it. Your life can move very fast this month. Keep steering toward situations in which you have control, and if you can't explain yourself don't worry about it.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

It's difficult to finish anything when you're not even sure where the finish line is. Things that you thought were done could maybe use some more work, and if you feel like carrying on, do so. Much in your life can be up in the air now. Don't worry about this, just keep doing good work, and keep working on those projects that most interest you.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

Some things can seem so important that it feels like there's no getting away from them. But when you need to, there's always a way to escape. If you find yourself this month in situations that feel too tight, do whatever you must to gain more freedom for yourself.



GEMINI
(MAY 21-JUN. 20)

Now's the time to investigate hidden things and to consider what the covert motives of others may be. What interests you now and draws your attention may be very different from what others think is important. Pull away from the crowd and go your own way. You're receiving an invitation to explore now, so take it and go see what you can find.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

When strange, awkward or difficult things happen don't let them stress you out. There's something of value that can come out of these sticky situations. What you need to do to assist whatever is most good and positive to emerge from them is to be as gentle and patient as possible in your approach. A light touch can help to soothe and smooth all sticky situations.

STAR JOURNEYS

BY JOHN SANDBACH

Major changes are wanting to happen now, and if you resist them, it could create a lot of stress and frustration. Rather than spending too much time trying to figure out what to do it is far better to take direct action and then see what happens, for experimentation is what's most likely to free us from old restrictive patterns and get us moving forward again.



PISCES
(FEB. 19-MAR. 20)

When you feel like you've come to the end of your road, it can mean that maybe it's time to quit using roads for a while and to do some wandering to see what you find. You can now tap in to what has been undermining you, and as you come more and more to see what the hidden problem is you're going to be in a much better position to fix it.



CANCER
(JUN. 21-JUL. 23)

The limits you thought were there in your life are different from the real ones. There's more to be had, and now's the time to be open to it. Even though you want more stability there's a strong likelihood that it would only serve to hold you back at this time, so realize the positive potential inherent in unsettled situations and know that eventually things are going to be more solid and consistent.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

This is a good time to brainstorm. Don't try to get things right the first time, because if you do it will only serve to reinforce your inhibitions. Think of as many ways as you can to approach situations, because if you let yourself think about things in a freer and more expanded way you're likely to come up with some really good ideas.



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 19)

Any pent-up energy you've been holding on to now wants to cut loose and come out. Try to assume as little as possible now, and to be prepared to follow up on some new information. Biases and taken-for-granted notions can try to hold you back now; don't let them.



LEO
(JUL. 24-AUG. 22)

There are things in your life now that you are not capable of clearly understanding, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy them. Remember that you don't need reasons now for what you're doing, and you don't need to justify yourself to anyone. Some things are better left unexplained.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

It can take some extra work now to find things, but if you look diligently you can discover something really valuable that is just what you've needed. The best means of exploring is to think outside the box, and there are people in your life who can help you to do this. Seek them out.

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