

Targeting Wellness Newsletter

Good News for Good Health!

April 2021

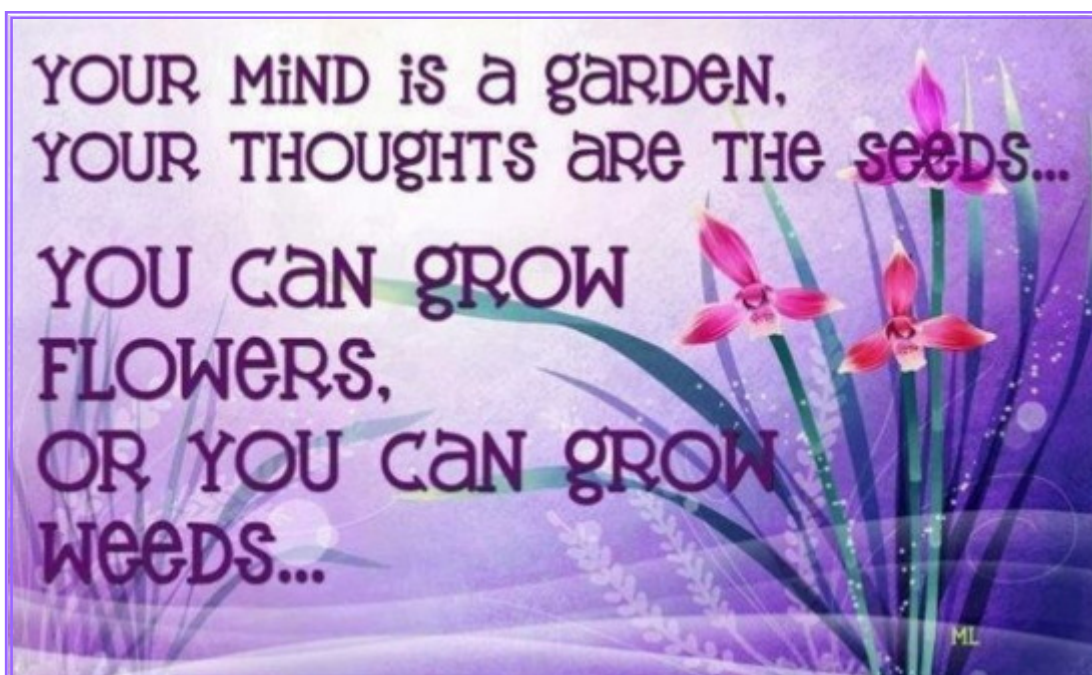
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April and springtime has always been synonymous with renewal, freshness and new growth opportunities. Many engage in the ritual of spring cleaning their homes, but what about our minds? I particularly liked the quote below. Our mind and body are intimately connected. If we fill our thoughts with negativity and allow the stress of life to get in the “roots” of our being, instead of harvesting beautiful flowers, our garden will be overrun with potentially damaging weeds. We have the power of choice, which many of us forget. We are not victims of circumstance...we are victors of possibility, capable of tilling the soil, planting new seeds (of positivity) and watching how beautiful our gardens can grow with a little tender loving (self) care!

Happy Spring “Cleaning”!



Managing Stress is Possible

April is Stress Awareness Month. I'm going to go out on a limb and say with certainty that there is no one among us that isn't aware of stress. Yet it's a topic I feel is worth addressing whenever possible. Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life. Over the last year, the topic of stress has been a major concern as it relates not only to our own well-being but that of our employees, colleagues, family members, friends, and even the world. That is a heavy burden to carry. According to the American Psychological Association, over the last several months, the average reported stress level was 5.6 on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 meaning "little to no stress" and 10 meaning "a great deal of stress"). With 84% of adults reporting some feelings of stress, the most common emotion associated with prolonged stress were feelings of anxiety (47%), sadness (44%), and anger (39%).

In looking at the causes, remember that your brain comes hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat, it signals your body to release a burst of hormones to fuel your capacity for a response. Once again, this is labeled the "fight-or-flight (or freeze)" response. Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a normal relaxed state. Unfortunately, the nonstop stress of modern life means that *your alarm system rarely shuts off*.

I personally think, over the coming months, this is going to improve as more people start express feelings of hopefulness for their future. Little by little we are climbing out of this pandemic with the excitement of finally being able to hug our loved ones again! Yet we all know that stress never totally goes away. It comes and goes as a normal part of our daily lives. Although we may feel more hopeful, there will always be that uncertainty of what's around the corner.

Consider focusing on living a life filled with more optimism since constantly living in fear puts a heavy burden, both mentally and physically on us, and that is cause for concern. We are well aware of the consequences of poorly managed stress, ranging from fatigue to obesity to heart disease. It is of utmost importance that we recognize and take action to handle it in healthy ways before it causes any prolonged health issues. Being able to control stress is a learned behavior, and stress can be effectively managed by taking small steps toward changing unhealthy habits.

The American Psychological Association offers the following tips on how to manage your stress:

Understand how you stress. Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?

1. **Identify your sources of stress.** What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships or something else? You might ask yourself "am I giving too much to others and not enough to myself?" If you are, take time for yourself without guilt....you need to take care of you in order to take care of them.
2. **Learn your own stress signals.** People experience stress in different ways. You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or a lack of energy. Gauge your stress signals. Practice getting still for a few minutes to pay attention to how your body is feeling (where are you holding tension?)
3. **Recognize how you deal with stress.** Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol and over/under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices as a result of feeling rushed and overwhelmed? Become more mindful of these reactions.
4. **Find healthy ways to manage stress.** Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising or talking things out with friends or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time.
5. **Take care of yourself.** Eat whole nutrient-dense foods, get plenty of sleep, drink adequate amounts of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a walk, connecting with nature (listen to the birds, start a garden) going to the gym (or search the internet for tons of workout options) or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health (try something new like pickle ball!). Plan a vacation and take your designated breaks during work (you've earned it...don't consider it a privilege!). No matter how hectic life gets, make time for yourself — even if it's just simple things like reading a good book or listening to your favorite music. **Self-care is the most affordable healthcare!**
6. **Reach out for support.** Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors. Check into whether your town has an Employee Assistance Program and take advantage of it. Try booking a session with your JIF Health & Wellness Coach (that's me! 😊)



Consider Trying Meditation

Meditation is widely recommended as a healthy way to manage stress, and for good reason. It provides many health-enhancing benefits, like reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety, relieving physical complaints like headaches, and even enhancing immunity to illness.

For many of us who have tried meditating, thoughts come in and out of our minds constantly. Our focus may dart from one thing to the other and quieting the mind is next to impossible. But like with anything new, it takes practice. And the benefits are worth the effort!! Here are some basics:

Quiet Mind: With meditation, your thinking mind becomes quiet. You stop focusing on the stressors of your day or your life's problems, as well as solving these problems. You just let that voice in your head be quiet, even for a few minutes, which I know is easier said than done. For example, start thinking about nothing now. (It's OK; I'll wait.) If you're not practiced at quieting your mind, it probably didn't take long before thoughts crept in. It's normal...just don't give up trying.

Being In The Now: Rather than focusing on the past or the future, virtually all meditative practices involve focusing on *right now*. This involves experiencing each moment and letting it go, experiencing the next. This, too, takes practice, as many of us live most of our lives worrying about the future or relishing and rehashing the past.

Altered State of Consciousness: With time, maintaining a quiet mind and focus on the present can lead to an altered level of consciousness that isn't a sleeping state but isn't quite your average wakeful state, either. **Meditation increases brain activity in an area of the brain associated with happiness and positive thoughts and emotions**, and some evidence shows that regular practice brings prolonged positive changes in these areas.

Less bothered by little things - Do you sometimes allow yourself to get upset by little things? It is the nature of the mind to magnify small things into serious problems. Meditation helps us detach. If you have never read "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" by Richard Carlson, I highly recommend it.

Better Health - There have been numerous studies pointing to the health benefits of meditation. The reason is that meditation reduces stress levels and alleviates anxiety. And even if you don't feel you can do it, the act of trying (and sitting quietly for a few minutes) can be beneficial! It all adds up.

Knowledge of Self - Meditation enables us to have a deeper understanding of our inner self. Through meditation we can gain a better understanding of our life's purpose.

Many people like the idea of meditation, but feel they don't have enough time or patience. But it doesn't take either to try it. Taking a few minutes in the morning to sit quietly before everyone else gets up; this can set the tone for the rest of your day in a positively profound way! Meditation does require an investment of time, but clearing the mind can help you accomplish more in the rest of your day.

Meditation is not about retreating from the world; instead, it gives us inspiration. Whatever you do, if you have peace of mind, your work will be more enjoyable and productive. Remember this, it's not about NOT THINKING. It's about NOT ATTACHING to your thoughts. Acknowledge them when they show up but don't let them take over. Consider imagining them as clouds passing by in the sky, or leaves floating down a slow stream. You are not your thoughts and realizing that is empowering!

Question to ask yourself: What is preventing you from being quite inside?



Why Walking is Beneficial

With the warmer weather fast approaching, one of the easiest and least expensive ways to stay physically fit (while de-stressing) is to walk. You'd think a simple activity like walking would be just that, simple. Yet fewer than 50% of American adults do enough exercise to gain any health or fitness benefits from physical activity.

Here are some reasons why you should start walking:

- ♥ **Walking can prevent Type 2 diabetes.** The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing just 7% of your body weight (12-15 pounds) can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%. A great reason to offer a walking/step challenge at work.
- ♥ **Walking strengthens your heart if you're male.** In one study, mortality rates among retired men who walked less than one mile per day were nearly twice that among those who walked more than two miles per day.
- ♥ **Walking strengthens your heart if you're female.** Women in the Nurse's Health Study (72,488 female nurses) who walked three hours or more per week reduced their risk of a heart attack or coronary event by 35% compared with women who did not walk.
- ♥ **Walking is good for the brain.** In a study on walking and cognitive function, researchers found that women who walked the equivalent of an easy pace at least 1.5 hours per week had significantly better cognitive function and less cognitive decline than women who walked less than 40 minutes per week. Think about that! ☺
- ♥ **Walking is good for your bones.** Research shows that postmenopausal women who walk approximately one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than women who walk shorter distances, and walking is also effective in slowing the rate of bone loss from the legs.
- ♥ **Walking helps alleviate symptoms of depression.** Walking for 30 minutes, three to five times per week for 12 weeks reduced symptoms of depression as measured with a standard depression questionnaire by 47%.
- ♥ **Walking in short bouts improves fitness too!** A study of sedentary women showed that short bouts of brisk walking (three 10-minute walks per day) resulted in similar improvements in fitness and were at least as effective in decreasing body fat as long bouts (one 30-minute walk).
- ♥ **Walking improves physical function.** Helps prevent physical disability and weakness especially in older adults.

The list of benefits goes on and on but if I continued, there'd be no time for you to start walking!

If you're a seasoned walker, keep doing what you're doing. If you've been inactive and tire easily, it's best to start slow and easy. At first, walk only as far or as fast as you find comfortable. If you can walk for only a few minutes, let that be your starting point. For example, you might try short daily sessions of five to 10 minutes and slowly build up to 15 minutes twice a week. Then, over several weeks' time, you can gradually work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes of walking most days each week. **Set realistic goals for yourself. Track your progress. Walk with a friend.** It helps keep you going and accountable. And keep in mind that usually the first step is the most difficult. But once you start I know you will be glad you did...so will your health!

We are the choices that we make. Every choice gives us the opportunity to create our course...our life's journey. Right now we are one choice away from a new beginning. For a moment, think about what YOU really want, what is your intention? What will make you happy, fulfilled, content, safe, confident, empowered? What choices (or changes) do you need to make to get there? If you have struggled in the past, perhaps one way to succeed this time is to be accountable. Find someone you trust. Someone who can be your ally and hold you accountable to your intentions. Consider getting a Health & Wellness Coach.

You really only have 3 Choices in life:
Give up, Give in, or Give it all you've got.
What are you going to do?

YES LOVE
YOURSELF. BUT
ALSO, ANALYZE
AND BE
CRITICAL OF
HOW YOU
THINK, ACT,
AND
BEHAVE. SELF
LOVE WITHOUT
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AWARENESS IS
USELESS. BE
ACCOUNTABLE.





Spring has sprung! A perfect time to open the windows and let in the fresh air. It's that time of year when we feel revitalized, renewed, and re-energized. And just as we may plan to spring clean our homes or offices, consider spring cleaning your mind. Most of us walk through life carrying worry and an over-ambitious "to do" list that we try to tackle every day. We push through the clutter in hopes of one day finishing. However, that list continues to get longer and longer with added responsibilities.

Take a moment and think about how nice it would be to declutter your mind. To do so you must first become aware of what's going on and realize that the change is in your hands. Taking inventory of those things that are causing you stress and harm is the primary way to make room for the positive, as well as peace and focus.

When you ignore the chaos in your mind, the over stimulation, the constant over-thinking, your body starts to kick in with warning signs (constant fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, bad moods, sleepless nights...). This mental clutter takes up energy and can lead to permanent health issues if ignored.

There are simple things you can incorporate into your day that can help to ease the clutter in your mind. Like with anything worth doing, it takes commitment, it will not happen over night nor will it happen through osmosis. You are going to have to do the work required to achieve the change. Aren't you worth it? We only have one life to live. Make it your own!

Simplify or organize your physical surroundings. If you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take a look at your physical surroundings and determine where you can simplify. Maybe it's tossing some of those things that have been sitting around. Create a donate pile. Perhaps make it a weekly routine to schedule some clean up time to organize your living or work space.

Plan some time each day to do nothing! For some that may seem impossible, or perhaps it makes you uncomfortable. But taking even a few minutes to sit silently without checking your phone, no music, no conversation, just you is healing. We have so many distractions constantly in our lives it can take a toll on your mind. Try sitting maybe outside and just focus on being not doing.

Write it down. When you have too much on your mind, write it down. Release some of the burden of having to keep it all inside.

Take a break from consuming information. Whether it's social media, scrolling, news articles, or watching TV, the constant stimulation is draining. Give you mind a break. Instead of reading, try writing. Instead of watching videos of people exercising, go do it yourself. Do something for YOU!

Focus on one thing at a time. As much as you think you can multi-task, our brain can only focus on one thing at a time. What you might really be doing is just hopping from one task/thought to the next but you aren't able to give any one thing your full attention necessary to get it done.

Focus on your breathing. I know you have heard this before but becoming conscious of your breath, slowing it down and elongating your exhale truly does slow down your nervous system and brings you back to a state of rest and digest.

List your core values. What is important to you? It's a great way to center yourself, get some perspective and remind yourself what is essential in your life. Remembering what our values are can help to block out the noises of distraction, at least for a while.

These are just a few things but really it comes down to being mindful of what is happening, practicing being present and giving yourself permission to set healthy boundaries. If you have to worry, schedule 15 minutes in your day just to do that. When you start to ruminate outside of that 15 minutes, remind yourself it's not time to worry yet. Sound silly? Give it a try...it just might work.





Growing Your Own Broccoli Sprouts

If you are anything like me, I love fresh produce picked from the garden, however, I have a hard time even growing herbs in pots! So I am trying to sprout my own broccoli seeds. This delicate baby broccoli plant, known as broccoli sprouts, may have several health benefits. It's a very easy



process that just takes a few days and doesn't require much except a mason jar, sprouting lid or cheesecloth, high quality/organic seeds and water.

Sprouts are incredibly nutritious and can easily be added to your daily diet. When you grow them at home, not only is it fun to watch them as they sprout, but you have them on hand to add to salads, sandwiches and even add them to cooked dishes (cooking them should be avoided though as it can damage the delicate balance of nutrition).

What is sprouting? It's the process of soaking a seed, grain, nut, or bean to induce the process of germination. They grow without soil. After the initial 6-8 hours of overnight soaking, all that is required is a rinse of water twice a day. If you are interested, I would recommend watching a short introductory video on YouTube. Germination enhances the nutrient profile of the seed, such as fiber, vitamins C and B.

Health Benefits: most of the benefits come from their high-level of glucoraphanin. Our body converts this compound into sulforaphane, which helps protect cells against inflammation and a wide variety of disease. Here are a few health benefits that broccoli sprouts are known for:

- **Cancer protection**—Studies have shown that eating cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli cauliflower, kale, and cabbage) raw or lightly cooked can protect against many types of cancer. The sulforaphane can slow tumor growth and stop benign carcinogens from converting into active ones. Eating a little as 3 to 5 servings of these veggies a week could have significant impact on lower your risk of cancer.
- **Stomach Ulcer treatment**— This compound also helps fight the type of bacteria that causes ulcers.
- **Mental health**— Some studies show where sulforaphane can help reduce levels of a compound called glutamate which has been linked to depression and schizophrenia. More study is needed but the findings so far are very

Nutrition (in a cup):

Fiber 2g
Protein 2 g
Calories 20
Vitamin A and C
Calcium
Iron

Word of caution:

The temperature, moisture balance, and other growing conditions that produce sprouts may foster the growth of certain bacteria. Growing your own, using good seed, and following the growing steps will help.



Commonly used seeds to grow sprouts: chickpeas, red clover seeds, soybeans, fenugreek, lentils, mung beans, pumpkin seeds, wheat, radish seeds, alfalfa, chia seeds, quinoa seeds, and sunflower seeds.

How to prepare broccoli sprouts:

Soak two tablespoons of broccoli seeds overnight and rinse them. Put the damp seeds into a mason jar and screw on the lid. Then, prop the jar in a bowl or dish with the top slanted downward — this will allow moisture to drain away from the seeds. Keep the jar in a dark cupboard.

Rinse and drain the growing sprouts twice a day. After about 4 or 5 days, they will be ready. If you put them in the window for a few hours, they will take on a vibrant green color. Dry your sprouts on paper toweling before you put them in the refrigerator. Eat within 2 to 3 days.





Pea Pesto Pasta with Sun-Dried Tomatoes & Arugula

Recipe from Minimalist Baker

INGREDIENTS

PESTO

- 1 1/2 cups packed basil
- 1/2 cup packed flat leaf Italian parsley
- 1 cup green peas (if frozen, thawed)
- 4 cloves garlic (4 cloves yield ~2 Tbsp)
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts (plus more for serving // or sub raw walnuts, but omit as garnish)
- 1 medium lemon, juiced (~2 Tbsp or 30 ml per lemon)
- 1/4 cup [vegan parmesan cheese](#) (plus more for serving) *
- 1 pinch sea salt (plus more to taste)
- 1/4 cup olive oil

PASTA

- 10 ounces gluten-free pasta
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup loosely packed arugula (organic when possible)



PARMESAN CHEESE

- 3/4 cup raw cashews
- 3 Tbsp nutritional yeast
- 3/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a large saucepan 3/4 full with water, salt generously, and bring to a boil.
2. In the meantime, prepare pesto. To a food processor, add basil, parsley, peas, garlic, pine nuts, lemon juice, vegan parmesan cheese and sea salt. Mix to combine. While the machine is running, stream in olive oil through the spout.
3. Continue blending, scraping down sides as needed, until creamy and fully combined. If it has trouble blending add a bit more olive oil or water.
4. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed, adding more lemon juice for acidity/brightness, vegan parmesan for cheesy flavor, salt for saltiness, or peas for sweetness.
5. Next add pasta to boiling water and cook according to package instructions. Be sure not to overcook, and drain when noodles are 'al dente' and still have a slight bite to them. Return to pan off heat and set aside.
6. Once your pasta is drained, heat a large saucepan or cast iron skillet over medium heat. Once hot, add olive oil, garlic, and sun-dried tomatoes. Sauté for 1-2 minutes, or until the garlic is fragrant but not yet browned.
7. Turn off heat and remove skillet from burner, then add cooked pasta and toss to coat.
8. Transfer to a serving platter or mixing bowl and add 3/4 of pea pesto and the arugula. Toss to combine.
9. Serve warm with additional pesto on the side, and garnish generously with additional parsley, pine nuts, and vegan parmesan cheese.
10. Best when fresh, though leftovers will keep in the refrigerator up to 2-3 days. Enjoy chilled or at room temperature.

DIRECTIONS FOR PARM CHEESE:

Add all ingredients to a food processor and mix/pulse until a fine meal is achieved. Store in the refrigerator to keep fresh. Lasts for several weeks. Soaking your cashews in hot water for about 15 minutes helps them to mix easier, making a creamier consistency.

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As a Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC), I can help you tackle these lifestyle challenges keeping you from living the life you want. Working with me as your advocate keeping you accountable to yourself, you will see that making those changes most important to you are within your reach. It's about tapping into your inner wisdom; sometimes it takes a little guidance to help you see that. Reach out to me via email or phone to discuss if coaching might be an option for you.