

SEE BEYOND™

Live. Love. Inspire.

My Biggest FAN

By Chloe Thomas

TAKEN AWAY, AGAIN

By Ilze Madeiros

The chicken Lady's Brood

By Stacey Marie

Reach Your 2023 WEIGHT AND FITNESS GOALS

By Drake Eastburn

Holy Horsepower! This Was FUN!!!

By Chris Cofer

The Artistic Genius of Jiannan Huang

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**Letters from the
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief**



“You can get excited about the future. The past won’t mind” (Hillary DePiano).

No matter how this year has gone, ushering in 2023 can set the stage for the best future ever. Any eve of a new year is a welcome occasion, with dazzling possibilities. The key to making 2023 your greatest is to approach it with the right mindset. *See Beyond* can help! We invite you to become a regular reader and follow our amazing writers. Listen to their stories, the lessons they’ve learned, advice they would like to share.

And with this time of renewal, we are excited and proud to provide a new *See Beyond* website, replete with amazing, highly accomplished professionals, taking center stage to inspire you with their life stories. We are also incredibly pleased to publish teen and young adult authors, filled with vitality, passion, humor, love and sometimes heartache.

Please enjoy guest authors as well as our regulars. And take time to ponder the stunning, stimulating artwork. Let us delight your senses, warm your heart and inspire your soul as we begin 2023 together!

Aura Imbarus, Ph.D.
See Beyond Magazine, Publisher

“Art is the lie that enables us to realize the truth” (Pablo Picasso). I hope you enjoy my story about a very unique interview with an amazing artist from China. Join me for “The Artistic Genius of Jiannan Huang” and explore his surreal, bright, optimistic truths.

In “Taken Away, Again,” Ilze Madeiros reveals her shattered childhood and long-awaited rescue. Carla Kalaja’s “Nervous and Excited” tells about a special reunion.

Don’t miss Stacey Marie’s fun feathered family in “The Chicken Lady’s Brood.” In “Perspective,” Kyle Huynh shares a lovely grownup appreciation for a childhood gift. Chris Coffey, our fast car fan, hit it again with “Holy Horsepower! This was FUN!!” And don’t miss Chloe Thomas’ “My Biggest Fan.”

Find out how Hailey Shah deals with life when she’s “Hanging by a Thread” and consider resolution worthy wisdom with Eastburn, Ribble, and Johnson.

We hope you will build tremendous success and happiness in this coming year. And perhaps, you will find a little inspiration within our pages!

Stefanie Elwood
See Beyond Magazine, Editor-in-Chief

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

***Looking for a topic? We are glad to oblige.
Other topics will also be published.***

Guidelines: www.seebeyondmag.com/write-for-us/

- 1. “Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings” (Salvador Dali). What do you wish to accomplish? How are you going about it? To what extent are you finding success?**
- 2. “Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect” (Mark Twain). When were you brave enough to go against groupthink? How did it go?**

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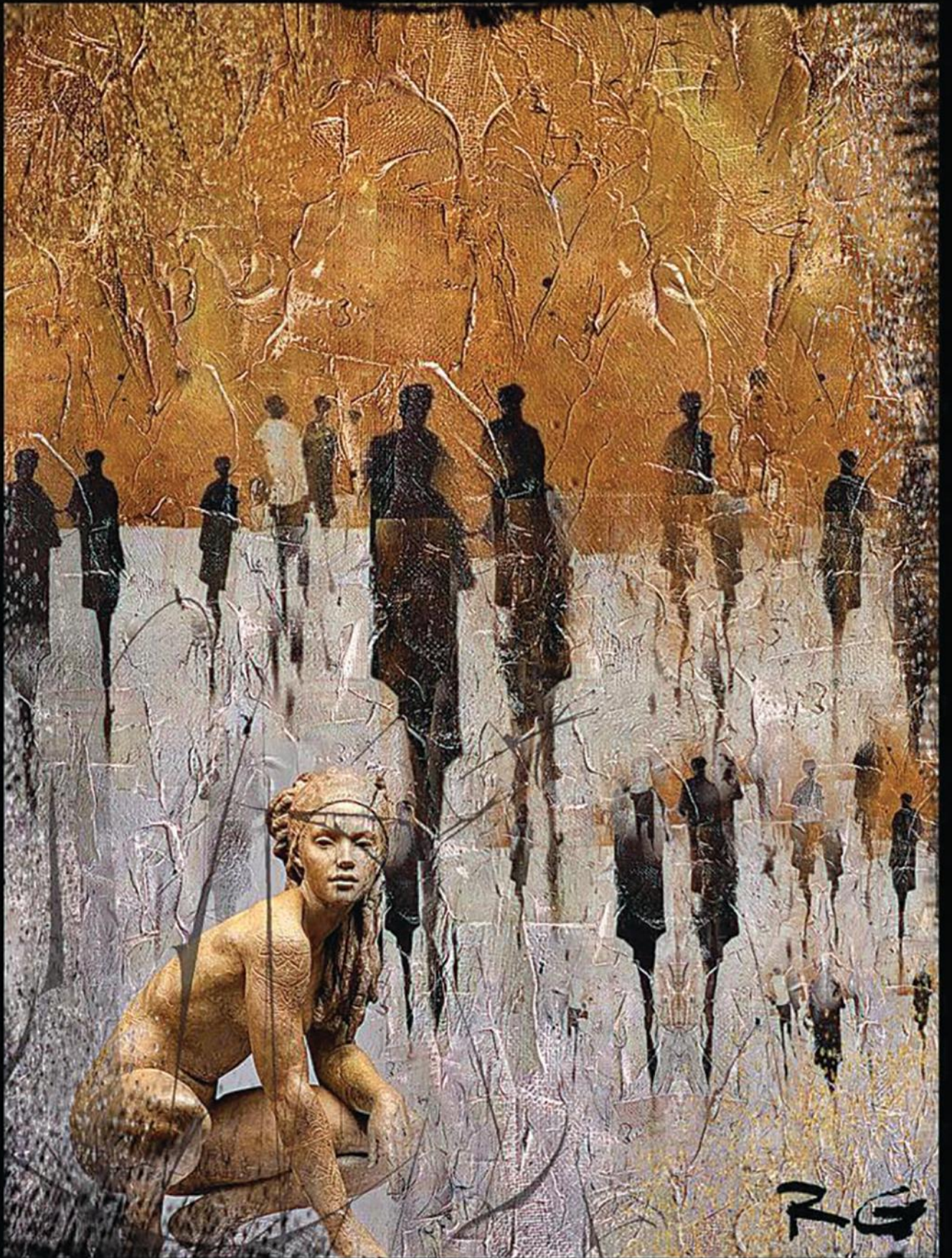
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We Are Walking in Unison – Second Edition Artitude 2022 by Rachel Goldberg

The Artistic Genius of Jiannan Huang

By Stefanie Elwood
with Joey Zhou



Our publisher, Aura Imbarus, and I were honored to join Mr. Joey Zhou for lunch recently at the Culina Caffé, Four Seasons Hotel, on Doheny Drive. Naturally, traffic was horrendous—we're in LA—and we arrived a little late. While waiting, our host patiently enjoyed his coffee and crusty bread. He smiled generously as we exchanged greetings. Joey was the cover author for our March/April 2022 edition. We wanted to showcase Zhou's story because of his avid support for the arts. He is the founder of the Los Angeles Beverly Arts (LABA). His LA Art Show on January 19, 2022 benefited St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Please check out "Joey Zhou: For the Love of Art" in *See Beyond Magazine* to learn more about this esteemed gentleman.

But Joey invited us for another reason. After ordering our own frothy coffees, the best orange juice ever, and lunch all around, Joey filled our ears with lively conversation. He expressed appreciation again for his cover article in *See Beyond Magazine*. Since Joey is also a TV host, who interviews prominent artists, actors, and dignitaries, he talked a bit about some recent interviews, like with Kelly LeBrock, the gorgeous actress from *The Woman in Red*, with Gene Wilder; *Weird Science*, with Robert Downey, Jr.; and *Hard to Kill*, with Steven Seagal. And we discussed our current project. You see, Jiannan Huang was the featured artist for the LABA International Art Festival and Beverly Arts Online Exhibition for 2021-2022. Aura and I were intrigued and wanted to know more about this fascinating artist.

Joey placed a call to Jiannan and they chatted briefly. Lunch was served. My notes and pen were out. Joey introduced Aura and me to Jiannan via Facetime. Although we did not understand his language, Jiannan's voice was full of joyful

Although we did not understand his language,
Jiannan's voice was full of joyful friendliness.



Rivers of People, Gold Medal winner, Tokyo World Chinese Art Boutique Exhibition, Japan, 2008

friendliness. When I asked my first question, Joey held the phone so that Jiannan would face me. That way, I could speak to him directly even though he does not speak English. Likewise, when Joey translated answers, he positioned the phone so that Jiannan would face me or Aura, depending on who had posed the question. This surprised us. Surely it would be easier if Joey spoke directly into the phone. But this insightful interviewer knew exactly what he was doing. After a little while, I got comfortable speaking toward the phone with a man whose warmth welcomed me. It was lovely to see his eyes wrinkle a bit when he smiled. The interview felt personal.

Jiannan was born in 1952 in Heyuan, Guangdong, China. His large, loving family sacrificed greatly to provide him the freedom and resources to develop his talent. Because of their background and the cultural revolution occurring at this time, Jiannan was not able to go to school or attend university. Instead, he read textbooks and studied science, art, mathematics, whatever interested him. Jiannan orchestrated his own well-rounded education. And then . . . he went for a walk. A very long one.

Jiannan travelled more than 23,600 miles (38,000 kilometers) on foot. Over the course of nine years,



Sunrise, Gold Medal winner, Tokyo World Chinese Art Boutique Exhibition, Japan, 2008

↓ he ventured north and south through China. He had no financial resources, no sponsors. He was not famous, yet, but this was no publicity stunt. He is too genuine of a person for showy pretenses. On this trek, Jiannan experienced nature in a vast variety of terrains and met all sorts of people. Townsfolk and farmers from all across his country shared their food, home, and their lives. He repaid people's kindness with paintings. In the absence of a canvas, as was occasionally the case, he would paint on any surface.

In 1970, within the northern countryside, as a measure of gratitude to a helpful villager, Jiannan created a beautiful painting on a wooden board. Forty years later, a friend came across this piece in his own travels and shared that information with Jiannan, who bought his painting back from the original owner. This early work was added to an exhibition some forty-nine years later. How fun to have a very specific remembrance from a challenging but enriching time. How profound to have such a distinctive style as to be recognized decades later.

Many in this field liken Jiannan's work to that of Henri Matisse (1869-1954), a leader amongst the Fauves ("wild beasts") of a French artistic movement, which embraced "intense color" and "personal expression." Matisse explained that his work is intended to provide "a soothing, calming influence

The serenity Monet spoke of certainly resonates with Jiannan's philosophy.

on the mind" (www.artist.org). I often wonder how artists feel about expert opinions, so I asked if Jiannan considers his work a representation of the "wild beast" of Fauvism. Part way through the afternoon, I could have answered that question myself. Of course, he said no. Jiannan's walk across China filled his consciousness with a heightened emotional response. His interpretive use of color expresses this magnitude powerfully, a little like Matisse but still different.

ernism as a whole, and a bit of Monet. No critic I read mentioned Claude Monet (1840-1926), a French painter most famous for his tranquil Water Lilies series. It might interest you to learn that in 1872, a critic referred to Monet's *Impression Sunrise*, using the term *impressionism* derisively. Avant-garde artists adopted the term, and this exciting movement was born (claude-monet.com). The serenity Monet spoke of certainly resonates with Jiannan's philosophy.



Some art critics believe that Jiannan's works echo elements of Pablo Picasso (1891-1973), considered "a virtual progression of modernism." Picasso has said, "I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them" (theartstory.org). Jiannan paints what is real but as it feels, which sounds a bit like Picasso, but there is so much more to this concept. Jiannan uniquely combines the vibrant colors of oil paint with traditional Chinese ink painting. His configurations bounce into one's imagination and then slowly settle in.

When asked directly which artists he considers inspirational, Jiannan explains that his style embodies a wide range, like Picasso, Da Vinci, post-mod-

Then, Jiannan explained his intention, the meta universe and his own unique style, which he named Quantum Art. He combines memory and imagination to open up the universe for profound consideration, to contemplate the hidden science, the currently unknowable. He creates expansive and intricate post-modernist Frontier paintings with symbols that reflect upon and question life. His idea of frontier does not, however, involve a specific physical boundary but the metaphorical quest that passionately drives research and discovery. It's a range of concepts encompassing the science of Black Matter and the ideology of Buddhism.





Olympic Lights, Beijing Winter Olympics, China, 2022

↓ At one point, Jiannan moved his phone around his studio and showed us canvas upon canvas of astounding paintings. He revealed a portrait that was done with such precision that it could have been a high-quality photograph. Jiannan has also done portraits of his family members (a wife and five children), but these are private. Aura asked if any of his children are artistic. We were surprised to learn that Jiannan is the only one amongst his siblings, parents, and his own children with that proclivity. Reaching further into his interests, it delighted us to learn that Michael Jackson was his idol when Jiannan was young. He even boasted having done the moonwalk back in the day! He pulled up a video of someone dancing like Jackson and we enjoyed the universal language of laughter together.

I asked Jiannan if his children like Michael Jackson, too. With whole-hearted veracity, I got this response, “Who doesn’t like Michael Jackson?” So true. But the most interesting part of this topic was when I asked for his favorite song. I don’t think Joey translated this question because Jiannan does not speak English and, therefore, would not be familiar with Jackson’s titles and lyrics. Good point. Jiannan loved the sound and the spectacle of Jackson’s performance art. The only other American entertainer Jiannan enjoys is Charlie Chaplin. That also makes sense. His favorite form of entertainment at home? The Beijing Opera.

As English and literature instructors, Aura and I appreciate titles, so we asked Jiannan to talk to us about how he names his paintings. Were there any themes or symbols hidden in the words? But Jiannan’s titles are more about identifying than expressing. They are not intended to be a surprise or to be analyzed. His *entire* message is in the work itself. His art expresses a mystery in the images, colors, arrangements of elements, symbols, moods, and use of circles. But if there were an overarching message

→

There is a quiet energy in Jiannan’s compositions that invites us to stay a while.



The entrance to the Olympics was filled with Jiannan's art. It must have been stunning!



Jiannan Huang and Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic committee, displaying *The Flower of the Winter Olympics*, Beijing Winter Olympics, China, 2022

from Jiannan's work, it would be that of hope and optimism, perhaps evident in his vivacious use of color. There is a quiet energy in his compositions that invites us to stay a while. It's not about struggling for an answer. It's about calmly reflecting and allowing the universe in for a visit or to teach us a lesson.

A hunger for knowledge sent Jiannan to Paris, France where he spent eleven years studying independently, collaboratively, and exhibiting his work (2009-2020). Critic and historian

Gérard Xuriguera and Rémy Aron, president of the French Artists Association, lauded Jiannan's works. Jiannan has been on the Hurun Art for Chinese Artists list for seven years, reaching 3rd in 2020 and 19th worldwide. He is 21st in the Top 500 Global Contemporary Artists at Artprice, the authoritative European and American art website (preweb.com).

Jiannan has too many accolades to name here, but I'd like to provide just another little peek at this vast list. In 1982, his art was on exhibit in Germany. He

It was apparent that Jiannan is a great man as well as a great artist.

held solo exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia (2006). His *Rivers of People* and *Sunrise* garnered the international Gold Medal at the Tokyo World Chinese Art Boutique Exhibition in Japan (2008). Probably his greatest connection to the US and the entire world came about during the Winter Olympics in China—all because of Thomas Bach, the current president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Bach is a lawyer by trade and a gold medalist for fencing in the XXI Olympiad in Montreal in 1976 (olympics.com). When Bach came to China to meet Jiannan, he received a painting as a gift. Upon returning to Germany, Bach observed great admiration for this unique artwork and decided to engage Jiannan as a leading member of the Cheering for the Olympics committee for the Beijing Winter Olympics, 2022, sponsored by the IOC and China. The focus of this two-year position was to promote the Olympic spirit and honor this event with Chinese culture.

Jiannan created two paintings to commemorate this historic experience. *The Flower of the Winter Olympics* is a traditional Chinese and contemporary modernist expression of welcome. You will notice the many circles in this image. Jiannan explains, “World peace is a circle, harmony is a circle, and unity is a circle. There is a little circle in the big circle, me in you, and you in me.” He adds that “the Olympics are the embodiment of beauty, art, justice, bravery, honor, fun, vitality, progress and peace” (thebeverlyarts.com).

The second painting is titled *Olympic Lights*. Jiannan explains, “With this torch, there will be light, unity, friendship, peace, and justice in the world and under the sacred flame, the flower will bloom and the vegetation will be full of vitality.” He sums up the Olympic theme beautifully: “In this atmosphere, there is no cultural prejudice, no contradictions and conflicts, only the cultural landscape of human society in abundance” (thebeverlyarts.com). He certainly captured the essence of this

unifying event. Bach made a great choice. The entrance to the Olympics was filled with Jiannan’s art. It must have been stunning!

This Olympic position also opened the door for Jiannan to direct financial support to some of the less popular sports, like women’s football. I hadn’t thought to bring this up at the time, but I wonder if he considers himself a feminist. Even though I do not understand Chinese, it was apparent that Jiannan is a great man as well as a great artist. He has been an avid philanthropist his entire life. Jiannan supports his childhood family as well as, of course, his own. He contributes his talent and time to organizations that support a vast array of charities. One thing he does not do, however, is offer his work for printing. Every single painting is one-of-a-kind and a few are too important to Jiannan to sell. I completely understand.

As the interview drew to a close, Aura and I uttered our good-byes, feeling a little bit in awe of this gentle, humble man. We thanked Joey for the yummy lunch and incredible interview. Later that day, I revisited Joey’s cover article in *See Beyond Magazine* and browsed his social media to see what else he had to say about Jiannan Huang. I read more about the LABA International Art Festival (10/28/21) that honored Jiannan, along with the Royal Society of St. George, CA Branch; the United Nations Association of the US, Inland Empire; and the US Art Bank. Naturally, as the founder of LABA, Mr. Zhou addressed festival attendees about “How Inseparable and Inextricable Passion Can Create the Perfect World” (prweb.com). No wonder Joey and Jiannan are close friends. They are both impressive gentlemen with boundless optimism. This is a great time in our weary world for some hope.

I can also easily imagine, in the very near future, many critics likening the works of up-and-coming young artists to the genius and innovation of Jiannan Huang.



Photo credit © Carl Barcelo

Reach Your 2023 Weight and Fitness Goals

By Drake Eastburn

My wife Lynsi and I used to frequent a restaurant that featured a huge salad bar (unfortunately it's no longer in business). Our kids loved it as much as we did. When left to his own devices, it was interesting to watch my eight-year-old stepson Dylan pass through the line and fill up his plate. Though he would have a full plate when he arrived at the end, there would not be a single green thing on it. His plate would be jam-packed with

cottage cheese, croutons, noodles, cheese, eggs, and creamy ranch dressing. He was aware that he had made some poor choices, or more accurately, hadn't included any good ones.

Dylan had been struggling with some weight gain; he didn't like it and knew he had to change things. He *wanted* to like salad. He understood the benefit of an array of colorful raw vegetables, but

Willpower is no match for the subconscious mind.

he just didn't like them. A little hypnosis changed all that and Dylan was able to make the shifts he wanted. Broccoli became one of his favorite picks at the salad bar, and he happily filled his plate with more greens and less of the other stuff. He nipped the weight gain in the bud and developed healthy habits. Since then, he has used hypnosis in various ways, including for music and sports performance. Twenty years later, he loves to cook, works out regularly, and is a professional classical musician.

Many people seek hypnotherapy for weight and fitness issues. Intellectually, these individuals know what they want to change, and they know what they are doing wrong. However, the intellectual mind is not running the show. It is the subconscious mind that keeps us stopping at our favorite fast-food drive through. The subconscious mind works in patterns—what we would think of as habits—and once the pattern is created, it keeps repeating it over and over again. It doesn't matter if the pattern works for you or against you, the subconscious takes what I refer to as *the path of least resistance*. It takes effort to consciously change a habit, and this type of effort results in stressful inner conflict. The subconscious continues along its path of least resistance as the conscious mind struggles to change. Willpower is no match for the subconscious mind, and it will eventually run out.

That is not the only challenge. We are also innately wired to conform to social pressures. Whether we want to believe it or not, human beings are herd animals, and we must work at forming alternate behaviors. To achieve our goals, it is essential to evaluate the herd and honestly determine where it is headed.



Television plays into herd mentality, which quite efficiently affects our subconscious behaviors. We are constantly bombarded with images of the latest snack foods, soft drinks, candy, alcoholic beverages, and more. Those things typically have a long shelf life, simple and colorful packaging, and little actual food value.

Furthermore, advertisers promote these products using images of mostly young, attractive indi-

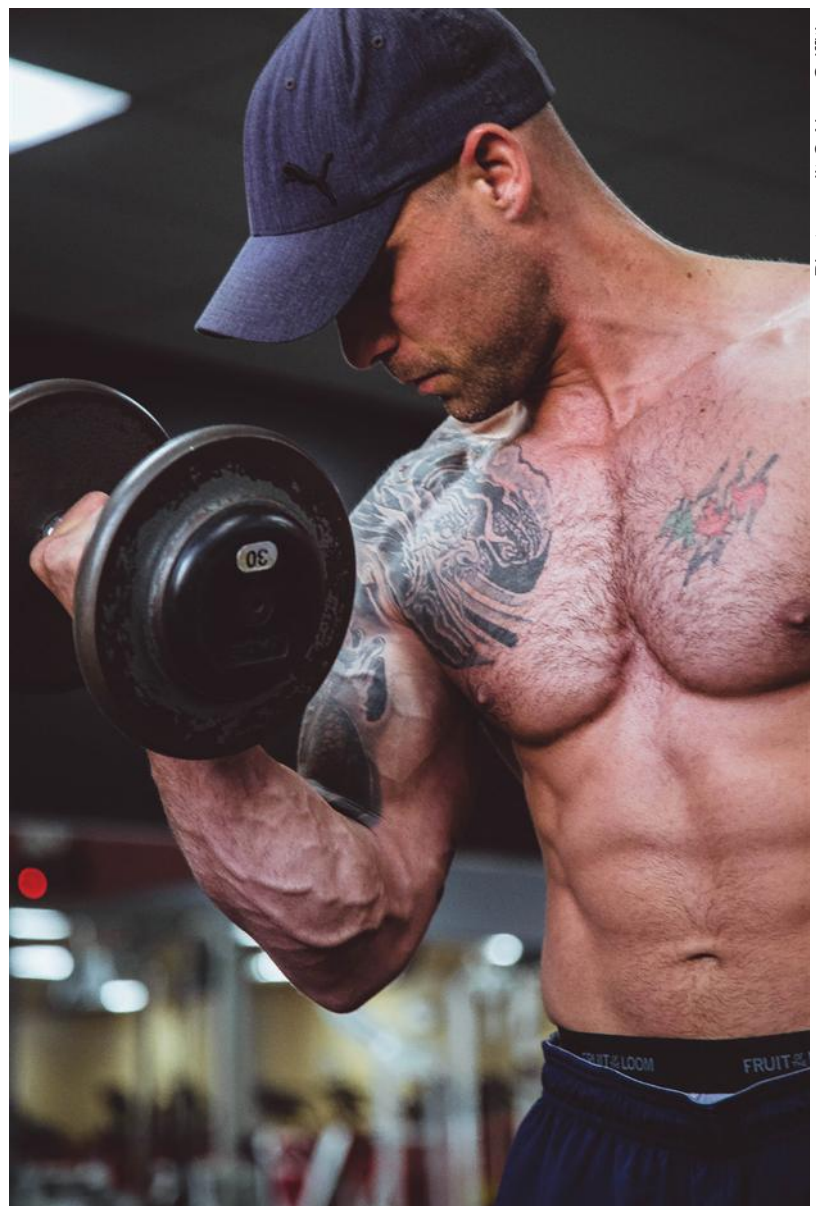


Photo credit © Alora Griffiths

73.6 percent of adults in the United States are overweight or obese.

↓ Individuals engaged in fun things that we would all enjoy, like being at the beach or a festive family gathering. The subconscious mind responds to pictures—the more colorful, emotional, and energized the better. Our subconscious likes these pointed marketing images and the lifestyle they promote. The more we are subjected to these images, the more likely we are to accept them as truth and make decisions accordingly. This itself is hypnosis.

When was the last time you saw broccoli or spinach advertised this way? I'll venture to say NEVER and there's a reason for that. Healthy fresh foods do not lend themselves well to a long shelf life, colorful packaging, or sexy images on a beach. Not only that, many of the items we see advertised over and over are also quick, cheap, and convenient. It may be as simple as opening a bag or box, popping something into the microwave, spending a few seconds at a drive through, or having an item conveniently show up at your front door. Fresh vegetables will likely require preparation, so why bother? Convenience is the theme of the day. Convenience is the direction of the contemporary herd.

According to the most current CDC statistics, 73.6 percent of adults in the United States are overweight or obese. That number is astounding!



Photo credit © Andreea Boncota

So, how do we break away from the herd? Habits, whether selecting food, biting our nails, picking at our skin, or picking up a cigarette, are the path of least resistance, the easy, consonance-producing path. Perhaps you were taught to clean your plate as a youngster and that habit is now working against you. Normally, change is dissonance producing, so doing the same thing is more comfortable than doing something different. Since our subconscious has become programmed—in fact, hypnotized—in a particular way, it only makes sense that hypnosis will be our answer to producing desired change.

Let's say that every morning when you leave the house, you step off the porch and head down the

“I want to want to eat vegetables; but I don’t want to.”

exact same path. This could be the path of smoking, eating poorly, or whatever else. It has become the path of least resistance for your subconscious mind, and it will continue to lead you, even if it is not in your best interest. Now let’s say that the next time you are about to step off the porch, a huge snowstorm has come through and there is no longer any sign of your usual path. What if off to the side there is another path that has been cleared during the night—with the help of your hypnotherapist. As a result, this new, better direction becomes the path of least resistance, and the subconscious will adopt a new behavior. In other words, new neural pathways are formed through the hypnotic process.

“I *want* to want to.” These are words I sometimes hear from clients. “I *want* to want to exercise” or “I *want* to want to eat vegetables; but I don’t want to.” These clients are not yet at a place where they actually want change, but they definitely want to want it. And that’s all it takes. Hypnosis can help them make the shift from a mere wish to an actual want to, and more.

Hypnosis is the key to the subconscious mind. It’s typically as simple as sitting back in a comfortable chair as your hypnotherapist talks to your subconscious mind, convincing it that there is a better way.



Drake Eastburn is a Board-Certified Hypnotherapist and co-founder of Eastburn Hypnotherapy Center and Eastburn Institute of Hypnosis. He served as the Director of Education for the School of Integrated Hypnotherapy. With over forty years of experience, Drake is on a mission to educate people on the reality and impact of hypnosis. He and his wife Lynsi teach foundational classes through their institute in Colorado and globally. The training includes advanced methods, such as Regression Therapy, Resolving Repetitive Body Focused Behaviors (trichotillomania, nail biting, skin picking, etc.), and state-of-the-art smoking cessation. Drake has worked extensively with athletes from football, golf, cheer and more and is the official hypnotist for the US Olympic Cycling Team. Several of his eight books are used in hypnotherapy training worldwide. *No Time to Waist—Hypnosis Weight Loss Secrets You Need to Know* could be the life-changer you need this year!

Playing with Playlists

By Sarah Walker

It is a never-ending, ever-changing contradiction that flows through my ears like a river.

I have a playlist for riding to the beach in my cousin's sand-coated jeep, smiling openly and swallowing sunbeams. I have a playlist for when I feel so defeated that my bones seem to melt and I can barely go to class without crying. I even have a playlist for staring out the window on a lonely train ride, even though I've never been on a train in my life.

But creating that playlist makes me feel like I'm ready for it when it happens, some unknown day hovering in the future. The act of playlist creation makes me feel ready for things: ready for change and for newness, ready for next steps and next leaps, ready for falling or flying. My playlists turn uncertainties into certainties, silence into music, life into a musical. My playlists are magical.

The first one I made is simply called "Stuff." Despite the rather unimpressive name, I have to admit that it *is* pretty impressive: it's a twenty-eight hour (and still growing) musical buffet ranging from punk to jazz, indie to pop, spanning across decades from the sixties to just yesterday. It's made of a smorgasbord of artists: Queen, Lana Del Rey, Cage the Elephant, Amy Winehouse, Imagine Dragons, ABBA, Green Day, you name it. It is a never-ending, ever-changing contradiction that flows through my ears like a river, shifting from quiet stream to rushing torrents in a matter of seconds. The only thing that binds it together, the

If I had a nickel for every playlist I've made in my life, I would just go ahead and buy Spotify, and Apple Music too while I'm at it. See, I've been doing it for quite a while, and I have a playlist for practically *everything*: times of day, moods, events, places, even just seemingly random mash-ups of what I felt like listening to at the time.

I have a playlist for playing pickleball with my mother after school under a cloud-smear sky.

Photo credit © Jackson Simmer

**It will both define me more clearly
and complicate me more completely.**

only thing loosely anchoring its existence to reality and preventing it from flying apart into oblivion, is me.

My own eclectic taste has weaved it together over the course of four years now, pruning it like a prized garden, adding fresh sounds and removing the old, dead ones as I please. It is my masterpiece in all the colors of a sunlit prism, my instant-classic novel encompassing every genre, my crazy theory of the universe that only makes sense to me (and even I don't completely understand it sometimes).

I've reached a total of ninety-nine playlists so far. That's ninety-nine situations into which I can inject a little extra life; ninety-nine moments of clarity, rain, celebration, moodiness, frustration, sunshine, expectation, beauty; ninety-nine works of art, displayed in the gallery that is my phone screen, open to the public via my speakers. All music is freeing, but there's something about the sense of ownership that comes from playlists that

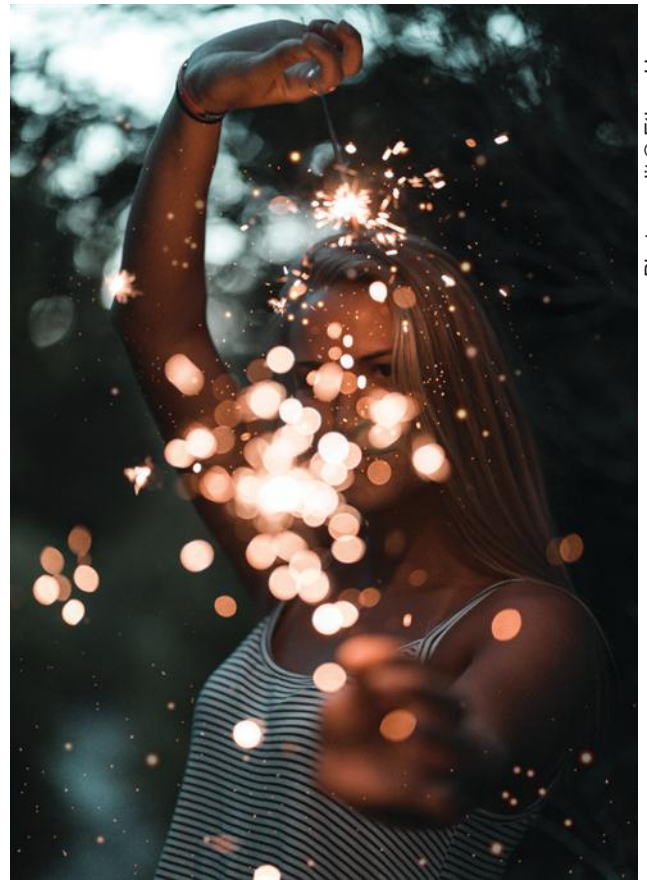


Photo credit © Ethan Hoover

makes me feel like I could never be anything other than free.

So who knows what Playlist Number One Hundred will be called? I don't, at least not yet. But when I do, I know it will both define me more clearly and complicate me more completely, just like every other act of creation. And I can't wait for that to happen.



Sarah Walker is a studio art major at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She illustrated the poetry book *Postcards from Breakfast* and has had her artwork, writing, and poetry published in various places, such as *The Lit Tribune* and *Fever Dream Zine*. Sarah's hobbies include drawing, reading, swimming, and listening to music. When at home in Southern California, she loves going to the beach and spending lots of time with her family (parents, sister, dog, cat) and friends. Sarah enjoys meeting new people and loves developing her craft.

Holy Horsepower! This Was FUN!!!

P O R S C H E
911 turbo

By Chris Cofer

**It was time to test a
Porsche 911.**

Have you ever flown by the seat of your pants in a dream machine? Have you ever felt g-force going a hundred and eighty miles per hour? Well, I have!

When you are given control of a Porsche and told to try to do these extreme maneuvers, you say (grinning wickedly from ear-to-ear), “Are you sure you want me to do something insane in this one-hundred-thousand-dollar car? On purpose? I get to be James Bond for a day?” The answer was “YES.”

As a thank-you from our financial adviser, my family and I were given the opportunity to go to the Porsche test track. We were each paired up with a professional driver. I was briefed on the car, what we would be doing, and was put into the driver’s seat of a Porsche Spider convertible with the top down. The driver said, “We are going to go around the track

fast and then weave between the cones.” My uncle blurted out, “Hey, Chris gets the convertible??” Don’t worry; he got his turn in the Spider. We swerved in and out, between the cones. I put my hand up in the air and it felt like my arm would be pulled right out of the socket. It was heaven! Anything superfast that I can control puts me in my element.

We left the cone section and got to drive through a wet track. Yes, a wet track! This is where we could get loose and practice drifting a little. We drove back to the ready area. It was time to test a Porsche 911.

I was then taken to a flooded track and was told to make the car hydroplane. “OH, BUDDY!” I drove to the line and the driver told me to gun it through the water and make a quick sharp turn

and then correct it by changing direction. It was hard. I spun out at first but got it with a few tries.

After that, I was taken to a dogleg drag strip, one with very sharp angles, like dogs' legs. The driver said, "Let me do this one first; then you can try." That should have been a "Hey, we-are-going-to-get-crazy alert!" The driver says, "Hold on!" He floors the engine in park, amping it up! Then, puts it in drive!

The only way to describe what I felt next is this: When you see a fighter jet take off, it just slingshots into supersonic mode. The pilot is thrown back with incredible force and the craft becomes airborne. That's exactly what was going through my head at this point. My blood was forced down to my feet! We were pushing a couple g's. We had to be going close to 200 miles per hour.

And then we hooked the dogleg. You feel that shift in the force. I'm not going to lie—you think you are going to die at that point. When it was my turn, I tried but couldn't get it right. And it was still fun! I was thinking, "Even if I crash, I won't be able to stop smiling."

I was taken to another flooded area and listened to the words every guy wants to hear: "DO DONUTS!" OH YES!! Let's just get stupid with this!! So, I rev the engine and whip around in the water, hydroplaning. First, I'm wondering, "Why is this so much fun??" Then, I consider how lucky we are that the bank paid for comprehensive medical insurance just for this experience. I'm in a one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand-dollar car, spinning! My inner speed demon was thrilled.



Chris Cofer was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, which has had a slight impact on his speech and walking. He grew up in a loving family. Unfortunately, his father died in a car accident when Chris was nine. His only unrealized goal was to be a U.S. Marine. He earned his certificate in Computer IT and Networking from Laurus College and studied photography at Southern California Regional Occupational Center. Chris is a prolific poet, who writes "to calm the beast inside," and reach the masses. He credits an incredible guitar teacher for adjusting instruction, so Chris could learn to play. He loves archery and shoots a compound bow. Chris has become a passionate advocate for disabilities awareness.

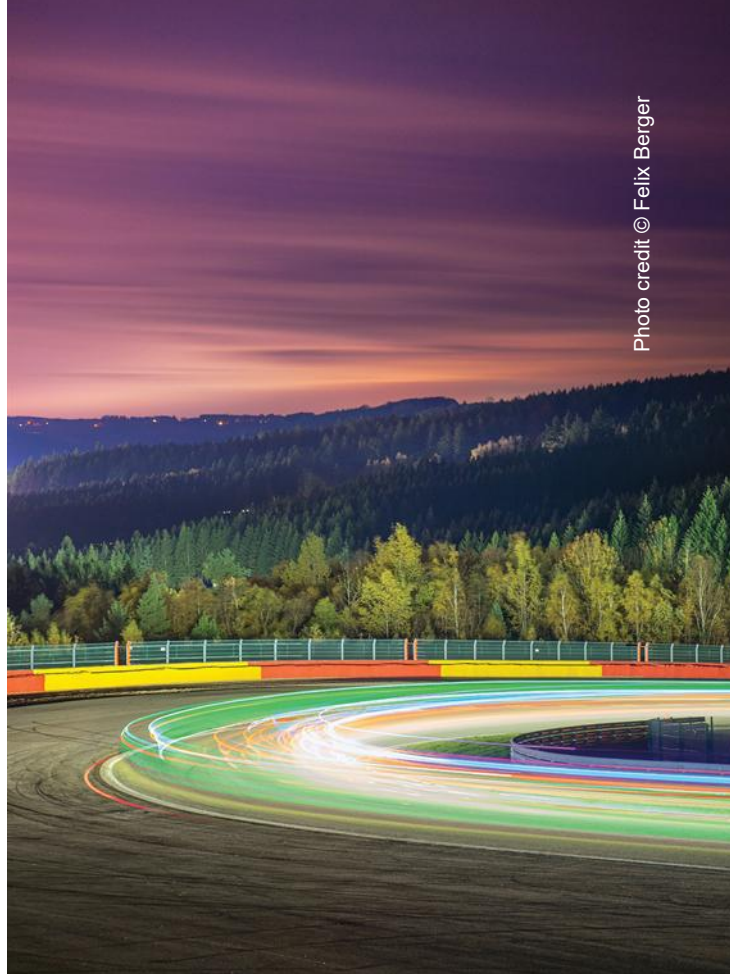


Photo credit © Felix Berger

The fun was over too soon! But we had a blast! I also learned that Porsche is German. I always thought it was Italian. You learn something new every day! And guess what! This is an experience that anyone can have. I encourage you to check it out. You, too, can take a Porsche out on the actual testing tracks that check these amazing cars for safety and racing.

Dear Porsche – Thank you for turning my blood to octane for a few hours! This man with a disability was a racer for a day!! Holy Horsepower! This was fun!!!

My Biggest Fan

By Chloe Thomas

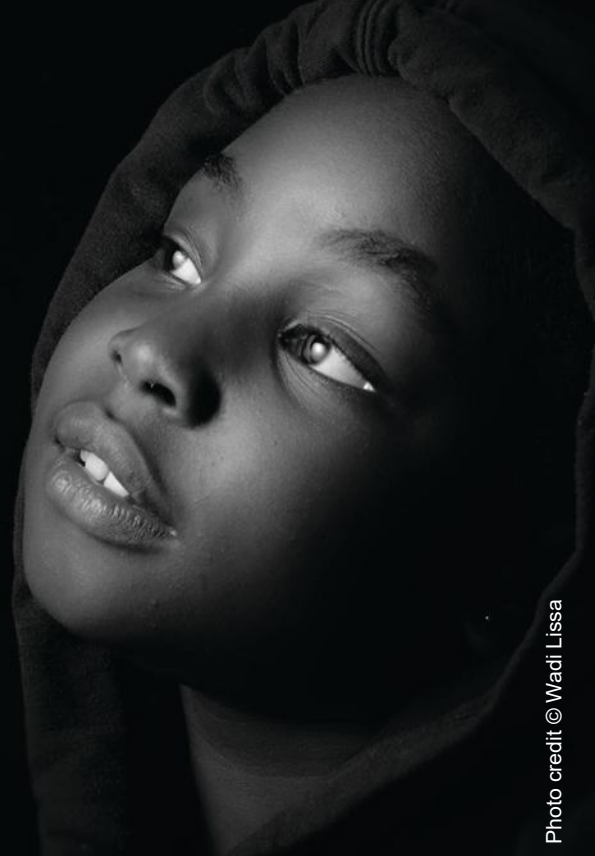


Photo credit © Wadi Lissa

A tiny critic, ready to pounce with judgment.

My hands were sore, my throat dry, uncomfortable from the hours of practicing once again for my impending performance. I had rehearsed this song a thousand times in class and a thousand times on my own, but every time there was something to improve.

I took a deep breath and started again on the second half, knowing that I only had so much time before my mother told me it was too late for me to be singing and playing. My hands stretched in front of me laying out the key of F sharp, my pinkies reaching on both ends to play the entire range of the piece. One measure, a second, and a third go by, then my baby brother walked in.

Sitting at my feet listening to me play. Waiting for me to mess up. A tiny critic, ready to pounce with judgment. But I was resilient and played through every line of music, singing along and finally getting the notes right, unwilling to crack under pressure. Proud of my accomplishments, I left the room and my keyboard, to take a small break, returning only moments later, water bottle in hand.

The first thing I saw, my critic—my brother—sitting in my chair slamming his hands down on the keys, resulting in a cacophony of notes, with no rhythm to be found.

“I wanna play too” his small voice squeaked. It had to be near his bedtime, but as I checked the clock, I realized my five-year-old brother still had another hour to annoy me.

“I’m not playing; I am practicing. My concert is next week, go play with your toys,” I tried to shoo him off. He looked up at me, a small gleam in his eye slowly fading, and then returning as a glossy sheen of tears. *Here we go*, I thought. Crying all the way up and back down the stairs, my brother returned with my mother, who fell for his sob story—whatever it was.

“Let him play, Chloe; he’s not hurting anybody. It’s not like we haven’t been listening to you pluck at the same notes all day. Lord knows we could use a change in music.” My mother sat my brother next to me and walked away humming the same notes I had just played correctly for the first time. Her word was final. There would be no arguing.

I looked down at my sibling, whose tears had miraculously disappeared, and shrugged. *What's the worst that could happen?* I slid the keyboard over our laps so he could reach. Without hesitation, he began to slam his hands down on every key he could find—an imitation of what he thought I did.

Quickly lowering the volume, I snatched his hands up, ceasing the assault on my musically trained ears. He frowned, but before a meltdown ensued, I had an idea. Slowly, I demonstrated how to play a scale from middle C and up the octave and then gestured for him to try. He put one hand gently on the keyboard and, in the blink of an eye, my dreams were crushed, as he slammed the keys down simultaneously.

Deep breath, I told myself. Then I remembered my days of learning piano and decided to start even smaller. Teaching him just how to hold his hands, I watched as he mastered the art of moving one finger at a time along the keys, playing notes like a true pianist. But of course, this wasn't enough and soon he grew restless.

"I wanna play da song," he whined. My mother walked by smiling in my direction, a silent warning to indulge him, or face her wrath. Smiling back, I plucked out the notes for "Itsy bitsy Spider." My brother, recognizing the song, gasped, "Ethan play it! Ethan play it!" Using the number system to tell him which note to press—each number corresponding to a finger—he learned the first part of the song. Pleased with his progress, and overjoyed at the time on my alarm clock, I sent him off to bed with promises of more practice in the future.



My brother sat in my room once again at my feet, looking up as I played.

Months later, I sat in my room playing the piano once again, practicing the pieces I had learned for fun: "Reflection" from *Mulan* and John Legend's "All of Me." My brother sat in my room once again at my feet, looking up as I played, waiting for me to finish, knowing he'd get to play when I was done, and praying I didn't mess up so that his turn would begin. But

he was also listening, adoring my mediocre performance as if I were Beethoven. My little brother, my student, my pianist. My biggest fan.

Chloe Thomas is a freshman, attending California State University Long Beach as a Pre-business Marketing major. Co-founder of her high school's Black Culture Club, she now participates in the Black Student Union, continuing her passion for learning and sharing African American culture with peers. Chloe has attended the CSULB American Marketing Association meetings, gaining insights and networking. Chloe comes home often to spend time with her mother, father, and two younger brothers. Her family enjoys vacations, game nights, beach days, and hosting karaoke parties. Chloe adores music in all forms. She sings, plays piano, and writes songs. She also likes full days in the kitchen, cooking, baking, and frying anything her family might enjoy. Chloe aspires to experience all she can while navigating college and her future career.





The Light in the “Big Dark Hidden”

By Penney Peirce

We are living in extremely intense times, and honestly, I like it! It's a roller coaster, and I swoop from confusion, to excited anticipation, to fogginess, to sadness, to a peaceful quiet in-betweenness, and back to heightened curiosity. It makes me feel alive. I see positive signs:

- People are sincerely working to release limiting, negative belief systems and emotional traumas.
- They are anticipating and readying themselves for new work, relationships, homes, locations, and ways of thinking that bring clear access to their inner being, or soul.
- They are fascinated with the idea of how to materialize what they need—with less will power and more enthusiasm for what's "just right and right now."
- They are exploring how to cocreate with others as though "You are another myself." Ego is less and less important.

All this reassures me. I am innately positive but I noticed that recently I'd been pulling in with a need to just *be*, feeling that the most interesting work I was doing might be at night while I was dreaming. I was in the foggy part of the life cycle, bouncing off left-brain computer work, preferring to be simpler and more physical—weed the garden, clean, organize my closets. I didn't want to market myself, or think about my "brand," or push forward with anything—if it involved pushing.

A friend used to call this the balance between *the primal self* and *the enterpriser self*, or the deep feminine and the materializing masculine. I'd been focused on the enterpriser for a long time, living in the frontal lobes of my brain, and now life was feeling dull and one-dimensional. I could tell the primal was calling me into the formless, and I had a lovely revelation as I began to let go: *The purely*

experiential helps eliminate clutter. By allowing things to be as they are, I saw that I could shed old skins and melt through the shells of my habitual containers. I realized I would emerge again at the right time, squeaky new like a tender green shoot, vulnerable yet motivated by a force much clearer than what had created my previous identity. But could I really trust that unknown lifewave to carry me forward to where I know not? What would my new life be like?

OLD METHODS AND HABITS DON'T WORK ANYMORE

I don't know about you, but life places instantaneously-erected walls in my path every time I try to *make things happen* with old methods—like using willpower, trying to make good impressions, or associating with reputable people in hopes their vibe might rub off on me. Of late, a large invisible hand attached to a large outstretched arm had been pressing into my forehead every time I tried to move forward, making my legs spin in place like a cartoon character.

What are our outmoded methods? They involve beliefs like: "We alone are the driving force," or "Personal willpower generates success." They might come from beliefs that aren't in harmony with universal truths, like: "It's noble and necessary to sacrifice yourself," or "If you don't inflate yourself like a balloon to take up space, you'll be swallowed by the void." *Old methods reflect old motivations which tie to old identities.* Our identity, or definition of self, can and does evolve! It's not set in stone.

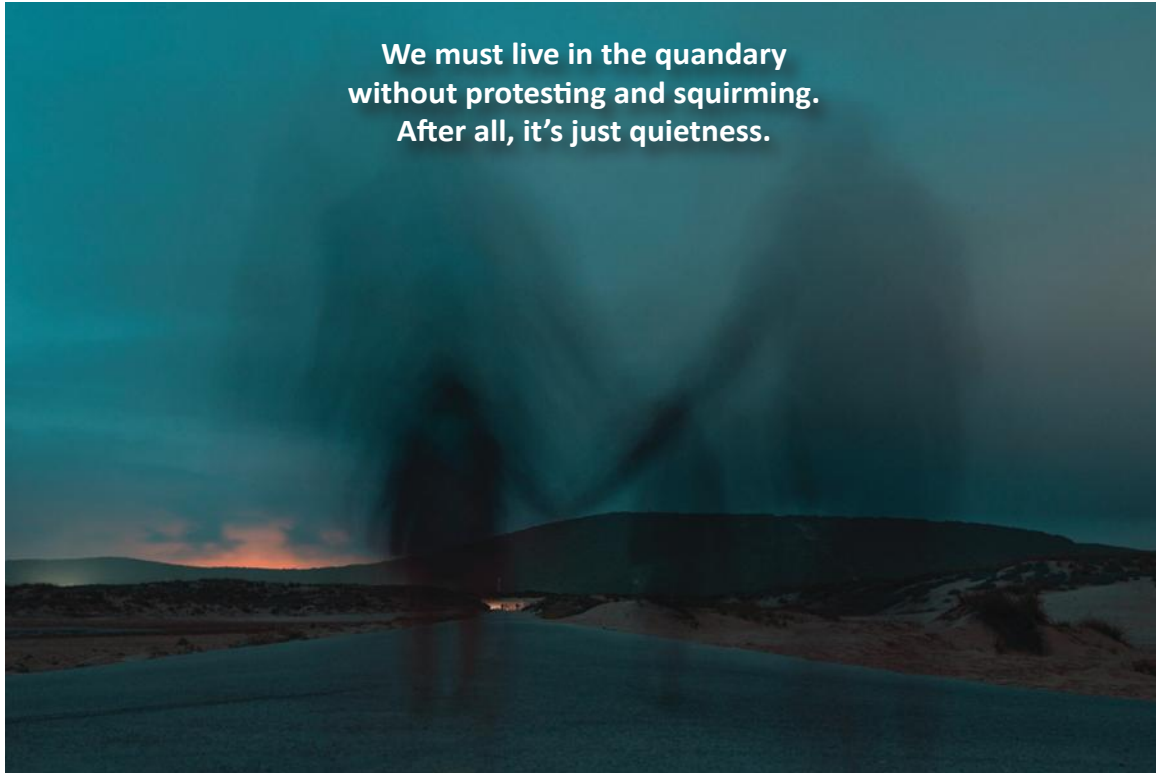
I sense strongly that it's time for our identity to expand. The soul is moving on! And not just in a way that will change what we do or how we dress, but



it will change what it means to be a human being and how we construct our reality. It's guaranteed that the way we *see* our life, the way we *engage* with life, and the way life *arises* will change radically. It's at this point that imagination fails us since we're tied to old ways of thinking; we know intuitively that we're not going backward, but we can't quite visualize what's ahead. In my lessening fog, I could get glimpses, flashes, but no full-on vision.

my mind tuned to the highest frequency "radio station," the one broadcasting thoughts of gratitude, appreciation, curiosity, cheerfulness, charity, and amusement, I was sure the next just-right step would appear magically.

I was talking to Norma, a high-powered, high-energy businesswoman who possesses great wisdom about mythology, the spiritual dimensions, and



**We must live in the quandary
without protesting and squirming.
After all, it's just quietness.**

Photo credit © Jr Korpa

LIVE IN THE QUANDARY

I had an inkling of my destiny, a subtle feeling of how I might express myself and live at a higher vibration. Yet without specific details, how would I get there from here? This is when I have tended to retreat into old mental habits and try to figure my way out of the quandary. I'm learning this is a mistake, and more than that, it's a waste of energy because it stalls forward movement. Another wall will need to be erected to stop me from using that particular method called "figuring it out."

It's difficult to trust the quandary space. It can feel like pain. But instead of jumping away, I knew I must live in the quandary without protesting and squirming. After all, it's just quietness. If I kept

shamanism. The day we spoke she was clearing boxes of clutter from her house, laughing because she was being turned back from virtually every familiar path forward. She said, "The door is ajar, but it's not open! I've looked, and it's not about fixing our energy or 'acting-as-if.' Nothing is really wrong! And yet, we wait. We must not force these creations, we must wait to be invited." Then she said, "'The Big Dark Hidden' is about to break loose. We're in the midst of the Great Shifting."

ADD ENERGY TO MAKE THE CONNECTIONS

A few weeks later, an intuitive friend and I got together to focus our intuition and energy on how we might call forth the next period of our lives. She was good at materializing and I asked her how it feels when she's in that particular flow. She said

it was like a big faucet had been turned on and she was in the stream of energy and it was doing everything. All her needs were taken care of, everything was perfect, and she could relax.

So she went into that state, and I closed my eyes and went in with her. Until then, when I looked out into the world I'd only seen a gray fog. But as we sat in the streaming energy and let it flow into the world, the fog began to clear. I could see lights and criss-crossing lines of light emerge from the density. These, I knew, were people, situations, and events that were lining up to begin occurring in my world. They'd been there all along. It occurred to me that what I could see was a function of my energy level. I'd been preoccupied with what I didn't have and what wasn't materializing, and I suddenly realized this was resulting in me seeing *nothing*. Now that we added the streaming energy to the mix, I could see clearly.

It occurred to me that what I could see was a function of my energy level.

As we continued to run high energy, not only did the field around me become studded with these stars of budding opportunities, but a few feet in front of me, a row of people, big as life, appeared. And they were being goofy—pulling their mouths into crazy faces, acting like apes, waving their hands inches in front of my face, as if to say, “Ha! Ha! You think you can't see us but we're right here!” As I looked closer, I saw they were beloved family members and friends who had died, and even dead celebrities I'd admired. I started to laugh out loud—“OK! I get it, you're right here. The precious is right under my nose—and my doubt is the Big Joke! I just need to receive.”



Penney Peirce is an articulate and accurate clairvoyant empath, visionary, and author of 10 books on intuition development, inner energy dynamics, expanded perception, dreamwork, and personal transformation. She coaches business and government leaders, psychologists, scientists, celebrities, and those on a spiritual path about the hidden dynamics of what makes for true success. Her books include *Transparency*, *Leap of Perception*, *Frequency*, *Be the Dreamer Not the Dream*, and *The Intuitive Way*. Penney is a *See Beyond Magazine* editorialist, writing about Clarity and Intuition.

Website: www.penneypeirce.com.

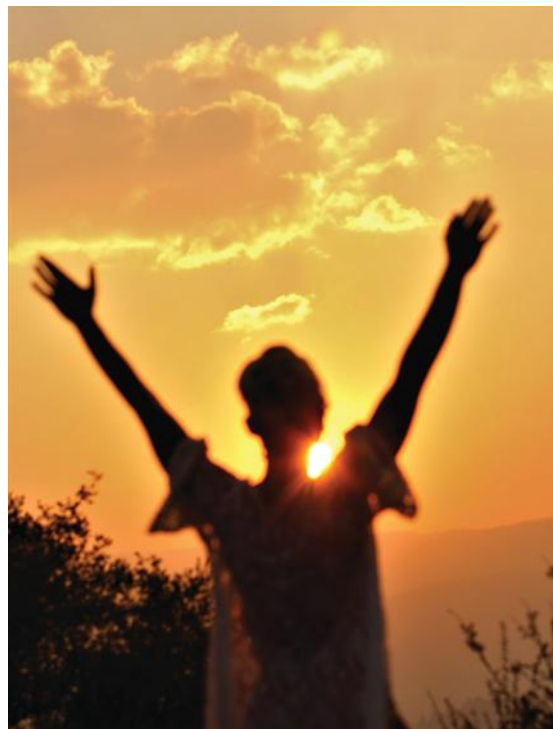


Photo credit © Elisabeth Wales

It was interesting then, that over the next few days I had calls from long-lost friends, invitations to work in new places, go swimming at someone's beautiful pool, and one person gave me a book I knew would be important. Small steps, but signs that what was coming would be arranged graciously, without stress and strife. I sensed answers would come via the diamond light shining out of the Big Dark Hidden. Everything would be a kind of new I couldn't quite imagine yet, but it would feel ancient and from beyond time, and naturally perfect as though it had always been waiting—like the biggest relief I'd ever known.



Perspective

By Kyle Huynh

When I was a child, my grandparents bestowed upon me a traditional Buddhist necklace that was supposed to give me prosperity and health. Suspended from a gold chain was a jade pendant, shaped as the Buddha. The necklace was an irreplaceable piece of jewelry that was in my family for many years. It carries religious and monetary merit, yet as a child, the necklace seemed meaningless. It was just something to wear, like a random shirt or pants.

My immature eyes only noticed the opulent jade pendant and shimmering gold chain and my immature brain only thought to wear the necklace to please my parents. Like many children, I had a surface-level understanding of the world. It was the job of every object or action to keep me interested. The necklace failed at this job.

A new identity was beginning to emerge, one that showcases both my halves.

Despite my lack of adoration, heading into middle school, I continued to wear the necklace. As time passed, my perceptions started to evolve. Curiosity began to penetrate the forefront of my mind. I asked many questions. Eventually, my inquiries led to the ponderance of my cultural identity. Like many adolescents, I struggled with my self-image: my identity as an American always seemed to conflict with my identity as Vietnamese. I needed balance.

This realization would allow me to put many ideas into perspective. From the food I ate to the languages I spoke, a new identity was beginning to emerge, one that showcases both my halves. Among these changes came a new perspective regarding the necklace. My eyes no longer saw just the glistening jade and shining gold chain. It became a symbol of culture, an integral piece of my Vietnamese half.

For many children, the world seems like a safe place.

With a new sense of identity, I progressed towards high school, still maintaining the necklace. I arrogantly believed high school would be seamless, but I suddenly encountered one of the darkest days of my life. The passing of a relative synthesized an unfathomable experience that I will never forget.

As I marched into adulthood, I also began to develop my sense of humanity. Throughout the grieving process, I often found it hard to illustrate the experience to others. Descriptions are often too complicated to portray to someone who has not experienced the same thing. Moreover, it seems cruel to pass bad news to others.

Yet I found myself confiding in the very item that has accompanied me since my childhood. The necklace was not only a symbol of culture but also a token of remembrance for family that has come before me. The jade pendant paid homage to the relative who passed away. It is a comfort to know that his spirit lives on as I don the necklace.

Discernments evolve with experiences and time. For many children, the world seems like a safe place. They only look at the bright sunshine and playful fun. Yet, as children learn and grow, their view of that same environment will change, just as mine did. As an adult, I began to realize the necklace that was intended to give me health and prosperity led to something greater—perspective.



Photo credit © Mi Pham

Kyle Huynh is a Public Health major at the University of California, Irvine. He is a history buff, who studies voraciously, goes to museums and watches documentaries. He enjoys reading as it provides him with a holistic perspective on profound topics such as life and society. Huynh's favorite authors include Ralph Waldo Ellison and F. Scott Fitzgerald. He is fascinated with how their works reverberate themes that remain relevant today whilst maintaining the cultural aspects of the era. Huynh always makes time for friends and family and for playing trumpet and piano. He appreciates writing as a means to comprehend his struggles as a Vietnamese-American and a son of immigrant parents. One day, he intends to write for scientific journals, specifically in the fields of biology and chemistry.



SEE BEYOND BORDERS



**VATICAN, THE CATHOLIC
CAPITAL OF THE WORLD!**



View of Piazza San Pietro

Sistine Chapel ceiling (painted by Michelangelo Buonarroti)



Vatican Museum interior stairs



Nelida Dotan

was born in Romania and lived there more than half her life. She was raised in a family that loved books, the arts and laughter. She earned an MA in Geology in Bucharest where she also developed a love for theater, museums, art galleries and opera. In 1995, Nelida and her family immigrated to the US. She learned English, attended school and started a new career. Nelida enjoys being a wife and mother and working as an oncology nurse adviser. She credits her patients for teaching her to make each day meaningful. While traveling, Nelida discovered the magnificence of photography and considers her work an invitation to experience the untainted beauty of this world through her eyes.



San Pietro Basilica



Hanging by a Thread



By Hailey Shah

As I'm about to doze off, an idea strikes me. Grumbling but excited, I grab my phone and type away furiously, rephrasing sentences and rewording fragments until everything fits like a neat collage. It's a beautiful amalgamation of words, crafted in jagged stanzas. Satisfied, I close my eyes and slip into sleep.

This is one of the many experiences I have had with writing. My thoughts are an electric current. Until pen comes to paper, my reflections sit inside my insomniac brain. Writing poetry and songs allows me to unravel feelings through double meanings and wordplay like a puzzle I'm solving.

My writing is organic: it comes to me usually whenever I think about my life. Writing allows me to gain a better understanding of those around me and of myself. I look at all those people through a different lens when I write because I flesh out my thoughts rather than letting them cascade in my mind. I have a broader discernment of my classmates, friends, and parents when I see my thoughts on paper. I read them aloud, sometimes to see how they sound and other times to hear how I feel.

**My thoughts are
an electric current.**

Photo credit © Amirali Mirhashemian

I used to live in a bubble
of my own problems.



Photo credit © Daniel Hansen

Since I started writing about feelings, even just keeping a digital diary, I have developed more empathy and became less reserved. I used to live in a bubble of my own problems, but after writing everything down, I saw a bigger picture.

I took a greater role in community service. I raised funds for the Mattel Children's Hospital as a youth ambassador. By selling books I had already read and creating charity concerts with my school

choir, I achieved my \$1250 goal. I researched racial inequality and wrote poetry about social injustice that affected my life.

I use writing as a way to make sense of the world and to explain how I see it. It has always been the common thread through all of my adventures. And when I'm hanging by a thread, writing is what I'm holding onto.



Hailey Shah is a freshman at UC Irvine, majoring in Public Health Sciences. She is a singer and spent six years in choir. She has also spent twelve performing classical Indian dance known as Kathak. She is a student of guru Prachi Dixit at Nupur Academy LA. She debuted at Armstrong Theater in Torrance last August and earned a higher certificate from Bharati Vidyapeeth University in Kathak. Hailey has traveled to France, Italy, Thailand, India, Hawaii, and Alaska and plans to study abroad at some point. She is a fan of Taylor Swift, Lana del Rey, Rosalia and musical theater, especially *Heathers* and *Into the Woods*. She enjoys *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek*. Beloved books include *Carry On* by Rainbow Rowell, *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera, and *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins.



Nervous and Excited

By Carla Kalaja

We were living in Syria, and during the war, my siblings had to leave the country. My big brother and sister left for the US. My little brother, Cris, left for Belgium when he was only seventeen. I stayed with my parents. We hadn't seen each other since he moved. We were going to meet up with Cris in Yerevan, Armenia in the summer of 2020, but COVID got in the way. Finally, we booked

our flight, rented a house and arranged everything to reunite with him. After six years apart, I was nervous and excited.

We got here ahead of Cris and had time to get settled before his flight was scheduled to arrive. The airport was busy that day. A lot of people were waiting for their loved ones. I kept looking at faces,

When we finished, he handed us gifts, which led to coffee with dark Belgian chocolate.

trying to catch sight of my brother. My heart was rushing, my palms were sweating. I didn't know how I should welcome him. Would we feel like family or strangers?

His flight was delayed for three hours, but Cris finally appeared. He is not little anymore. I got goosebumps. I was surprised by how much he had changed. Approaching me was a handsome tall man with a beard and a deep, husky voice. I ran to him immediately. I squeezed him and took in his scent. He squinted slightly. Wrinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes when he smiled.

My parents' eyes welled up with tears. A few rolled down their cheeks straight away. My mom started kissing and hugging him. She whispered in his ear, "I love you, my baby boy." In a stifled voice, our father said, "I can't believe how big you are now and how much you have grown up apart from me." This was hard.

On our way home, my brother sat between me and Mom. We hugged him for the entire ride. When we got home, my mom made a delicious Syrian breakfast for us with cheese, labneh, za'atar, olives, fruit jams, crumbled eggs and fresh pita bread. Cris inhaled all those glorious smells and started clapping for joy. When we finished, he handed us gifts, which led to coffee with dark Belgian chocolate. It coated my tongue and the roof of my mouth with magnificent creaminess.

My brother told us about his life, how the culture is different from ours and how much he missed us. We also talked about my life, what I'd like to be or do. I told him about caring for our dad and how natural that felt for me and how wonderful it was to help make someone well. Cris advised me to go to college



Photo credit © Julilia



My brother was very much family, not at all a stranger.

↓
in the US. He knew I was already thinking about it and encouraged me to start the application process, so I did and here I am.

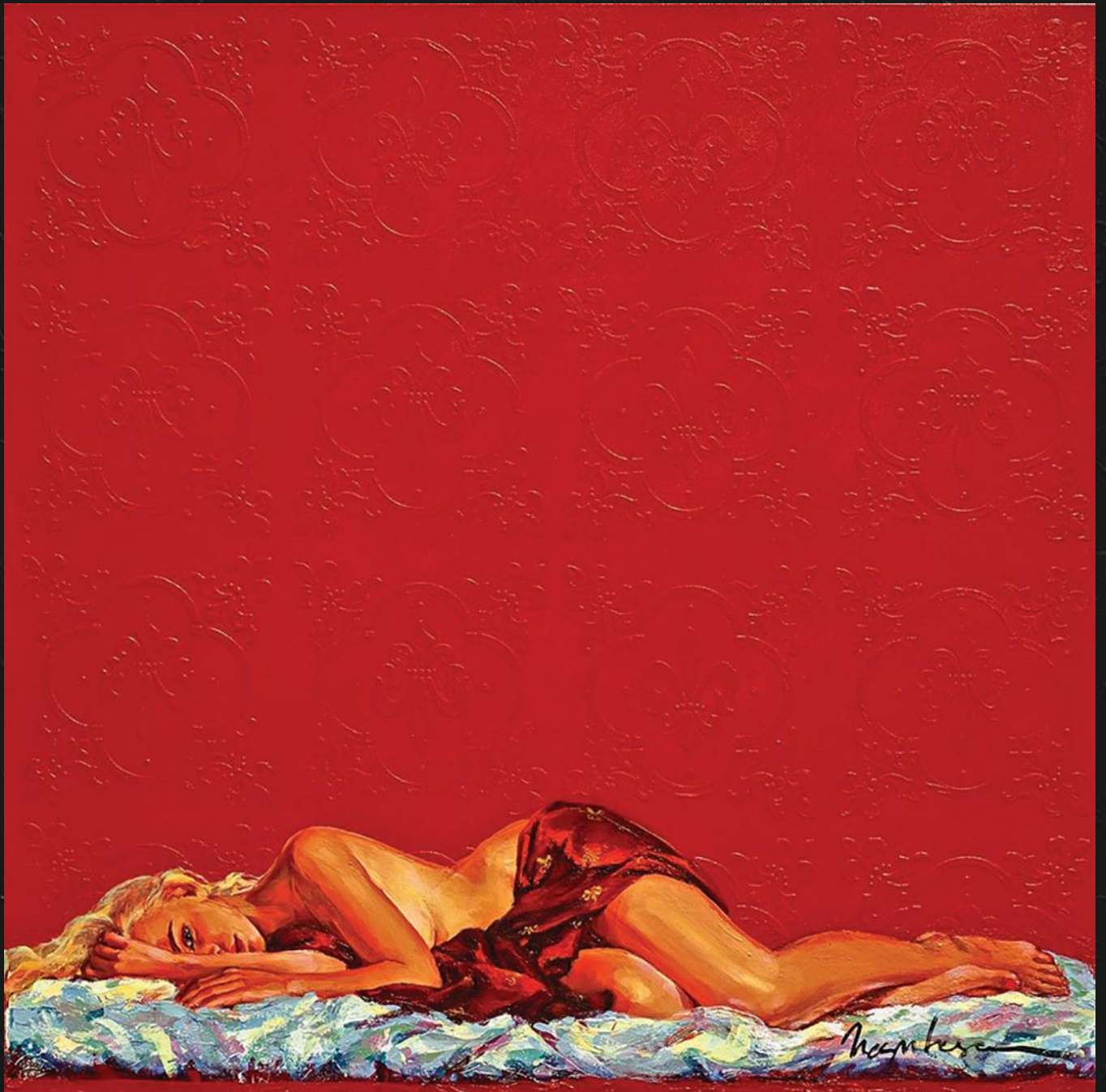
After a while, Mom busied herself preparing Cris' favorite dish, a homemade lasagna, for lunch. Dad infiltrated the kitchen, hunting for something to nibble on and, right on cue, Mom was telling him no. The aroma of lasagna hot from the oven was so delightful we could practically taste it. My brother and I drooled. We gathered at the table, my dad at the head and the rest of us around him. My mom started serving. Seeing the lasagna's stringy cheese, savory spices, and yummy meats made me hungrier. My brother was teary-eyed and said, "I have never tasted lasagna like yours." Mom was thrilled.

After lunch, we went for a walk. The air was rich with a vibrant freshness. People everywhere filled the sidewalks, bars and restaurants. Dogs walked around us all over town. They were so friendly. We grabbed a beer and some nuts at a bar with a quiet, cozy atmosphere. The picture taking and laughter never stopped.

At the end of the day, I realized how important family connection is because being together like this made me feel grateful and lucky. It surprised me how much the years just melted away. My brother was very much family, not at all a stranger. He was still my backbone, someone I could count on.

Carla Joseph Kalaja developed an interest in nursing when her diabetic father got COVID. Because medical facilities and hospitals are scarce in Syria, she and her mom decided to care for him at home. They paid close attention to doctors' instructions. This was stressful but more manageable than dealing with an over-crowded hospital. Carla began her dream of becoming a nurse the moment she arrived in the US. She also has a passion for traveling and is fluent in English and Arabic. She enjoys personal development and surrounds herself with successful, happy and supportive people. Carla loves sunsets and long walks on the beach. She misses her family and looks forward seeing them again.





Rêve en rouge by Irina Negulescu

Photo-credit © Dan Cristiaș Pădureț

$E_p = E_{p_{max}} \Rightarrow \sin^2(3t_p + \frac{\pi}{3}) = 1$
 $= \sin(\frac{\pi}{2} + n\pi); n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$
 $t_p = \frac{\pi}{3}(n + \frac{1}{6}), n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$
 $E_c = E_{c_{max}} \Rightarrow \cos^2(3t_c + \frac{\pi}{3}) = 1 \Rightarrow \cos(3t_c + \frac{\pi}{3}) = \pm 1 = \cos(n\pi) \Rightarrow t_c = \frac{\pi}{3}(n - \frac{1}{3})$
 $\omega = \sqrt{\frac{k}{m}} = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi m_p K_p}{3m_1}} = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi K_p}{3}}$
 $\omega = \sqrt{\frac{g_0}{R_0}}$
 $T = \frac{2\pi}{\omega} = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{R_0}{g}} = 5,03 \cdot 10^3 s.$

$Q_{total} = Q_1 + Q_2 = 3\epsilon_0 \frac{S}{d_1} U_0$
 $C_1 = C_2 = \epsilon_0 \frac{S}{d_1} = 8,85 \text{ pF}$
 $Q = \frac{Q_1 + Q_2}{2} = 13,275 \cdot 10^{-9} C$
 $U = \frac{Q}{C_1} = \frac{3}{2} U_0 = 1500 V$
 $= \frac{1}{2} QU = \frac{9}{8} \epsilon_0 \frac{S}{d_1} U_0^2 = 9,956 \cdot 10^{-6} J$
 $-Q_{41} = vC T_1(1 - \epsilon^{1/2}) + vC_V T_1(\mathcal{R} - 1),$
 $-Q_{34} = vC_V T_2(\mathcal{R} - 1) + vC T_2(1 - \epsilon^{1/2}),$
 $1/2, \frac{T_3}{T_2} = \mathcal{R}, \frac{T_3}{T_4} = \epsilon^{1/2}, \frac{T_1}{T_1} = \mathcal{R}_1$

I[mA]	0	0	4	50	104	170
U[V]	0	0,5	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0
I[mA]	0	-1,05	-2,1	-3,2	-4,2	-5,3
U[V]	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
I[mA]	0	0	4	44	115	175
U[V]	0	0,4	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0
I[mA]	0	-0,4	-0,76	-1,12	-1,5	-1,9
U[V]	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
I[mA]	0	1,4	2,8	4,2	5,6	7,1
U[V]	0	1	2	3	4	5
I[mA]	0	-1,4	-2,8	-4,2	-5,6	-7,1
U[V]	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5

$Q_{41} = vC T_1(1 - \epsilon^{1/2}) + vC_V T_1(\mathcal{R} - 1),$
 $Q_{34} = vC_V T_2(\mathcal{R} - 1) + vC T_2(1 - \epsilon^{1/2}),$
 $1/2, \frac{T_3}{T_2} = \mathcal{R}, \frac{T_3}{T_4} = \epsilon^{1/2}, \frac{T_1}{T_1} = \mathcal{R}_1$

A Mild Inconvenience

By Raymond Cordero

Sitting at my slightly warm and creaky school desk, I hear someone calling from behind me. "Hey Ray, I don't get what I'm supposed to do here. Can you help me?" A good friend of mine is trying to solve a problem from today's homework. He got started but is having trouble figuring out what to do next.

I can feel his frustration since I just completed the same problem only moments before. I went over to help him and noticed that the way he set up the equation was slightly off, so it would have given him the wrong answer. I point out his calculation error within the second line of work. He promptly

fixes it and continues working. He finally breathed a sigh of relief and thanked me.

Satisfied, I started back to my seat. But, before I could even touch the physics homework I had open on my desk, another friend beckoned me to help. I go over to him and see that it is the homework that is going to be assigned later today. Since he and I have the same Algebra 2 class later on after lunch, we usually try to get a head start on the upcoming homework before the end of the study-hall type of workshop.

The paper was looking back at us, taunting us.

We both stare at the paper perplexed, trying to understand what it is trying to tell us. We had this feeling that the paper was looking back at us, taunting us with an answer, yet refusing to reveal its secret. I flipped between pages of notes we had taken to see if it would help in any way, but this was something completely new. Determined to find the answer, too stubborn to give up, I tried something different.

“Wait! You did it,” my friend said. “How did you know to do that?” I shrugged and tried to explain to the best of my ability how it works. I was pleased that I could help and happy that we got it.

I suppose I could’ve just told him I didn’t understand how to do it. After all, I had my own work to do. But assisting people is something I enjoy doing. I like to look at problems from multiple perspectives.

In fact, I would like to engage in a career where I can create machines or software to make a simple task easier to complete or a complex task simpler to understand. So when people ask for help, it’s great problem-solving and communication practice. Even if it is sometimes a mild inconvenience, it’s still worth my time.



Photo credit © Ben Weber

Raymond Cordero is a high school senior interested in the Computer Science field, specifically the software engineering paths. He would like to work in an inventive industry that serves others. Raymond is dedicated to finishing his senior year with another 4.0 GPA. He also volunteers at his church and previous private elementary school, Saint Philomena’s. He earned the Saint Joseph’s award in 2019 for aiding both teachers and other students. Raymond enjoys listening to music, playing FPS and strategy games, and cooking ramen noodles, omelets, pinwheel chips, and fried rice. As a boy, he watched his mother and grandmother prepare chicken adobo, pancit, sinigang, Lechon kawali, and dinuguan. They have been his culinary inspiration.





The Chicken Lady's Brood

By Stacey Marie

I never thought that chickens would bring joy to my family, but they do. Watching them roam freely in their run area is entertaining. Chickens mostly stroll around, looking for bugs and other things to eat. When a chicken finds something, the rest run to see what, and they all try to steal it. Sometimes they chase her throughout the run. They are fast cluckers too.

Chickens used to terrify me after I was pecked hard by one at a very young age. That all changed a few years ago. While at a local feed store, my two youngest kids asked if we could get some chicks. They were only days old and very cute. Sucker that I am, we left with twelve baby chicks from a variety of breeds.

Since that first batch, we have learned a great deal about how to care for chicks. It was fun to hold them and let them get to know us. We would take the chicks outside so they could walk around supervised. At the time, our dog, Buck, was terrific. He would give them their space and watch. Eventually, Buck ended up licking their faces, which he continued to do until they were older.

Only one chicken, Megan, would have a sour look on her face after he licked her. It was so funny! And, yes, hens will learn their name if you begin this early. Buck and the chickens became friends and they all hung out together. Sometimes he helped me round them up. As the babies got older, they sang a sweet lullaby at night to help them go to sleep.

Chickens are no harder to raise than most pets.

Right before they were mature enough to be placed in the chicken run, we built a coop. It was amusing to watch them get acquainted with their new environment. They approached with caution and spent time moving the hay around to their liking. Now, when my son and I clean out their coop, they stand there and watch. Once we place the new hay, the chickens help spread it out. They can be such team players at times.

Chickens are no harder to raise than most pets. Cleaning their coop and run area, feeding them and giving them water is most of the care they require. Each week chickens will take a dust bath to get rid of mites in their feathers and for hygiene. When one hen starts, the others join in, and it becomes a social connection. We give them table scraps, but as a treat, I warm up non-sugar oatmeal and spread hominy in their area. At times one or two will develop a disease and die off in

their early years, but most live for five to ten years. It's painful to find one dead or watch a hen die.

Chickens are usually broody during the summer. They will sit on their eggs for hours each day in hopes of hatching chicks. As you know, an egg must be fertile to hatch, which requires a rooster. When I have a very broody hen, I fill up a bucket of cool water and place my hen in it where just the bottom of her gets wet. I keep her there a few minutes, then repeat the process every few hours. It helps cool her off so she will get out of the coop to eat and drink water.

During broody season, chickens can also become wicked. They are moody and want to be left alone. Each breed is different. My Australorp hens give a warning but don't tend to peck at you hard; whereas, my Araucana and Leghorn breeds will attack if you get too close or bother them.



Pecking order is alive and well.

When adding a new flock, we keep them separated from the rest with fencing so they can see each other without physical contact. After a month or two, I open the gate so the older hens can meet the new flock. This allows them to migrate slowly and get to know each other before adding them all together to the run.

Pecking order is alive and well. Sometimes chickens can be brutal because the pecking order determines which chickens are allowed to access food and water first. It also determines who gets to sleep in a nesting box. My top three hens will not share. I tried to place another nesting box in their coop, but one of the top hens kicked it out. Every so often the pecking order changes. The same two older hens are always at the top. Megan is #1 and Sookie is #2. They choose the third one. Taffy recently lost that spot to Ethel. The process was painful to watch at first.

Sometimes I must go out and break things up, but not very often. Now, when we are outside, they tend to behave. As I write this, the pecking order has been established, which makes it peaceful. Pecking order fights cause some chickens to get

injured and lose feathers. We bring that hen in the house to put a purple dye on the wound so the chickens won't peck at it. Plus, I give her a warm meal that she can eat in peace.

Even though Samantha is one of the three oldest hens, she has *always* been at the bottom of the pecking order. But she's the sweetest and so cuddly. She fell asleep on me one time when I was sunbathing. When we get new baby chicks, she's the one we assign to teach them things when they get older. I laugh because she doesn't really want that job and Megan is envious that Samantha gets to be mommy. But it's a good job for Samantha because it gives her new chickens to hang out with.

Protecting the flock from predators can be hit or miss and depends on your hens. Over the years, hawks will try to swoop in and catch one. Strawberry (a Rhode Island Red) got chased around the run area until she finally ran underneath one of our big trees. I had to rescue her. The last few times a hawk flew into the run area, my hens huddled underneath the coop. Pepper and Taffy are always in front of the other hens flying up in



Lucy will fly onto my shoulder and give me kisses.

the air, flapping their wings to warn the predator to back off.

You can teach hens to do all kinds of things. Sookie used to play the xylophone, but now Pepper plays. Hens like to perch on something and swing. Lucy, one of the youngest, loves swinging! I think she might not know how to get down because she will cluck in a high-pitched tone for me come get her. Lucy will fly onto my shoulder and give me kisses. She rubs her face against mine to show affection. Lucy loves to ride my shoulder to the garden and is the only one who waits at the gate for me to pick her up and put her in the coup. When any of the chickens want to be held, they twirl and squat down or fly up in the air.

We spend a lot of time with our chickens and they know us well. It makes picking them up much easier. When I call my chickens, they look up and listen to what I have to say. They do want to spend

time with us. We will bring each one out of the run to let her hang out with us individually.

Strawberry used to go for walks with me and Buck. She also sat in the back seat with the dog for a car ride to the grocery store. They were both patient and well-behaved the whole time. One day, I left the sliding door to the SUV open while I went back to the house for my sunglasses. As soon as Strawberry saw this, she bolted to the side of my yard and hopped in! She also used to jump on my shoulder and give me kisses. Sadly, Strawberry died last year.

When I call my chickens, they look up and listen to what I have to say.

I did a video shoot with *all* my chickens for a country music artist a few years ago. We loaded all the hens into my SUV and took them on location. There are endless things you can do with chickens when you know that they can be tame and cooperative.

However, not everything works. I bought each of my chickens their own outfit and tried to put them on, but they couldn't stand it and still hav-





Taking a walk with Strawberry and Buck

Our favorite thing each morning is taking the eggs out of the coop.

en't forgiven me! But they do love music. When I have jazz on, they fly over the fencing and sit by my sliding door, singing along. Big band music gets them dancing from side to side and moving their head up and down. Frank Sinatra puts them to sleep.

Our favorite thing each morning is taking the eggs out of the coop. We get a rainbow of colored eggs. It's so pretty to see them all together. The fact that we have farm-to-plate fresh eggs is exciting. Eggs are so expensive at the store right now. It saves us a few bucks per week. At times, we sell eggs by the dozen, but most are given to friends. We keep the eggs in a basket on our counter in the kitchen.

We don't clean them off until we are ready to cook them. You must wait for at least three weeks before boiling them; otherwise, the eggshell will stick to the eggs and make them harder to peel. I grind up egg shells for our hens to eat. The shells provide calcium and other nutrients.

My current hens are Megan, Sookie, Samantha, Taffy, Goblin, Lucy, Ethel, Pepper, and Cookie. All of them have meant a lot to us over the years. If zoning ordinances allow it in your area and you have the inclination, get some chicken. Spend lots of time together, getting to know each other. You will love them!

Stacey Marie is a Versatile Entrepreneur and radio veteran, who has overcome a challenging childhood, dealing with learning disabilities. She is an author and publicist. Her first book is scheduled for release very soon. Stacy Marie is also an accomplished entrepreneur, who encourages individuals to find their purpose and live it to inspire others. Currently, she is a professional connector for businesses, helping them meet marketing goals. Stacey Marie is married to Peter and has four grown children. She and her family enjoy being together, especially playing board games. She spends time on her mini farm with her chickens and grows her own food. Stacey Marie loves to travel and learn about different cultures, especially how food is reflected in each. She seeks out new restaurants to try and will generously spread the word about them. Stacey Marie is a high-energy woman, who puts her heart into everything she aspires to do.





Fragments of Memory by Wanda Decca

Taken Away, Again

Photo credit © Vinicius "amnx" Amano

By Ilze Madeiros

Being at school was safer for me.

I am Ilze Marie Madeiros, but that wasn't always my name. I used to be Ilze Janstovica. My story goes back to April 17, 2006 in a small European country called Latvia. I lived in a very violent, alcoholic family. Both my parents drank and fought constantly. My dad spent most of his time in prison. During those times, my mom was usually in the hospital. The police took me to a facility where kids could stay. My parents would come get me when they could. In kindergarten, I got

dropped off and stayed all week, along with a few other kids. Most students were picked up every day. Being at school was safer for me.

When my dad wasn't in prison, he took me to my aunt's house and we played with the dog and went for walks. He taught me how to ride my tricycle. I don't ever remember him hurting me. I had a better relationship with him than my mom.

One night, my dad, mom, and I walked to the grocery store together. I chose to wait outside with my mom. As soon as my dad was out of sight, she grabbed my hand, told me to run as fast as I could and keep up with her. She took me to a strange place where a strange man waited for us. Even though I did not know him, I was expected to call him “dad.” Every time I refused, I got slapped.

My mom yelled and beat me when she was mad or in pain. I learned to stay away from her, especially when she was drunk. Unfortunately, that didn’t always work. Finally, she left me at my grandparents’ house. At this point, I didn’t see her again for a very long time. You would think I might be safe and loved now, but my grandparents were alcoholics, too.

Things were not always horrible. My grandma baked delicious bread. She helped me learn to read and write. I enjoyed long days out in the fields. Hunters visited frequently because we lived close to a forest. When the shooting woke me up in the middle of the night, my grandma would give me bread with fresh honey to help me calm down.

A truck drove by once a week and my grandpa would buy me animal crackers. But he also bought alcohol. Lots of it. When I saw those bottles, I knew to stay out of the way, no matter what. One time, I got so scared that I tried to call my mom to come get me. I couldn’t figure out how to work the phone, so I crawled under the kitchen table, crying quietly, trying hard to stay out of sight.

But I wasn’t sneaky enough. My grandpa caught me trying to call my mom. His drunken wrath

turned into a severe and seemingly endless beating. I screamed for mercy but got none. All hope was lost. I thought I would die.

A farmer passing by heard my cries and came running through the front door. He demanded that my grandpa stop beating me and, surprisingly, he did. The man asked to see my birth certificate. He wanted to determine if they had any rights to me. They didn’t have it, so he picked me up and walked away.

I stayed with him on his farm. It was nice not being treated with a harsh hand. I played with his kids and helped in the fields. I liked it there. Unfortunately, my grandparents came with the necessary paperwork and took me back. They tried not to drink so much after that, but the peace didn’t last long.

That was when my mom showed up. She took me back but things just got worse. She beat me almost every night. No child should ever see what I saw. She started to fight with her boyfriend. Early one morning, some people came knocking at the door. My mom had had a screaming fit at me the night before, but I don’t know why these people showed up that particular day. I was taken away again.

At this new place, many ladies talked to me. One asked how I liked my family. I told her that I wanted a new family with a nice dad and mom who wouldn’t hurt me. I wanted to be loved. My eyes were filled with tears. I told her that I was scared of my mom and my grandparents because they beat me. She said she would try to help. But she, too, sent me back to my mom after a while.

**All hope was lost.
I thought I would die.**



**My mom came after me,
dragged me home,
beat me and made me
kneel on hard beans.**

↓ One time, my mom got so angry and drunk that she told me to pack my things and leave. I did. I ran out of the apartment, trying to get away as fast as I could. I was looking for someone who could help me. A few minutes later, my mom came after me, dragged me home, beat me and made me kneel on hard beans. I have no idea how long I endured this painful punishment, but by the time I was allowed to go to bed, I had to peel the beans out of my skin. The indentations lasted for days.

About the same time the bean marks disappeared, the police showed up again and took me to an orphanage where I met that kind lady who said she'd help. She told me that I would stay there until a nice family came to take me away. I cried at bedtime. I was scared, lonely and really sad. Eventually, I got used to the place. So many kids needed help. I saw babies dropped off at their doorstep. Kids would come and go regularly. One day, I met Linda, a young lady in her early twenties. She and her mom, Solveiga, visited me. Shortly afterward, I went home with them.

I lived with the Solveiga and Felicita, another rescued girl, who was twelve. She was like a big sister to me. Solveiga, sent us to a summer camp. After we returned, I started first grade. Not long after that, Felicita was adopted by an American family. I got to meet them before they took her away.

It was now just me and Solveiga. I played outside with the neighbors and other kids in the town. I went to school and did homework. Day to day life was uneventful. Then, on a field trip, Solveiga pulled me aside to tell me that my mom had died. You have no idea the relief I felt. I was terrified that she would show up one day and take me back to that apartment and the misery. I used to cling to Solveiga like glue. When I learned that my mom could never come for me again, I didn't need to stick to Solveiga as much anymore. I also found out that my dad killed himself shortly after my mom ran away with me.

When I was eight, Solveiga and I went to the orphanage to pick up two new girls. Stella was eight and Victoria was nine. Well, funny thing, they

were among the few kindergartners who, like me, stayed at the school all week. We lived, played, and fought together for the next two years. Sometimes, two ganged up on one. Other times, we were all upset with each other.

School was also hard. I got into many fights. I learned how to take care of myself. I had to. No one would stick up for an orphan. I got into fights with kids around home, too. I was probably one of the meanest kids around. If you hurt me, you would get worse back. I became tough and ruthless.

That same year, Solveiga told me I was going to America to be hosted by the family who had adopted Felicita, who was now Kate. I argued with Solveiga, begged her not to send me away, especially to a country across the ocean. But she knew best.

I flew to America with two supervising adults and a huge group of orphans, all traveling to spend

time with host families. I stayed with Kate's family. It was great. She translated for me. We went lots of places, had movie days, visited the beach, and did crafts and other things. After a month, I went back to Latvia. The following summer, I was hosted by friends of that family. At first, I was scared, but I had a great time with them. I stayed with the same couple the following winter.

America was like vacation. Latvia meant the return to a harsh reality. I treasured those good times. I didn't know if I would see the American couple again but I hoped so. And I did. That next summer, I found out that Brandon and Miriam Madeiros wanted to adopt me.

They rented a small apartment in Latvia for a month. I stayed there with them. We were required to see if living together would work. We played games, toured Riga, took the train to the beach and tried out a lot of restaurants. Well, as many as we could. They are gluten and dairy free.

**No one would stick up
for an orphan.**



Photo credit © Katie Gerrard



I had to work hard to let them be my parents.



We used Google translate and lots of pointing. Then, they brought me home, to America.

At first, life was pretty bumpy, I would say. I was nervous and determined to make this work. When you have been repeatedly sent back into dangerous situations, fear stays with you for a long time. You get scared of making people so angry that they won't want you anymore. I was terrified of being sent back. I also wasn't used to having so many rules to follow. I had to work hard to let them be my parents.

This was no longer a vacation. There was so much to get used to. The food was different, but I love the meat, mashed potatoes, soups and, most of all, my mom's special meatloaf. At first, I did not like

olives or peanut butter but got used to them. The dairy here upset my stomach.

I miss some Latvian food, like bread filled with meat and onions. That was our specialty around Easter. I miss plov, an orange rice with sausage. But most of all, I miss the sandwiches that we used to have once a week. I don't know how to make them, but they were delicious! The only Latvian dish I make is cold beet soup. We used to have that almost every day during the summer and never tired of it.

In Latvia, I lived in a really small town near the woods where you know everyone. When I was adopted, we lived in San Jose, so you can imagine

Not knowing something or not doing things perfectly was OK.

the adjustment. People didn't know each other there. You couldn't talk to strangers because they might kidnap you. My new environment seemed really big and dangerous. Plus, everything was "go go go" and "don't waste time." Now, we live in Idaho, a little more like where I came from, with a lot of wooded land and friendly people.

My new mom labeled everything, from forks to clothing, so I picked up English pretty fast. I also learned about faith and became a Christian. Just as I was getting used to my new life, along came a little brother, Oliver. It was exciting and hard at the same time. There was so much to deal with, but I have since realized that people never stop learning. Not knowing something or not doing things perfectly was OK.

I have also learned that, despite how dark and painful the past has been, it's important not to give up hope. There were times that I wanted to die. But then I would never have found the family I was meant to have. I was adopted at ten and will

be seventeen in April. I have two great little brothers, Oliver (six) and Henry (three). I have wonderful parents, who discipline me with love, awesome grandparents, good friends and a strong faith.

I still keep in touch with the girls who lived with me and Solveiga. Kate (and her sister) are among my best friends. Stella and Victoria (now Emma) were adopted a few months after me. They live in Texas with twelve siblings. Their dad is in the military. I was offered the chance to change my first name but opted to keep Ilze. My parents added the middle name.

When people find out that I was adopted from Latvia, they have so many questions. It is hard to talk about. But I remind myself that there is a reason I went through all that. My heart goes out to those of you who suffer like I did. I want you to know that it will get better. Hang in there. The struggle will make you stronger. You have so much potential waiting for you. God has a plan. Everyone's story is unique.

Ilze Madeiros is a high school junior, homeschooled by her mom.



She looks forward to college, in another year and a half. Ilze plans to become a high school math or history teacher and would like to join the Navy. She loves working outside, playing with her siblings, hanging out with friends and family. She enjoys learning, doing crafts, and participating in sports, especially soccer. Ilze loves music and animals. She is crazy about horses. Ilze encourages people by writing letters or notes. Her life's work will be to bring hope and encouragement to the suffering and lost. She strives to serve God and bring glory to Him to the best of her ability.



Ilze (age 10); at a park close to home; San Jose, CA; 2016



Bracelet and ring, Mirabilis Art Jewelry by Ruxandra Papa

What's in Your

ShoebOX?

By Dave Ribble

Photo credit © Dan Cristian Pădureț

Metaphorically speaking, we all have one, you know.

Think of it as a sort of holding tank, a depository for all those dreams you told yourself you would one day like to take on. You might have a recurring dream of becoming the world's greatest something, or the richest, or the most successful. Or it may be where you dream of owning your own business or becoming known for your philanthropy. The dreams are there as long as you have an imagination and believe you can be, do, have anything you want.

Inside the ShoebOX are also other things that take up space in your head and heart. There are unresolved hurts, regrets, unanswered prayers, and other things you vowed you would handle one day, but just not yet. The things you dwell upon the most tend to stay at the forefront, pushing back some of the other issues and making them less easily accessible. Why do we tend to dwell on the more convenient ones, do you suppose?

They're all there, in this private space you carry with you.

You can always take your Magic ShoebOX down, lift the lid and look again at what you have placed in there. Are there unreached goals? Are there any someday desires you have put away? How about regrets you still hold onto? We all have them.

And, as we move into 2023, here's the most important thing to examine: What are these dreams, desires, curiosities, unresolved hurts, and painful memories actually doing *for* you? Why are they there? What made them so important that you continue to carry them?

If you have unresolved issues with someone, can you fix that? If you can, you know that when you do you will feel better and you can toss that one out of the box forever. Over. Done with. Gone. If you cannot do anything to fix it or rewrite history so you feel better about it, chalk it up to your Life experiences, take the lesson, recognize there will never be anything more you can do and move on. Either way, move on!





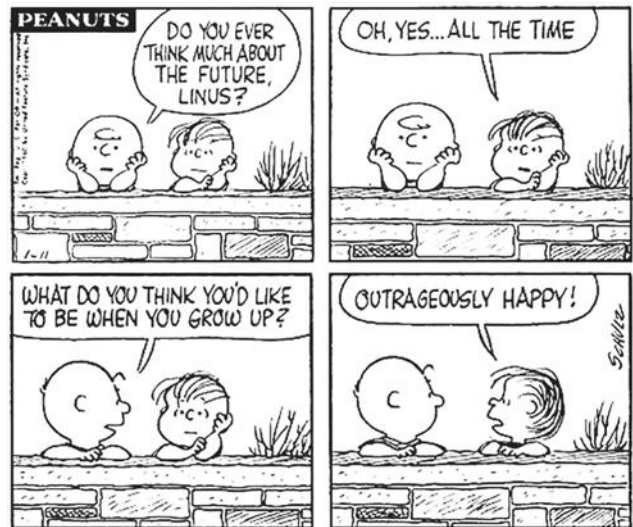
Take the dream of a new job or starting a business: Instead of just focusing on the actual ‘thing’ or the ‘business you still think would be amazing to take on while you still can,’ look for the feeling behind the reason you placed that in your magic shoebox in the first place. What would make all that work and effort worth it and welcome, even to this day? Is it ego or do you firmly believe you were supposed to do this? Ask yourself. And, if your answer is still just as strong as ever, start figuring out how you can go for it and . . . go for it, because you will be happy doing so. You! Not everyone else. You!



Gauge every dream, desire, condition, circumstance and fantasy against the feeling you believe will come from going for it or fixing it or addressing it. If you are not certain that the good feeling you’re looking for will be there, take another look and trade it for something that fits better. Are there other ways to get that feeling? Maybe that means having a partner in the new venture. Maybe your love of music sends you in a direction that doesn’t require learning piano but it does put you in that environment and you cannot wait to go to work every day.

When we were kids, older folks liked to ask us what we wanted to ‘be’ when we grow up, which generally meant some sort of occupation, like doctor, lawyer, dentist, baseball player. I was never happy when I had to declare an answer I knew little about.

So, when I came across Charlie Brown and Linus having this discussion, I found my answer, too!



We all carry around stuff that doesn’t matter anymore. Have you noticed?

Years ago, there was a musical on Broadway called *Is There Life After High School?* loosely inspired by Ralph Keyes’ best-selling book of the same name. Jeffrey Kindley and Craig Carnelia are credited for the music and lyrics that have always represented for me certain universally common thoughts and feelings we all have, to one degree or another. Here are the first two stanzas to give you a taste:

The Kid Inside

*There's a kid inside, and I have him with me always.
There's a kid inside, walking down old high school hallways.
There's a kid inside, at a desk, at a dance, in the halls and the showers . . .
There's a kid inside, to this very day.*

*And he makes a fuss over some A-Plus that I shouldn't still remember,
And he makes a try for that high pop fly that I fumbled one September.
And he goes along, getting hurt, getting mad, fighting fights that are over . . .
And unless I'm strong, all my senses get carried away.*

The brilliant lyrics are so pointedly accurate that Barry Manilow chose this song as one of his top dozen Broadway tunes for an album, even though the show opened and closed a week later.

This is the Magic Shoebox stuff I'm talking about. You've been placing important things in your own box for most all of your life. There are great memories in there. There are dreams unfulfilled. There are exciting recollections and achievements that made you feel good. There are shortcomings you still try to justify or replay in your head because you feel you failed. There are disappointments you haven't yet let go of so you can move on.

Pull up those things that no longer serve you. Love them and release them. Let them go. Give them to the ocean. Start replacing them with the many new and exciting things you would like to accomplish in 2023. Take them with you to your dreams tonight, and start dreaming bigger dreams.

At the end of your life, the person who will care the most about whether or not you were happy will be *you*, and you alone. What is it that lights you up, flips your switch, gets your motor running? What do you need to handle now so you hit the ground running in the new year with a plan? What is it you came here to contribute?

Les Brown once said, “[T]he graveyard is the richest place on earth, because it is here that you will find all the hopes and dreams that were never fulfilled, the books that were never written, the songs that were never sung, the inventions that were never shared, the cures that were never discovered, all because someone was too afraid to take that first step, keep with the problem or [remain] determined to carry out their dream.”

When you give yourself permission to conjure up new ideas, notions, dreams to replace ones that you were never really going to go after anyway, you stir the pot and Universe hears you. Don't be surprised when some of those ideas you are now focusing on start to develop into potentialities. New people will come into your life. New opportunities will unfold. Let the flow begin!

Set your Intention for what you desire by first asking yourself how you believe you will *feel* when it comes to fruition. If you can imagine feeling excited, happy and in the flow of your life the best possible way, you're on the right track. You will have a lot going for you. The rest of the world will take notice, too.



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Bridge the Resolution Gap

By René Johnson

Resolutions are merely fleeting aspirations.

As the clock struck midnight around the globe, millions instantly transitioned into a new year full of hope and promise. Some looked back with feelings of good riddance while others dreamed about a clean slate upon which to record this year's resolutions. And a few, a rare breed, celebrated the achievements of their last year's goals.

If we all transition together and have an equal number of days available, why would it matter if we have resolutions or set goals? It's the same thing, isn't it?

I recall a commercial from a few years back, showing a guy at the gym, dressed in his shiny new exercise clothes, stepping up on a scale to check his weight. He then proceeds to run around the scale several times, hops back on, looks at his results, and to his dismay, he hadn't lost more weight. Obviously, his expectations were unrealistic. Weight loss goals take time, effort and persistence. But how often do people resolve to lose weight and only attempt to change a few bad habits, while

expecting big results. This leads to disastrous discouragement and failure.

Many people get caught up in the excitement of making New Year's resolutions but often fail to bring about lasting change. The resolutions are merely fleeting aspirations, not backed by a solid plan, which cultivates the discipline to see them through.

Such hopeful resolutions don't take into consideration the two fundamentals of lasting change: personal awareness and responsibility. Most people approach resolutions in an "all or nothing" fashion, like the guy at the gym. But for true transformation, we must first address our beliefs (awareness) and our personal commitment (responsibility).

Consider your current situation versus the desired result. What beliefs do you possess today that lead to habits and behaviors that might hold you back? In essence, why haven't you already made the

changes you want? These beliefs are the ones often reinforced by your limiting self-talk and assumptions about your worthiness and capabilities. If these beliefs and assumptions are not addressed early on, you'll likely face their resistance as you struggle to change. Maybe you will even give up on a perfectly good goal.

Uncovering these is easier when you define your preferred situation. How does this look? How are you showing up and what are you achieving? Then compare the two and note the "chasm" between awareness of where you are and what it will take to arrive at your desired outcome.

Can I let you in on a secret? Many will shrink their potential because they lack the courage to self-assess. Instead, they'll proclaim hollow resolutions knowing they have no real intention of fulfilling them. But by taking personal responsibility, you'll build a bridge over the chasm to manifest even impossible dreams.

But don't just take it from me. There are several examples of ordinary people achieving extraordinary results. In doing so, they too had to cross their chasm. Did you know J.K. Rowling, the author of the *Harry Potter* series, was a single mother on welfare before she picked up a pen and reached for her dream, which led to a multi-million-dollar

enterprise? And at age 10, the only word Jerry Yang knew in English was "shoe," and he would later become a co-founder of Yahoo. Or you may view yourself as having achieved all your potential. Astronaut Neil Armstrong flew over 200 different types of aircraft, yet he's known for a single step on the moon. What stars do you have yet to reach?

Long-term goals are the key to transformation and success. They are more effective than New Year's resolutions because they provide a long-term focus and help people stay motivated and on track. Setting such goals can be daunting, but with the right approach, all of us can be successful.

Here are five key concepts to consider when determining the best goals to set and how to create focus, overcome obstacles, and celebrate success along the way.

1. Determine Your Goals: Decide what you want to achieve and why. Get clear about where you are and where you want to grow. Next, ask yourself what you want to accomplish long-term and why. Make sure your goals are specific and measurable. It's also important to consider what resources you'll need to achieve your goals. From my experience, the right people and opportunities reveal themselves when you are clear.



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2. **Create a Plan:** Once you've determined your goals, you will need a plan. Break down your goals into smaller, more manageable steps and establish a timeline for each. Big goals are never achieved in a single bound! Establishing priorities for each week or month will help you stay on track and ensure that you're making progress.

3. **Focus on the Process:** It's easy to get overwhelmed when setting long-term goals. To stay motivated, focus on the process rather than the end result. A true goal, not just a task, will require personal growth, so note even the smaller milestones by keeping a journal. Establish weekly action steps that leverage the previous. Rinse and repeat. You will be amazed at how quickly you close the gap.

4. **Overcome Obstacles:** There will be problems along the way. It's important to recognize these hindrances from the beginning and develop strat-

Celebrate each small victory.

egies to overcome them. You could seek help from a mentor or take a break to recharge. Also, consider your qualities and strengths in other areas and how you could integrate and leverage those. We have much more capability than we give ourselves credit for. Finally, lean in and challenge yourself to grow while fulfilling your goals. Who you are

becoming is just as important!

5. **Celebrate Success:** Finally, it's important to honor your successes. Acknowledging accomplishments will help keep you motivated and remind you why you're working so hard. It builds our confidence by setting a new standard for our capabilities. Celebrate each small victory. Keep going, even if you don't reach your goal immediately. Through persistence and tapping into your purpose and passion, you'll gain strength and re-energize with every celebration!

Did you make some resolutions for 2023? Are you already tired of this abstract obligation? Setting long-term goals is essential for achieving success and fulfilling your more significant potential. Start setting long-term goals today to achieve more than a resolution that fizzles out.

René Johnson is the author of *Leaving Your Comfort Zone* and a *See Beyond Magazine* editorialist, writing about Personal Power. She is the CEO of Power Zone Coaching. René's passion for leadership and instruction using her Power Zone Principles™ helps people break through to their "inner" leader and activate their Power Zones to achieve goals and develop positive influence. René is an ICF accredited, certified empowerment coach, a graduate of IPEC, an internationally recognized motivational speaker, and a nationally awarded leadership development consultant and trainer for corporate, private, and non-profit communities. René loves outdoor activities and spending time with friends. She volunteers for a local dog rescue and participates in civic engagement. René is blessed with two grown daughters and several adorable grandkids.

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