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Winter 2019

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From the Publisher

Do you experience anxiety? It's normal to feel anxious at times, but if you feel anxious all the time and it is starting to impact your everyday life, then you may suffer from an anxiety disorder. Statistics Canada research shows that anxiety disorders are very common; 3 million Canadian adults have a mood and/or anxiety disorder. So, if you suffer from anxiety as well, know you're not alone. Writer and *Soul Searching* columnist Tara Richardson talks about anxiety and offers clever ways to help you combat it. She also suggests some great organizations that can help you manage your anxiety if you need the extra support. Check out her article, *Anxiety - A Secret Today, Immobilized Tomorrow* on page 13.

Another great feature article we have for you this issue discusses how you can replace your current TV service with a streaming service if you're ready to make that change. Writer Hilary Thompson discusses in detail everything you need to know to make the switch successfully in her article, *Cut the Cord and Stream Smarter* on page 24.

I am also very happy to report that we have Josie Myers on board as our new family columnist! Josie lives in Durham Region with her husband and son, and she looks forward to sharing her parenting journey with you. Be sure to head on over to page 32 and check out her first column; she suggests some creative things you can do together with your family to make the holiday season less stressful.

In other news, we are currently on the lookout for a financially savvy person to take over our *Money Matters* column. If you work in finance, or have a background in finance, and love to share your financial knowledge with others, please contact Wendy at editor@thelocalbizmagazine.ca

I hope you enjoy reading our Winter 2019 issue. Feel free to share your thoughts on it. You can connect with us through our website www.thelocalbizmagazine.ca and Facebook page.

Happy Holidays!

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher

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From the Editor

It's interesting how the things we experienced as children during the holidays is what we tend to associate the holidays with as

adults. For me, it has to do with the food. My parents lived in England for a few years and the Christmas dinner I grew up having was turkey with traditional English trimmings. My husband who is Italian grew up with a very typical Italian meal at Christmas time. Although we try to mesh both of our culture's cuisines during the holidays, for me, Christmas isn't quite the same until I have my mom's traditional turkey dinner. For writer Kelly Wilk, it's about the traditions she shared with her family growing up and also the holiday entertaining. She fondly recalls the warm, spicy scent of mulled wine, the gigantic bowl of eggnog and the frothy, marshmallow bedecked hot chocolate. Now, she's opening her doors and sharing her signature version of these drinks but with an adult twist! Check out her delicious recipes for mulled wine, fireside punch and spiked eggnog using classics like ouzo, scotch, port, rum and wine in the mix. You can find her article, *Enchanting Holiday Spirits* on page 8.

Speaking of holidays and winter time, have you ever attended a wedding in the middle of winter? Would you ever consider getting married during the winter months? For most, the answer is a resounding 'no'. However, more and more couples nowadays are saying 'yes' to a winter wedding, and it's not surprising why. Money of course, is the biggest motivator. If you are looking to save money, getting married in the winter months (with the exception being the holidays and Valentine's Day) makes the most sense. However, there are other reasons in addition to money that make winter weddings a sought-after option among engaged couples. Writer Sam Burton researches this trend in more detail in her article, *The Winter of Contentment: Why You Should Give Winter Weddings a Fair Chance* on page 19.

As always, I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the magazine. Feel free to send me your feedback on it. If you would like to pitch a story, or write for us, you can reach me at editor@thelocalbizmagazine.ca

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I'll catch up with you in 2020!

Wendy Chiavalon
Editor-in-Chief

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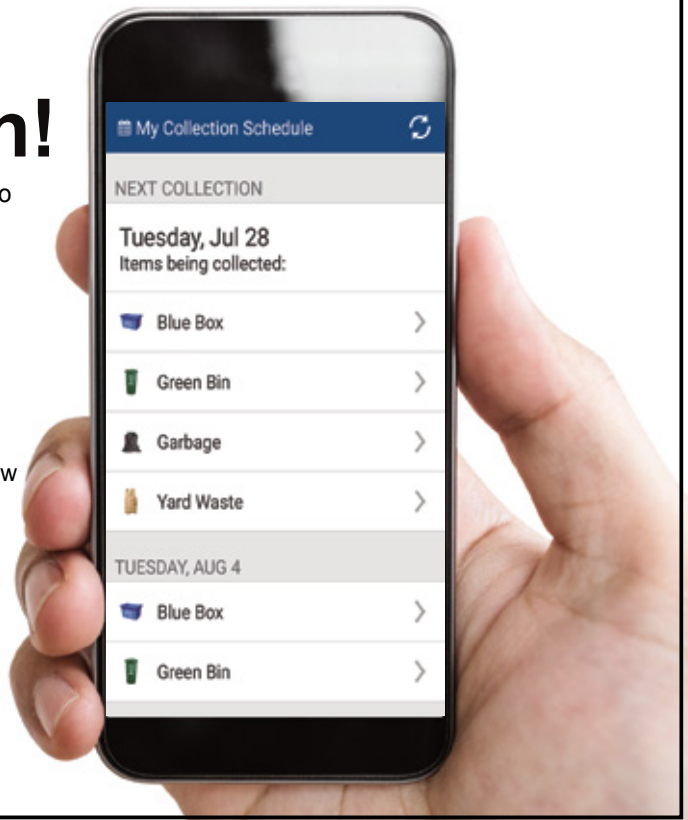


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ENCHANTING HOLIDAY SPIRITS

by Kelly Wilk

There were many holiday traditions I looked forward to as a child, icing the gingerbreads (no blue icing as apparently that was sacrilege), sitting with dad in our Christmas pyjamas reading *T’was The Night Before Christmas* and of course, looking out the window at the multi-coloured lights painting the blanket of snow when the sun went down.

Growing up with a fierce childhood love for Christmas, I have also loved “growing up” my Christmas; it is my favourite time to entertain! I was the kid who sat at the top of the stairs and listened to the parties my parents had, hoping to be invited down and hoping even more that there was shrimp. Now, I am opening my

door to friends and family I love, serving up edible and potable productions.

The holidays are a time when I have relied on traditions of Christmas past. I vividly recall the warm spicy scent of mulled wine, the gigantic bowl of eggnog and the frothy, marshmallow bedecked hot chocolate. The grown ups also got into good bottles of scotch, port and ouzo. We were no strangers to friendly holiday spirits in our house and I have endeavoured to keep an open door for them. However, before I dive in, I would like to explore some liquors that are great for warming the cockles of your heart.

Ouzo

This liquorice-flavoured liquor is famous for its roots in Greece. Anise is a curious spice made all the more curious when the alcohol is pressed out of the remnants of grapes formally used for wine. It can also be flavoured with mint or coriander. It is an innocent looking little spirit that packs a punch at 40% alcohol on top of the high sugar content. If that wasn't sweet enough, my parents would give it a curious treatment, floating a coffee bean in

it and setting it on fire. After the little blue bonfire extinguished, they would drink up and eat the bean.

Scotch

This was another favourite of my parents who would add a little *Drambuie* to their glass and call it a Rusty Nail. Good quality scotch like *Glenfiddich* was often a gurgling gift under the tree that mom adored. This brand as per usual is distilled from barley and in this case fermented in a barrel of Douglas fir, matured in oak that previously contained bourbon and sherry and is known for its distinctive “pear notes”. That, and the good Scottish air it drinks in (www.glenfiddich.com).

A scotch enthusiast I spoke to named Bob Taylor claims, “there isn’t a bad scotch”. Even so, he prefers a 12-year-old single malt whisky, meaning malted at a single distillery and kept in different casks for at least three years. However, this would run you around \$90 for a 750ml bottle which only increases in price with age.

There are a number of ways to treat a serving of this liquor, sometimes with tonic like my very proper grandmother did, with an ice cube, or as Taylor explained, with a drop of distilled water, releasing the “nose” or fragrance. And of course, giving it a good swirl in the glass helps too. There are many scotches and scotch blends, i.e. Highland, Lowland, Speyside and Islay (Eyelay).

While scotch may be grand for the parents, I prefer something sweeter. Normally I serve non-alcoholic hot cider but all this talk of other spirits has inspired me to come up with something sweet and cool.

Kelly’s Fireside Punch

- 2 cups *Grand Marnier*
- 1 cup bourbon
- 4 cups of apple cider
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 cups of pomegranate juice
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 4 tbsp of vanilla
- 1 orange sliced
- tonic water

In a punch bowl, add *Grand Marnier*, bourbon, cider, juices, cinnamon sticks and vanilla. Slice orange and add. Cover and chill until the guests arrive (you and the beverage). Before you serve add tonic water and a little ice to each glass.

Port

Oh! How my mother, sister, wife and I have gotten ourselves into trouble with this fine spirit. Nothing warms me more after a meal, especially with a dense slice of flourless chocolate torte and



raspberries. Port is a fortified wine made famous by the folks in you guessed it, Portugal!

My preference is the tawny port made with red grapes and aged two years, made by *Graham’s* in the Douro region. I do also enjoy *Taylor Fladgate*, particularly the late bottled varieties. This port maker keeps the liquor in casks for four to six years before letting it see the light of day. It has a multitude of time to mature and can be consumed straight away, no decanting necessary. Their ruby port is the most economical as it is aged in stainless steel casks and does not improve with age.

Graham’s only ferment their grapes for two days and then they go through a process of fermentation by adding natural grape spirit and brandy. It is ready to drink after half of the grapes have been converted to alcohol. This makes it splendidly rich and can be aged very well in increments of 10 years. *Taylor Fladgate* on the other hand bottles their product to age after 20 months.

White port (made with white grapes) is an alternative offering that makes sparkling cocktails go down smoothly. Rosé is similar to rosé wine as it is not brought into contact long with the red grape skin. And lastly, vintage port like wine is made from grapes grown



in a vintage year, which is determined by the producer. It is aged two-and-a-half-years and then bottled, requiring 10 to 40 years to mature (www.taylor.pt/en).

As the namesake for my traditional Christmas affair, I have made a number of versions of my mulled wine recipe using red wine and port. Made practical by the Romans to keep wine from spoiling, and made famous by the British (and Charles Dickens) as a holiday drink, mulled wine is an opportunity to show off your creative flair.

I love adding a generous glug of tawny port to a few bottles of rich *Jackson-Triggs Cabernet Frank - Sauvignon* to make mulled wine. However, a cheaper bottle of the *Naked Grape Shiraz* flavoured with blackberry and spice is good depending on how long your guest list is. If you want something a little lighter go with a pinot noir.

Mulled wine can be flavoured with not only a variety of spices but also fruit. I was very fortunate to visit the *Aswan Spice Market* in Egypt. The crowd of vendors and shoppers was intense, and the heavy aromas that seemed to permeate everything were remarkable. Stores with shelves and shelves of spices in baskets and glass jars sold in bulk (and haggled over) were a-plenty. I loaded up on frankincense, cloves, and cardamom and called my

offering an “Egyptian Mulled Wine” that year. However, this year I would like to up my anti with a new creation.

Kelly's White Christmas Mulled Wine

- 4 litres pinot grigio
- 1 cup white port
- 2 cups pear juice
- 1 cup lime cordial
- 4 limes sliced
- 1 pear sliced
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 5 cloves
- 5 cardamom pods
- 1 cup whole cranberries

Put wine, port, pear juice and lime cordial into a large pot or Dutch oven and begin simmering on low. Cut limes and pears and add with cinnamon sticks. Put the cloves and cardamom pods into a tea ball in the pot. Let it simmer for an hour before guests arrive and when they do, add whole cranberries. Keep warm on low, serve in a glass with a handle, and enjoy a winter white, Christmas coloured mulled wine!

Sherry

Like port, sherry wines are fortified with grape spirit but is not stopped in its fortification process and therefore it is dryer. These unique flavours are achieved by a film of yeast in the casks preventing oxidation, which makes an impact on the wine. Sherry enjoys an exclusive designation as it can only be called “sherry” if grown in Spain, the Jerez-Xeres-Sherry region, but some view sherry as the poor cousin in the liquor family due to an underappreciated status.

Made from white grapes, there are many varieties of sherry depending on how long it is left to oxidize in the barrel. Some are classified as dry, naturally sweet or just sweet. For dry like a white wine try *Fino* with its almond flavour, *Oloroso* with its aromas of spice and tobacco, *Manzanilla* with its floral notes or *Amontillado* with its hazelnut flavour.

This spirit was used by Edgar Allan Poe in *The Cask of Amontillado* as the irresistible vintage that lured a doomed wine enthusiast to his death. Don't let that put you off, Poe knew his stuff, but if you prefer a naturally sweet wine like a dessert wine, try a *Muscatel* made on the coast with notes of citrus and floral, or *Pedro Ximenez* a very dark velvety wine approaching more of a dried fruit flavour like dates, figs and honey aromas and going to more coffee notes as it ages. The sweet sherry varieties are made by blending the above types of wine in a process called *cabeceo* and come in a pale cream, medium and cream. (www.sherry.wine/sherry-cask/types-of-sherry-wine)

Eggnog

This drink is one I never liked as a child, but I have definitely grown to love, perhaps that has to do with my fondness for rum? At Christmas, a half-litre of 'nog would always turn up in the fridge ready for a dark, spiced splash of rum and a cinnamon stick, but once upon a time my parents made it from scratch and you can too! However, I would like to spice it up even more with this spin on the old family favourite.

Homemade Eggnog

- 12 eggs (yolks and whites separated)
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2 ½ cups rum
- 1 cup crème de cacao
- ½ cup *Frangelico*
- 1 litre whipping cream
- 2 ½ tsp vanilla
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp clove
- 6 tbsp icing sugar
- cocoa powder or ground nutmeg for garnish

Mix egg yolks and sugar and beat until thick. Add rum, crème de cacao and *Frangelico*. Add 1 cup of whipping cream and stir until blended. Chill for an hour allowing the eggs to get mellow. Add vanilla, cinnamon and cloves and refrigerate overnight. Whip remaining whipping cream and 12 remaining egg whites. Fold together cream and egg whites and slowly add to egg yolk mixture. Serve with nutmeg or cocoa powder for garnish.

For the Kid In All of Us

I cannot however forget my early Christmas tradition of hot chocolate, but I think I need to take it to a new level. I love making authentic chai especially since that trip to Egypt, so here goes.

Kelly's Peppermint Chai Hot Chocolate

- 4 bags of black chai tea (or loose 4 tbsp)
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 5 cardamom pods
- 5 whole cloves
- ½ cup brown sugar or other sweetener
- 2 cups milk or coconut milk (from a can will be thicker)
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup peppermint schnapps
- crushed candy canes or peppermint stick for garnish



Boil four cups of water in a pan to steep the chai. Add cinnamon sticks and vanilla. Put cardamom and cloves in a tea ball and boil until dark and fragrant. Strain out the spices and add the sugar. Once sugar has dissolved, add the milk. Heat until steaming and whisk in the cocoa powder. Stir in the peppermint schnapps and pour into mugs rimmed with crushed candy canes or garnished with a peppermint stick.

And now, I want to leave you to your stirring and your pouring, to your shaking and your mixing. I hope your holiday brings you beloved traditions and new discoveries. I must tell you, after coming up with new concoctions for this article, I have a real dilemma. I have found a new winner, as the white mulled wine is spreading the smell of Christmas through the house. So, can I justify both? Maybe I'll just invite more people to the party.

May all the spirits that visit be friendly and whatever you make be delicious!

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and queer parent blogger for *PinkPlayMags*. She has recorded a podcast called *Fashioning Families*. For more information about the podcast, as well as events and publications, please visit her personal website, Kelly Wilk – Brave . Creative . Me.



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Anxiety A Secret Today Immobilized Tomorrow

by Tara Richardson

I think it's safe to say that everyone reading this article has felt anxiety at some point in their life. Job interviews? Public speaking? New parents? Suspicious person? Airplanes? Busy malls? Driving on highways? Fear of the unknown?

Although feeling anxious is an adaptive function of our bodies in order to defend ourselves quickly in times of danger, sometimes our body perceives danger when there is none implicated. Most of the above examples of anxiety-provoking situations are not actually life-threatening, yet our body may react as though they are. It's normal to have some levels of anxiety, but when we are in a frequent state of anxiety it may become a diagnosable anxiety disorder.

According to a 2014 survey by Statistics Canada, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness, and nearly 3 million adult Canadians reported having a mood and/or anxiety disorder.

What is an Anxiety Disorder?

According to Anxiety Canada, an anxiety disorder is defined by having long periods of time spent being anxious and/or anxiety that is out of proportion to situations and negatively impacts aspects of an individual's life.

It is a common misconception that an individual with an anxiety disorder is easy to recognize; that they're turning tomato red

and hyperventilating in the middle of a busy festival. While this is certainly possible, the truth is that mental illness is often not visually apparent.

On the surface, I look like any other 30-something woman. I am usually articulate, I have a career in the mental health field that requires me to do some public speaking occasionally, and I do everyday tasks with seemingly little effort. All of this is true, and, I have suffered from social anxiety since the age of 12. I have had a lot of therapy which has been helpful in managing symptoms, but sometimes it still gets the better of me. I will often have a dialogue in my head contemplating what others may be thinking of me and assuming that they are judging me harshly, leading me to the conclusion that I am making a fool of myself. It can be absolutely exhausting.

Yet, you would likely never know unless I told you.

Anxiety disorders can be difficult to detect because we often mask it, through food, alcohol, drugs, sex, even productivity. In fact, many people with anxiety would also be classified as successful individuals and can manage their anxiety effectively. But for some, anxiety can be debilitating. The good news is that when well-treated, an individual with an anxiety disorder can live a full and flourishing life.

Anxiety and Physical Health

Anxiety may be a mental disorder, but the many symptoms of anxiety tend to be physical in nature. This makes sense, considering that the function of anxiety is to prepare your body to respond to a threat. According to anxietycanada.com, some physical symptoms include:



- An increase in heart rate and rapid breathing which allows you to run away quickly if needed. However, this rapid breathing can also make you feel dizzy and light-headed
- Sweating
- Nausea and upset stomach due to your body shutting down non-vital systems unrelated to survival
- Chest pain as your muscles become tense
- Tingling sensations from your hairs standing up and being more attuned to even minute sensations
- Numbness because of decreased blood flow to unnecessary parts of your body
- Unreality and/or bright vision. During times of stress, pupils will dilate to help us see clearer, but can also lead to feelings of unreality

It can be helpful to understand the function of the physical signs of anxiety in order to remind yourself the reasons you are feeling certain symptoms. I find being able to rationalize that the dizziness I feel is from my body responding to a potential threat (even if said threat is unknown), makes it easier to practice deep breathing and potentially stave off a panic attack. (I do want to remind you, however, to please seek medical attention if you are concerned about any symptoms you may be experiencing.)

When our bodies are under consistent perceived danger, we produce excessive amounts of the stress hormone cortisol. Consistently high levels of cortisol have the potential to lead to various health conditions such as: suppression of the immune system, irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive disorders; heart conditions such as premature coronary artery disease and heart attacks; muscle tension; short-term memory loss and other cognitive symptoms; frequent tension headaches; and pain from clenching your jaw. Left untreated, anxiety can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts.

When to seek help for your anxiety

If anxiety is causing you a lot of distress, interferes with your ability to live life or being able to carry out daily tasks, it is recommended that you get help.

Many people do not seek treatment for their anxiety because, despite the increased awareness surrounding mental illness, there is still a stigma attached to getting help for one's mental health. I work in a hospital dedicated to mental health and many people find it stigmatizing to even walk into the building. But seeking help for your anxiety in a timely matter is so important so that it does not become worse.

There are plenty of ways to treat anxiety disorders that may or may not involve taking medication. Trying new coping skills is a way to understand what is and isn't helpful in your own recovery. Keep an open mind and try each skill at least once and then continue with the ones that are most effective for you. Remember, recovery for each person is an individualized journey.

10 Ways to combat anxiety

1. Get excited instead of anxious

There is research that instead of trying to suppress your anxiety, it may be more helpful to reappraise the situation. Next time you are feeling anxious, try thinking about what excites you about this situation. For example, I was recently speaking on a panel and was very nervous I would say something stupid. Instead of trying to stuff this anxiety down inside of me, I considered what I was excited about in doing this speaking engagement- the chance to discuss such an important topic in a public setting.

2. Set a worry time

If you spend a lot of time in your day worrying, try to block out a specific chunk of time each day and set out to worry in that time only. For example, if you set your worry time for 7-7:45pm and you catch a worry at 9am, write it down for your 7pm session. This will allow you to carry on with your day knowing it can be sufficiently worried about later. You will likely catch many worries throughout your day but hopefully by the time you go to worry about them they won't seem as intense.

3. Deep breathing

When we are having symptoms of anxiety, we often take shallow breaths. It is important to practice deep breathing. The best thing about this is that you can literally do it anywhere and be discreet. One breathing exercise that I have found beneficial is box breathing. Find a square or rectangular shape in the room. Inhale as your eyes move up one vertical side, hold your breath as you go across the top, then exhale as you go down the side, and hold this exhale as you go across the bottom. Repeat this as many times as needed.

4. Exercise

It will come as no surprise that exercise is beneficial for everyone, but especially if you have a mental illness. Exercise may improve mental health because it helps the brain cope better with stress. According to the Anxiety & Depression Association of America, just 5 minutes of aerobic exercise begin to impact anxiety levels.

5. Get plenty of sleep

Lack of sleep will impact anyone negatively and will compound certain mental health conditions. Try to stick to a consistent sleep schedule as much as possible.

6. Consider the worst-case scenario

This is an exercise from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) that encourages you to think of the worst-case scenario, best-case scenario, and most-realistic scenario. Many times, we conjure up scary visions of the worst-case scenario happening and then let our brains run with it. This exercise is designed to help you catastrophize less and change your outlook. In a 2015 TEDx talk, psychologist Jennice Vilhauer discusses that we often don't get what we want because it's not what we expect to happen. This is the case with anxiety. I know I have missed out on opportunities to build friendships because I was so focused on the notion that I was unlikeable that I didn't socialize with people and did not build relationships, therefore reinforcing my belief that people didn't like me. It's hard not to get stuck in this self-fulfilling prophecy.

7. Avoid caffeine

Don't hate me for this one! I personally have a deep appreciation for coffee and am unwilling to give it up right now, so I make sure to drink it purposefully and carefully. And remind myself when I get shaky and anxious that it's simply caffeine coursing through my body and this feeling will pass.

8. Picture a stop sign

When you find yourself ruminating, visualize a stop sign to remind you that ruminating is not helpful. (If it helps, consider where the word 'ruminate' comes from- cows ruminate when they eat their food, bring it up, and eat it again... Gross!)

9. Lean on supporters

Not everyone is blessed with wonderfully supportive family and friends but if you are, take advantage of their support. If you are not this lucky, check out some online communities, local mental health programs and/or peer support groups.

10. Talk to a trusted professional

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) have both been proven to have optimal outcomes for anxiety disorders.

CBT encourages you to notice thinking ruts and cognitive distortions, and to create a systematic approach for exposing yourself to anxiety-provoking situations while feeling safe and supported.

ACT is intended to improve your psychological flexibility and instead of focusing on reducing your anxious thoughts, this type of therapy is intended to reduce your struggle against these thoughts. If we can accept that we are having these anxious thoughts, then it becomes easier to move forward.

There is hope...

Moving beyond anxiety is entirely possible. There is hope, and, it takes persistence in challenging your anxious thoughts. Be aware of your triggers and create an action plan for when you are experiencing them.



Many people find this time of year to be incredibly stressful: family get-togethers, busy malls, pressure for holiday events to be "just right", concern about winter weather, less adherence to a healthy diet and sleep schedule, less time to practice self-care... The list could go on for weeks! So, it is entirely understandable if your anxiety symptoms worsen. Knowing that this is a possibility can potentially lessen the worry about why the anxiety is back. (Anxiety about having anxiety is real!)

So, this holiday season take deep breaths, call a supporter, and be proud of yourself for any small wins in defying your anxiety. In the words of a popular internet quote, "it's not easy but it's worth it".

Where to seek help for your anxiety

• Connexontario

• www.connexontario.ca 1-866-531-2600

• Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences

• www.ontarioshores.ca 905-430-4055

• Durham Mental Health Services

• www.dmhs.ca 905-666-0831

• Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Durham Region

• www.cmhadurham.ca 1-844-436-8760

• Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH) – Toronto

• www.camh.ca 1-800-463-2338

Tara Richardson is a wellness blogger, whose personal experience with mental illness has inspired her to dedicate her life to helping others heal and live a full, flourishing life.



Winter Events Calendar

November 15 to December 15, 2019

100 Small Artworks Show and Sale

This exhibition offers VAC members the opportunity to show and sell their artwork with the first 100 submitted artworks getting automatically accepted into the show, and 100% of the sale price going directly to the artists.

Bowmanville
www.vac.ca/100smallartworks.html
905-623-5831

November 29 to December 1, 2019

A Country Path Christmas

Welcome to the County Path Christmas. 8 stops & 25+ "Makers to Meet". Local farmers, artisans & specialty producers. Stops along the way include: Archibald Orchards & Winery, Tyrone Mills, Timeless Essentials, Rosemary Jenkins Pottery, 3Beez.buzz/Our Valley View B & B, Gallery on the Farm, Geissberger Farmhouse Cider & Knox Farm. Also, Eldad United Church is open Friday from 10 - 4, serving lunch from 11 - 2. Enniskillen Tyrone Church is open Saturday from 10 - 4, serving lunch from 11 - 2. Clarington

www.acountrypath.com
(905)263-2396

November 30, 2019

905 Comedy festival/ OUT in Oshawa

Durham's first LGBTQ Comedy show.
8:30 PM - 11:00 PM Adults | \$20
Harmony Creek Community Centre
15 Harmony Rd. N., Oshawa ON, L1G 6K8
905-725-8463
iansirota@sympatico.ca

December 1, 2019

Christmas in the Village, Winter in the Woods

Visit with the inhabitants of the pioneer village as they share their holiday customs. Enjoy Scottish Hogmanay, Welsh traditions, Victorian Christmas celebrations, Squire Jonathan's Christmas Ball, and a walk in the woods to see how Pickering's first settlers struggled in the wilderness. Backwoods Players presents the "Duffins Creek Sunday School Pageant" free with admission. Special admission fees apply. Advanced tickets on sale starting June 1, 2019 online and in person at the Pickering Museum Village Gift Shop. Pickering
www.pickering.ca
905-683-8401

December 1, 2019

Hello Holiday Makers Market

Featuring a curated collection of 40+ handmade vendors. Tickets will be \$4 at the door, or if you bring a non-perishable food item for the Uxbridge Loaves and Fishes food bank, tickets will be \$3. Kiddies under 12 are free. 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Uxbridge Arena and Community Centre
291 Brock Street West, Uxbridge ON, L9P1A6
905-852-3081
Sonya Nelson and Chantal Aschwenden
hellomakersmarkets@gmail.com

December 6, 2019

WRAP: Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Registration required through Durham Mental Health Services at 905-666-0483 or wrap@dmhs.ca. The Wellness Recovery Action Plan is a self-management tool. This prevention and wellness process aid you in getting well and staying well. 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM
Clarington Public Library, Courtice Branch
2950 Courtice Rd, Clarington ON, L1E2H8
905-623-7322
info@clarington-library.on.ca

December 7, 2019

2019 Scugog Santa Claus Parade

The Scugog Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Port Perry Lions Club bring to you the 2019 Parade Theme of a "A Christmas Miracle on Queen Street!" Both organizations are looking for adult and student volunteers to help assist in various rolls such as float organizers (adults), and elves (students) to help Santa as he travels through Port Perry. Downtown Port Perry
905-985-4971

December 7 to 31, 2019

Gingerbread Village

Amazing gingerbread village using creations made by the community in the Scugog Memorial Public Library for the last 20 years. It is a very popular event and people from all over the GTA and other parts of Ontario (and Canada) annually come to visit it during the holiday season. Gingerbread submissions accepted from December 2 to 5. Submissions are to be brought to the library. Anyone can enter a creation-it just has to be made of gingerbread and on a reasonably sized base. Port Perry
www.scugoglibrary.ca

December 8, 2019

Children's Old Fashioned Christmas

The Scugog Shores Museum Village will be holding the Children's Old-Fashioned Christmas on Sunday, December 8 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Step back in time and tour through the historic village, traditionally decorated for the holidays with evergreen boughs, bright ribbons and berries. Children will be engaged in activities throughout the village. Visit with Santa Claus and his elf; create unique ornaments to hang on your tree; decorate traditional Victorian Christmas Cards; visit with the blacksmith and print shop and explore the Museum Village on a holiday scavenger hunt. Hot chocolate and apple cider will be served throughout the day. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for students and \$2.50 for seniors. Children 12 & under are \$2, or FREE with a non-perishable food donation for Operation Scugog. *Cash only please* Scugog

December 27, 2019

Durham's Best Karaoke

Every Friday 8 to midnight at the Royal Canadian Legion. Everyone welcome 19 and up.
Ajax
905 683 2927

December 28, 2019

Rogers Hometown Hockey - Free Event

Whitby is the 13th stop on the 25 communities cross-country tour for Rogers Hometown Hockey in 2019-20. Look for highlights during the NHL broadcast between the Montreal Canadiens and Florida Panthers beginning at 6:30 pm. Free parking is available immediately beside the event at the Whitby GO Station Parking lot. There are approximately 3,000 parking spaces available. 6:30 PM - 10:00 PM
Iroquois Park Sports Centre
500 Victoria Street West, Whitby ON, L1N 9G4
inquiries@whitbyhockey.com

January 8, 2020

TOPS Weight Loss Group

Meets on Wednesdays in the Sunnyside Park Community Centre. New members welcome. Recurring. Adults: \$3.50 per week, \$46 per year.
Oshawa
905-576-2182

January 19, 2020

World Snow Day at Dagmar Ski Resort

The event is open to all families and their children. So grab your winter woollies and enjoy a fun day on the snow. Activities for the Day: - The Canadian Ski Patrol Association will be hosting a Safety on the Hill Day! - Giveaways throughout the day! - Multiple vendors to browse (TBA) - Photos with Daggy the Dog
Uxbridge
905-649-2002

February 6 to February 15, 2020

Little Women - The Broadway Musical

The timeless, captivating story is now a multi-award winning Broadway musical filled with personal discovery, heartache, hope and everlasting love. Based on Louisa May Alcott's classic 1869 semi-autobiographical novel, it focuses on the four March sisters — traditional Meg, wild, aspiring writer Jo, timid Beth and romantic Amy at home in Concord, Massachusetts \$28.

Whitby
905-668-8111

February 13 to February 22, 2020

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

This is Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize-winning drama that became a juggernaut in the world of entertainment, making an indelible impact on Broadway, Hollywood, and the entire world. Presented by Borelians Community Theatre complete with the original ending the playwright intended audiences to see, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a gripping and intensely moving masterpiece. Port Perry
905-985-8181

February 22, 2020

Tank Saturday - Winter Warfare Armoured Vehicles and Tanks in a Winter Environment

Admission includes access to the museum that houses artifacts, medals, weapons and uniforms covering 150+ years of military history from the Fenian Raids of 1866 to the conflicts of today. Explore our Military Vehicle Conservation Centre with over 60 military vehicles and Tanks on display. Adult \$10 — Student / Senior \$5
Children under 12 \$2
Military / Veteran / Cadets: FREE!
The Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum - 1000 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa
www.tankmuseum.ca

For events that may have been added after the publication date and other ideas to plan your perfect day in Durham Region, visit www.durhamtourism.ca.

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The Winter of Contentment: Why You Should Give Your Winter Wedding a Fair Chance

by Sam Burton

When most of us think of weddings, there is an instant association with warmth—which extends far out from the presence and embrace of our loved ones and friends all gathering under one literal or metaphorical roof.

We think of sand, of greenery, a crisp blue sky, and most of all, we think of sun. Beach weddings, backyard ceremonies, and a reception where you ditch your blazer have the appeal of ease, as well as the association of comfort. This is especially true for us Canadians, who, although born and bred, still cringe at the notion of a temperature dipping below zero. But what about the snow-white Christmas image we all romanticized as children? What if you chose to spend one of the most memorable days of your life during those chillier months?

There are definitely some benefits to getting hitched during the winter months that you may not have considered. This article is going to present to you the possibility of doing just that, should you be weighing your options as far as seasons go. Because believe

it or not, even summer weddings have their downfalls, such as the possibility of overheating, rain and thunderstorms disrupting a reception, and most of all, summer acts as a definite wallet drainer as it is the most popular season to get married. You'll most likely be forking over thousands just to secure the right day that is statistically unlikely to rain, and also not be booked.

The Cons of a Winter Wedding

It is relatively easy to think of the cons of a winter wedding for us Canadians because, frankly, most of us are tired of the cold. It seems to only get worse every year (climate change is real!), so why would we spend such a memorable day immersing ourselves within it?

- 1. The Indoor Problem:** Winter is a particularly difficult time for a lot of people, many of whom enjoy the outdoors in the warmer months, and feel claustrophobic once November hits. It wouldn't be practical to stage a winter wedding outside, especially since there are separate and specific needs of every guest that will be attending. Your wedding would be no fun if you spent it worrying about your grandmother getting hypothermia. So, you'll probably stick inside, which could be bothersome to some of your guests.

2. **A Rush in the Holidays:** If you choose a day that slides in around November and December, you are risking not only squishing your wedding between an already busy holiday season, but are already making it difficult for your anniversary in the future. Your anniversary celebrations are definitely going to be interrupted for familial get-togethers and seasonal related celebrations.
3. **The Weather:** Well, it's the weather that most people detest about the season. No matter how far in advance you plan, you are not going to be able to predict the possibility of snowfall, or even a snowstorm. If relatives are travelling from near and far, it won't really matter, because they might be snowed in. This includes the photographer, and even musicians that might be playing your gig.

The Pros of a Winter Wedding

We're finally at the part you are most looking forward to - all the good reasons as to why you should start considering winter as a season to host your glorious day. The reasons include financial benefits, aesthetic motivations, and a unique bragging right.

1. **Finances:** The desire to book a venue for winter weddings drops dramatically along with the temperature. (The exception to this rule is of course, booking a Christmas, New Year, Valentine's Day or Easter wedding, when prices are higher because it's a special occasion.) Choices of venues will therefore be in abundance, and the prices will plummet in unison for their services. Due to lack of popularity, owners will also be more lenient of negotiations, such as prices for certain barn weddings that don't provide heaters.

Another way that the financial weight can be lifted due to hosting a winter wedding is due to the timing of the holiday season. There is no better time to purchase sale dresses and suits than between Black Friday and Cyber Monday in the States, which also benefits us Canadians. Even if you miss these specific sale dates, you are more likely to find a dress or outfit for your special day at a cheaper price due to the lack of popularity of wedding gear during the colder months.

Your guests are also going to enjoy themselves a bit more, since their calendar is not booked up with weddings as they tend to be in the summer. If your wedding is in November, January, February or March, they are going to have less expenses since the holidays are over, and are more likely to budget you into their own finances. This will also allow them to be more generous with your gift, and maybe even free up your own budget to invite more guests!

2. **A Unique Date:** The time that comes around annually to celebrate your anniversary will be a lot more unique than most of your friends. Most people will be celebrating summer and fall anniversaries, while you and your partner give thanks to one another with a winter and seasonal flair. This is especially personal for people who enjoy the holiday seasons, whether it be Christmas, New Year's, or Valentine's Day. It'll be easier for you to save your own date that is special between the two of you, rather than sharing something common with everyone else.

3. **Some Stunning Imagery:** Sure, sunsets over sand, and blue skies towering over oceans are beautiful, but what is more original than a winter wonderland landscape that looks like it jumped right out of a fairytale? Since you'll be saving money, you'll have more to expend on a talented photographer who will capture your day in full narrative format. Sure, the chances of snow usually make most people cringe, but the risk is just as high for rain or thunderstorm for a summer wedding. There is nothing quite like the silence of a winter's night, the soft snow seemingly capable of enhancing the quiet. Just think a horse-drawn carriage, seasonal décor, hot drink choices, and multi-colored lights! These photos are going to be ones that you gaze at often, so having a background that looks like it came straight out of a magazine is bound to warm your heart for years to come.

But What about The Holidays?

Granted, once October hits, holiday season is in full swing for most Canadians. Once Thanksgiving comes to a close, Halloween blasts by, and before you know it, you're rushing around trying to check every person off your Christmas list. And in this economy, we're always likely to spend more than we initially bargained for, or even planned out. The time of year certainly does come into play when considering an event that is generally financially draining for everyone involved.

A study conducted by Wedding Wire.com stated that the average Canadian wedding cost roughly \$29,450. The same study stated that if Canadians wanted to cut this to below 20K, one of the best ways to do so would be to pick a date during the least popular months. According to the study, for the year 2020, that would be for the months of January and February. The study recommends avoiding December, and anytime between Christmas and New Year, as venues are likely to jack up the price. This also counts for attempting to book a wedding on good old St. Valentine's Day. A lot of couples will fight for it, and some will be willing to pay more. One of the costliest elements of a wedding are the flowers, and everyone knows that Valentine's Day is number one sales day for them. So, unless you want to be paying an arm and a leg for standard ceremonial bouquets, it would be best to avoid February 14th altogether.

Winter is a Frugal Option

In December of 2018, the writer of the popular blog *Millennial Boss* simply known as J, wrote a piece about her plans to marry her fiancé during a winter wedding. Although some friends and family were not happy about it, J is known for her prudent financial advice, refused to give into the nearly \$30,000 trend. She committed to \$10,000, much to the impossible outlook of her friends and family.

Here are some of the benefits of a winter wedding that will save you money and, in every way, lift the heavy burden of financial stress:

- **Cheaper venues:** J mentions the fact that the same venue her fiancé and her wanted to rent out was \$3600 less expensive during the winter than the summer.
- **Make it A Weekday:** In the wedding planning world, making your big day during the week is an incredible faux pas.



Weddings are generally hosted on a weekend to make it easier for guests, but J found that the rental of the venue was cut by \$1200 when saving the date for a Friday, as opposed to a Saturday. Her research even found that couples who choose a Sunday morning wedding will save even more money.

- **Cutting the Guest List:** It simply makes mathematical sense; the more people you invite, the more catering you're going to have to pay for. Also, the bridal couple often feels obligated to greet all of their guests, so the more guests, the more greetings. It's important to actually enjoy the day of your wedding. J noted that a friend of hers felt stressed while trying to greet over 100 guests. Paying thousands of dollars just to feel overwhelmed? Doesn't sound very fruitful.
- **Staying Positive:** Not everyone is going to understand your willingness to change up traditions when it comes to wedding planning. J notes toward the end of her blog that her parents, as well as other friends were not happy about the cutting of the guest list, the winter venue, and the weekday date. But it is important for you to enjoy one of the most memorable days of your life without wondering how you are going to get through life afterward.

In this day and age, it is important to always consider the financial blow. Getting married is supposed to be an important day in an individual's life, and despite our childhood fantasies of a flawless, stunning day to go off without a hiccup, reality simply doesn't work like that. Practical elements of planning a day that involves so many people can cause great stress. We aren't always to get exactly what we want, and that is a part of being an adult.

So, if you want a day that you are going to remember forever, it would be best to lift yourself of any excess concerns. Try to envision the day with your partner—a few close friends and loved ones, a hot cocoa bar, a toonie cash bar, some rustic and cute décor, and some warm cuddles with your sweetie. On top of that, you won't have to be eating only cereal for the rest of your marriage. Consider a winter wedding so your mind is lighter, and your photos remarkably original.

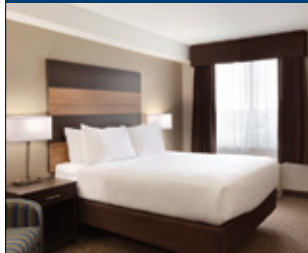
Sam Burton is a writer in the GTA with a focus on creative fiction but with an affinity for local and broader investigative journalism. Currently residing in Pickering, her striving goal in writing is to create a genuine connection with readers, whether it be through real-world events or those crafted from her own musings. Her photography portfolio can be found on instagram @typhoidandswans.



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Cut the Cord and Stream Smarter

by Hilary Thompson

So, you're ready to replace your overpriced TV service with streaming services? There are many advantages to doing so.

Chances are you don't use many of the channels you get with TV; switching to streaming means you can customize the media you pay for. And if you're already paying for internet service, cutting the cord will in most cases, reduce your monthly bill. Don't plan on downgrading your internet service, though; you'll need all that speed to support streaming, especially if you'll be using multiple devices simultaneously.

Here's everything you need to know to cut the cord successfully.

Internet Service

First, you need robust enough internet service to support smooth streaming. Different streaming services, such as Amazon, YouTube, and Vudu, provide their recommendations on speed, but they fall into the range of:

- 1 Mbps for standard-definition content
- 3-6 Mbps for 1080p HD
- 11-15 Mbps for 4K content

It's a safe bet that 5 Mbps will support streaming on one device from almost any service for standard HD content. If you live with multiple people, add the same amount of speed for each extra device you might be using simultaneously. Chances are, you'll need

to stick with broadband to get the required speed unless you have a fiber option in your area.

Devices

There are a couple of main setups you can use to stream on your TV. If you have a smart TV or plan on purchasing a new TV, you'll simply connect it to your wireless network. Smart TVs have all the major streaming apps, from Netflix to Vudu, built-in. You can add apps, too, from the brand's app store. If you are buying a new TV, beware of budget brands that may not provide all the apps you want—look into this before making your purchase.

If you don't have a smart TV, you'll need to buy a streaming device for every television you want to use. These connect to your TV via an HDMI port and then to your wireless network. Roku is a popular option, and Amazon, Google, and Apple all have their own devices as well. If you are setting up a smart home ecosystem, you may want to choose a device that integrates with your other tech. Doing this will make for smoother interfacing between devices.

There's a third option if you don't mind using your home computer: connect your desktop, laptop, or tablet to your TV using an HDMI cord and stream from your computer. This doesn't require purchasing any new hardware, but you may find it inconvenient over time.

If you still want access to some live TV, consider buying an HD antenna. This modern version of rabbit ears provides free local channels such as news and sports. After the initial small investment, there's no cost for this option, but channel selection is limited, especially outside of urban areas.

Finally, make sure your router is up to par so it's not the limiting factor for good streaming (that should always be the internet

service you choose). Choose a router with the 802.11ac standard, which can support up to 7 Gbps at once, plenty for even multiple simultaneous streams of 4K media. If you live in an apartment or small house, one powerful router should be all you need, but for larger spaces look into a mesh system to provide stable coverage in every area.

Now that your equipment is in order, let's discuss the meat of the process: streaming services. There are many, many options out there. What you choose depends on what you like to watch. Do you want to keep access to cable networks? Do you like specific genres or types of media? What's your monthly budget? While cutting the cord can certainly reduce your monthly bill, signing up for a few streaming services at once can add up quickly. It's just a matter of your priorities.

Specialty Streaming Services

If all you ever watched on cable was nature shows and movies, you'll probably want to choose a couple of streaming services that provide a lot of the specific type of content you enjoy. Netflix or Hulu are foundational for most people, but beyond that, you'll find a world of niche services, whatever your interest.

Into documentaries? Check out MagellanTV, which offers no-ad access to thousands of documentaries for a low monthly fee. You'll find documentaries in history, science, the development of civilizations, space, and historical dramas.

Can't get enough of anime? Crunchyroll, which has been around since 2006, offers manga, TV dramas, and music. Their first foray into original content, *High Guardian Spice*, is soon to be released.

Need more humor in your life? Laugh Out Loud is a streaming service launched by Kevin Hart and Lionsgate that promotes content curated by Hart. You'll see Hart himself, as well as comedy specials from Matt Ingebretson, Raul Sanchez, and others.

Are you looking to diversify your media consumption? Revry, an LGBTQ streaming service, strives for not only sexual identity but also racial and ethnic diversity in its comedies and dramas. They have both licensed media like *Queer As Folk* and original series, with shows, movies, podcasts, and more.

These are just a handful of the niche streaming services now available (find more on Rotten Tomatoes), and there will surely be more to come as more people cut the cord.

Live TV Streaming Services

If you enjoy network TV, consider choosing a live TV service. Here are a few of the best.

For sports lovers, FuboTV is a must. It offers access to beIN Sports, NBCSN, FOX Sports, TyC Sports, TUDN, ELEVEN Sports, NFL Network, NBA TV, The Tennis Channel, GOL TV, FOX Soccer Plus, The Golf Channel, The Olympic Channel, and PAC 12. You may notice that ESPN is missing from this list, but according to FuboTV CEO, that deal is in the works. This service is not just for sports, either; it provides access to a number of other mainstream channels and some optional add-ons.

Hulu With Live TV is a popular option that gives you access to everything on Hulu plus local TV channels, sports, and news. Hulu also offers add-ons to premium TV networks such as Showtime



and HBO. The plan includes 50 hours of DVR storage as well as support for two screens simultaneously, so it's suitable for smaller households.

Sling TV also gets a lot of attention as a good live TV streaming service. It offers two plans, Orange and Blue, that are each \$25 a month or \$40 combined. Each one offers over 30 channels and the Blue plan supports three simultaneous streams. Its channel lineup is limited, but it's also cheaper than most other options, so if it has the channels you like it's an excellent choice.

PlayStation Vue is not just for people with game consoles. This service has four tiers—one for entertainment channels, a second that adds more sports, a third that provides more movies, and a fourth that includes premium channels like HBO. That fourth tier is almost as expensive as a cable package, but you'll still save a bit of money. It also provides local channels, DVR, and streaming on up to five devices, so people who want more of the bells and whistles will want to consider this service.

Finally, an increasing number of cable networks are offering standalone subscription options, generally for about \$5 to \$15 a month. If you are loyal to certain channels and don't want much else, a few of these may be all you need and give you the exact TV package you want with no extras.

As you can see, cutting the cord is not only a good financial move—after a small up-front investment in the right tech—but can often help you improve the media mix available to you.

Hilary Thompson is a freelance writer with a background in English, content strategy and journalism. She's written for publications like Venturebeat, Today, Women's Health, POPSUGAR, Today's Parent, and Yahoo.

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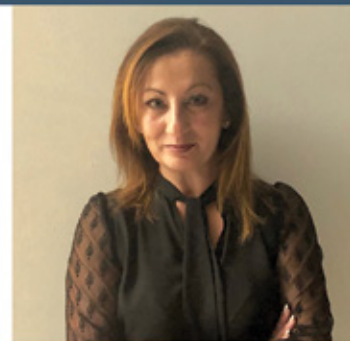
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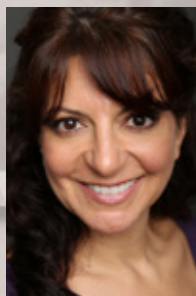
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by Stephanie Herrera

AT THE BOX OFFICE



PG Films

Melissa McCarthy is teaming up with her husband/director Ben Falcone once again in *Superintelligence*. McCarthy plays a very ordinary woman, Carol, living a very non-interesting life when suddenly she finds herself in dialogue with her home devices. At first, she thinks it's all a prank or even a mental breakdown but discovers she has been selected for observation. Soon, Carol finds herself fighting for humanity before this AI takes over the world. This action romantic comedy sparks life on December 20.

Animation fans will not want to miss *Spies in Disguise* on December 25. Will Smith voices Lance Sterling, a super, slick, spy who has to learn to work with Walter Beckett, voiced by Tom Holland, a MIT grad at 15, and socially awkward scientist. When Walter's experiment to turn Lance invisible goes wrong and Lance is instead transformed into a pigeon, the two must team up with their different skill sets in order to save the world.

Dramas

Just Mercy is based on the true story of civil rights defence attorney, Bryan Stevenson (played by Michael B. Jordan), who founded the not-for-profit organization Equal Justice Initiative in 1989 in Alabama. Stevenson takes on the cases of the poor, and wrongly convicted inmates on death row, fighting to prove that it's never too late for justice. The cast is filled with heavy hitters including Brie Larson and Jamie Foxx, and opens on December 25.

Burden is the story of a Ku Klux Klansman, Mike Burden (played by Garrett Hedlund) who opens a KKK museum and Redneck shop in South Carolina. It's only until he falls in love with a young single mother that he is pulled out of his racist haze and is taken under the wing of an African American Reverend. This powerful journey of love and faith has some powerhouse names making up the cast including Andrea Riseborough, Forest Whitaker, and Usher and opens on February 28.

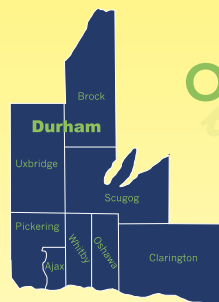
Action

6 Underground is action director Michael Bay's newest block buster and opens December 13. A group of operatives, declared dead, are brought together by a leader named One (Ryan Reynolds), in order to take advantage of their autonomy as they have ceased to "exist". The other 5 agents are equally skilled and ready to fight the untouchable villains that they couldn't get near to in their former lives. Freedom has never been more powerful and justice has found a new action hero.

The franchise is back for one more ride on January 17 with *Bad Boys For Life*. Will Smith and Martin Lawrence reprise their roles as detectives Mike Lowry and Marcus Burnett. Marcus is now a police inspector and Mike is now in a midlife crisis. They decide to work together one last time when an Albanian mercenary, whose brother they killed, tempts them with one last job.

Stephanie as a multi-award-winning actor, writer, director, producer, voice talent, and comedian. She is a published author, co-host of "Eileen and Steph: Everything's Fine" podcast, and is the founder of the Not-for-profit "Durham Improv Collective Inc." Her years of experience in the corporate and entertainment industries has given her an edge as an insurance broker, where she specializes in Business and Entertainment insurance.

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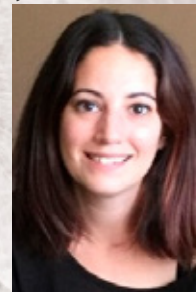


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97 Brock St. W. Suite 2D, Uxbridge, Ontario

by Tara Richardson

Soul Searching



Setting and Keeping New Year's Resolutions

With 2020 quickly approaching, you may be thinking of ways to improve in the new year. Here are some quick tips for being part of the minority of resolution setters who achieve their goals.

Write it down

Simple fact. People who write resolutions down are more likely to achieve them than people who just keep it in their head.

Connect to your 'why'

Resolving to go to the gym four days per week is great, but it's important to understand why this is so valuable to you. Keep it real and don't pick the generic socially acceptable answer. For example, if you want to go to the gym four days a week so you can have six-pack abs and pick up the ladies, don't write 'to feel healthy'. Feeling healthy is not going to get your butt to the gym because there's no burning emotion attached to it.

Plan for barriers

If you are trying to save money for a vacation but are continually tempted by 40% off sales at Old Navy, set yourself up for success by planning for things that could get in the way. Have a brainstorming session where you identify potential barriers (i.e. going shopping with a friend, needing something else at the mall, feeling bored, etc.) and create a plan for each barrier should it occur. Researchers in goal setting call these 'implementation intentions'. An example of this is, 'When I am socializing with a friend at the mall, I will leave my credit card at home'.

Make visual reminders

Life's busy and we get swept up easily in other things so it's easy to lose track of our resolutions. Create visual cues to remind you of what's important to you. Consider making your email password more meaningful, like 'fit4life2019'. Create a vision board. I personally love vision boards and cut out important images to represent my goals, then tape them to my closet door. If you're not feeling crafty, try simply writing your resolution on a cue card and sticking it on your bathroom mirror. Or, make your computer screen saver a picture of the car you're saving for.

Celebrate your wins

You may think that rewarding yourself for small wins is indulgent or resembles a 5-year-old's chore chart, but celebrating your success can encourage you to stick to your resolution. Just make sure that your rewards are not sabotaging any gains you've made. (For example, treating yourself to a new shirt when you've put aside money towards buying a car.) Also, reserve certain activity rewards only for when you're on track with your goals. The only time I buy scratch tickets is when I've reached my writing goal for the week. It's a treat because it's rare. If you buy scratch tickets every week anyway then it's not much of an incentive.

Finally, be kind to yourself if you get off track with your resolution. Setbacks happen; it's a matter of repeatedly resolving until your goal has been met. And remind yourself that if you are off track by February 1st, any day is a good day for self-improvement.

Tara is a wellness blogger for The Local Biz Magazine who hopes to publish her memoir on finding hope and meaning while living with a mental illness.



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by Bianca Schaefer

Get Fit: Inside & Out

The Secret to Having a Great Outdoor Winter Workout: The Warm up!

When you're pressed for time or just eager to start your workout, it can be tempting to skip your warm up and just dive right in. But no matter what form of exercise you choose, warming up beforehand has some very real physiological and psychological benefits. The key to a great workout can often be found in the preparation you do before you start. And frankly, if you want to increase your chances of an injury-free workout – especially if you're heading outdoors during colder temperatures, a proper warm up is a must! Here's what you need to know.

Why warm up?

Warming up before you exercise increases your overall body temperature and blood-flow to your muscles. The benefit? It improves muscle elasticity and increases your range of motion which allows your joints to reach their maximum movement potential. In other words, it can help improve your performance. Another great benefit to the warm up is that it mentally prepares you for the workout to come. Visualizing what you will do and the steps you need to take to help you reach your goals can be a great way to focus and get motivated. Finally, it's a discovery process which can help you learn a lot about your body. Notice tight muscles, aches or pains? Hopefully they disappear during your warm up. Are you dressed properly? Now's the chance to make any changes. Need to head to the bathroom? Better do it now.

What to do and for how long?

If you're heading outdoors for your workout, (i.e. running, skiing, snowshoeing), do your warm up outdoors as well. The reason being is that your body needs to acclimate to the temperatures and this could impact the duration of your warm up. I recommend at least 10 minutes but if you find yourself still feeling cold or tight add more time. Start with dynamic stretching which involves continuously moving through your range of motion. Think shoulder rolls, arm circles, knee and ankle circles. It's also helpful to tailor your warm up to your specific workout. For example, knee ups for running, squats for skiing and lunges for snowshoeing.

How does it feel when you're warmed up?

You feel warm! You feel loose. Your heart rate is elevated. And hopefully you feel motivated! Keep in mind that it is an individual process which involves a little trial and error before you find your perfect groove.

Final Tips:

Avoid static stretches (for example: bending over to touch your toes and holding there for a long period of time). During your warm up, your muscles aren't "warm" enough yet and doing static stretches can actually cause injury. The best time to incorporate static stretching is during your post-workout cool down. Not only will this help alleviate the feeling of tight muscles, it's a great way to mentally relax after your workout and feel good about your accomplishment.

Bianca Schaefer is a 360 Holistic Health Coach who inspires a global community to take charge of their health through nourishing their body, mind and soul with delicious foods, an active lifestyle and a mindset that believes anything is possible. Find out more about Bianca Schaefer on her personal website, Bianca Schaefer.



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Tweens, Teens & In-Between

by Sarah Malik



"Our self-expression is meant to be a manifestation of the silence of our hearts"

Matthew Fox

Hello Readers! While thinking about this season's column, I began to reminisce about why I even write, and what writing has done for me in the past and continues to do today. I have always thought of myself as more of a listener and a thinker. I never loved getting out of my comfort zone. Writing became a great way for me to express my ideas. Which for a while worked, but I soon learned that with writing, it can be difficult to have a detailed conversation, the kind that generates innovative ideas. And that's when I realized that if everyone was a "thinker and a listener", then there would be nothing to think about and no one to listen to - we'd all be lost in our own minds. From writing my ideas down, I learned other ways to communicate, and I found that by doing so I became a better writer. Participating in discussions, and asking questions allowed me to get a first-person look at the lives of other people and allowed me to connect that with my own place in the world.

I think a lot goes on in our minds that we aren't even aware of, and when we write we are really just slowing down and recording those thoughts and ideas. The amazing part about this is that no two people record their ideas the same way. You might have two completely different mediums of expression. One person may draw up an image that represents how they feel and another person might turn it into a song. The point is that even if both people were to write an essay about their thoughts, the words and emotions, that they bring to the page would be very different. The only thing unifying the two works would be the feeling of belonging felt by everyone viewing them.

The interesting aspect of this is that every person who views a piece of work has something new and unique to bring to it, which brings me back to the importance of sharing our thoughts and encouraging ourselves to break out of our comfort zones. No matter how different we may be, people have the tendency to look for themselves in the work of others, and most often find it. This is what brings people together, it lets people find comfort in the words of others, and connects them back to the world reminding themselves that someone somewhere understands.

When I think about myself and how hearing the stories of others has given me hope and solace during hard times, it encourages me to write more and share my stories, thoughts and ideas, in hopes that someone else can also find comfort in my words. This season I challenge you to speak up for what you believe in, share your thoughts with the world, and push yourselves to step outside of your comfort zone! Until next time Readers! I hope you have a joyous winter!

Sarah Malik is a Grade 12 student. She loves to read, write, and go on walks with her family and friends. Her dream is to one day travel the world.

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Family Matters

by Josie Myers



Rushing around trying to find the perfect gift and plan the perfect meal can create a stressful season. Worst of all, those aren't things the holidays are all about. The holidays are meant for relaxing and spending time with loved ones. In this crazy digital age, these things are easily forgotten. Kids think Christmas is all about Santa, and their parents are stressed to the max trying to give their family everything, including elaborate gifts. It doesn't have to be that way. There are many things we can do to show our family what really matters this holiday season.

1. Focus on experiences rather than gifts

Gifts can feel meaningless, both for the giver and the receiver. Oftentimes, the people we are buying for seem to have everything they need already. Consider reducing the number of gifts you give this season and creating a fun experience for your family instead. Not only will you have fun in the moment, but you'll make great memories too! There's no need to be fancy either. There are many things you can do during the holidays that are free or inexpensive.

- Organize a Christmas light tour
- Find a new sledding hill
- Go caroling

2. Start a new tradition

Traditions are a huge part of the holidays. There's feasting on turkey dinner, trimming the tree, and hanging stockings, just to name a few. Why not come up with a new tradition? Involve your kids and create something special that you'll all get excited about every year. Here are some things to get you thinking about the type of tradition you can start.

- Visit a seniors' home
- Volunteer at the local food bank

3. Give to those less fortunate

The holidays are also about helping people around us who could use an extra hand, financially or otherwise. Showing our kids how to help others is a great way to teach them compassion and generosity. Here are some inexpensive ways to help your community.

- Donate gently used items like toys or clothing
- Purchase one less gift and donate the money you would have spent on it to a local community agency

So often, the holiday season starts to feel commercial and cold. Show your family what the holidays really mean this season by spending time together, sharing your love, and creating wonderful memories.

With a master's degree in education and a background in Reiki, Josie Myers is an expert teacher and healer at her private practice Josie Myers - Opening and Balancing Life Force Energy. Josie helps moms find peace by supporting and guiding them to make the most of their motherhood journey. Josie lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and son and her two cats.

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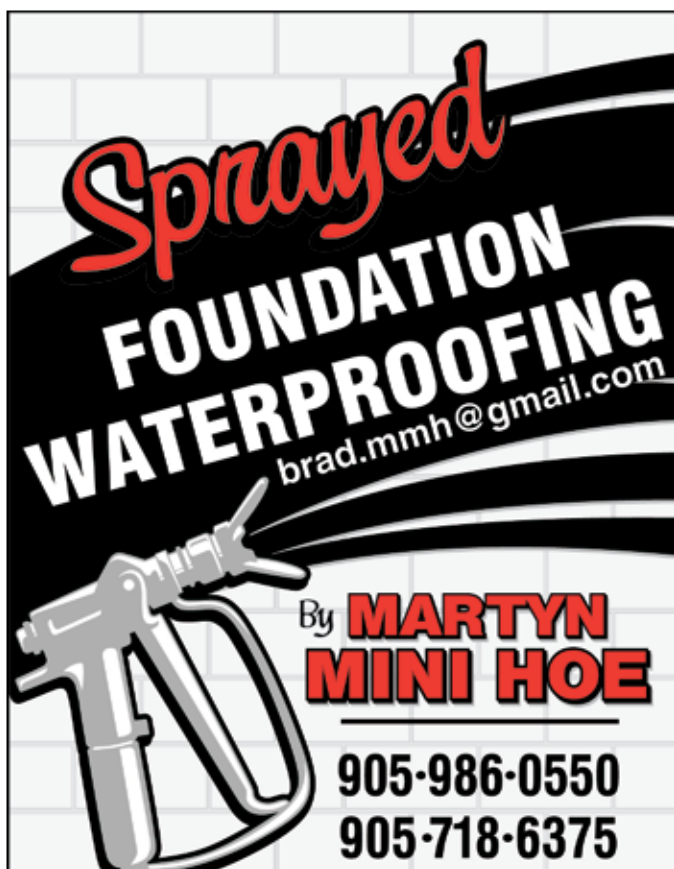
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A Forkful of Healthy

Vegetarian Pumpkin Chili



This vegetarian pumpkin chili is filled with flavour, texture, and just enough spice. Oh, and it's vegan and gluten free too! Combining easy canned ingredients with fresh produce, this quick one pot meal will warm you up in the winter months. I recommend sticking to the base of this recipe including the delicious spices, herbs, and other key ingredients.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil
1 cup chopped yellow onion
1 pepper (any colour), diced
1 small jalapeno, minced and seeds removed
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp salt
½ tsp fresh black pepper
½ tsp cinnamon
2 ½ tsp ground cumin
2 tsp chili powder
1 tsp onion powder
2 cups vegetable broth
3 cans (14 oz) diced tomatoes



1 can (15 oz) pinto beans
1 can (15 oz) kidney beans
1 can (15 oz) pumpkin puree
1 sweet potato, large, peeled and diced
Optional for Serving
Chopped cilantro
Chopped red onion
Sliced avocado

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a large pot. Add the onion, green pepper and jalapeno. Stir and cook for 5 minutes as onion softens.
2. Add garlic, salt, black pepper, cinnamon, cumin, chili powder, and onion powder. Stir and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add remaining ingredients.
4. Place lid on top, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Serve with any optional toppings.

Freezing Instructions:

Chili freezes up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator, then heat up in a pot.

Slow Cooker Instructions:

Place all ingredients in a slow cooker and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Protein:	Carbs:	Fat:
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Wendy is a food blogger, food photographer, writer, lifestyle strategist, self-taught chef and lover of animals. While living in Paris, she mastered the art of a perfect crepe and French cuisine, and also discovered the world of fabulous wines and champagne! Her passion to find healthy alternatives to popular dishes stems from her desire to live a fit and healthy lifestyle while still enjoying food!

by Wendy Chiavalon

MONEY MATTERS



We can all agree that money is a very important topic. It is something that affects every aspect of our lives. Unfortunately, it is a subject that most of us were never taught in school. For some, money may have also been a subject matter not discussed in the household growing up.

Financial literacy is vital. Learning how to budget, create a savings plan, set up an emergency fund, save for retirement, invest, etc., are all important skills to learn.

If you work in the financial sector, or have a financial background and are passionate about sharing your financial knowledge and expertise with others, we would love for you to be our next *Money Matters* columnist. For more information on this opportunity, please email me at editor@thelocalbizmagazine.ca

Wendy Chiavalon is the Editor-in-Chief of The Local Biz Magazine.



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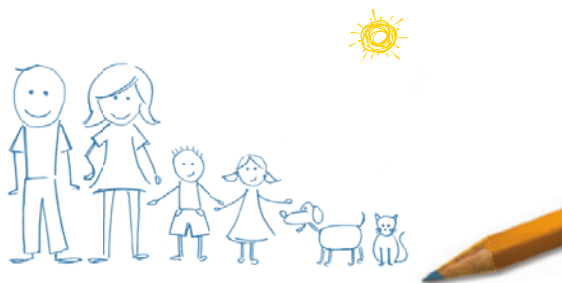
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*Ask
Sue-Ann*



Dear Sue-Ann:

I am struggling. The holidays are coming and this year it is my turn to cook and have the entire family at my house. The family drama is always at a maximum. It can get very tense very quickly and it is usually over past stories. My mother-in-law is always telling me I am not doing anything like she would and it makes me crazy. My husband steps back and just says "don't worry." The expense of it all takes a chunk out of our money that I would like to spend on our kids. Then, at the end of the day not one person says "thanks." My questions are, Why and How do I get through it and not end up with a nervous breakdown, angry or in tears.

Signed: The family Christmas Grinch :)

A: There is not a hostess alive that has not felt what you are feeling at one family gathering or even worse, every family gathering. Family actions at these events are habitual... the same people will drink too much, the same people will argue, the same people will complain, the same people will irritate you.

What I hear you saying is you would like to get off that hamster wheel. In the end it comes back to "choice". You choose to let it bother you. You cannot control the behaviour and reaction of anyone that comes to the gathering. What you can do is redirect the flow of how things go. Tighten up the amount of time they are there by stating a start time and an end time (and you are not obligated to state why). Provide things for them to do so the same old conversations don't start. Games and choosing topic of conversation can assist in things going smoother. Instead of waiting for people to offer to help, assign tasks to people so everything moves along smoothly. The financial burden can be spread by asking people to bring something.

In the end, it is just planning on your part. Keep in mind that next year you will have a break. One of the most important elements is to decide that the event will be fun and loving and peaceful from the beginning. This state of mind will help you look for opportunities to fulfill your goals. Happy Holidays.

Affirmation: With each breath that I take, I exhale stress and inhale peace. I am peaceful.

Sue-Ann is a mother of 3 and resides in the Oshawa area. She chooses to utilize her undeniable psychic ability to assist you in resolving all of life's issues. Host and Community Producer of Divine Lane on Rogers Cable 10, Tuesdays at 9 pm. You can find out more and forward your submissions to Sue-Ann at sue-ann@divinelane.com.

The COACH Corner

by Malachi Brown



Is Anxiety Ruining Your Life?

When I ask people, "where their life is, or where they think it's heading," I often notice a feeling of anxiety creeps up in them. What causes this feeling?

I believe a lot of the anxiety that people feel is self-imposed. We live in a culture that markets unreal expectations. It forces us — if we are not careful — into believing that to be content with your life is a sign that you are not an achiever.

I remember speaking to a gentleman a while back, who in his mind was a "mover and shaker." He outlined to me all the things he was working on, all the things he was planning on achieving, as he climbed the ladder of being a successful entrepreneur. He outlined his plans and the path he was going to take, which included long hours and getting rid of anything or anyone in his way. There was a lot of anxiety with his plans. He was totally convinced however, success was guaranteed.

After outlining his ambitious plans, partly trying to impress me, he asked about me. What were my ambitious plans? When I calmly explained to him that I was quite content, he was shocked by my response. He went on to lecture me that I had very little ambition. Being content was a sign of settling he said. He basically told me that was a sign of someone who is basically going nowhere in life.

Had he taken the time to ask me about my contentment, my lack of anxiety, he would better understand why my answer was what it was. First, I didn't say I had no interest in being successful in life. I didn't say I didn't want more for my life; I didn't say I had no plans. What I was saying was I was content. I was being grateful, first, for where I was in life. I was accepting the success I currently had in my life. I was counting my blessings and not taking them for granted. I was being thankful for my loving family, health and friends. This represents a very partial list of the things I am thankful for.

I want more from life, however, I believe in order to be truly successful we need to take the time to acknowledge and be thankful for the blessings we currently have. Now, I know some people will say that's good for you, you have a lot to be thankful for. However, you too have a lot to be thankful for. The difference is we can take a lot for granted and not see them as blessings.

I ran into the gentleman along with his wife recently and when I asked how he was doing, he sheepishly looked away. His wife answered and mentioned all the things he was chasing did not work. He had now settled into a more contented life, which suited her and the rest of their family far better.

There is nothing wrong with wanting more out of life. You can however avoid a lot of anxiety in your life by practicing gratitude. What are you grateful for each day?

Malachi Brown, life coach, applies his passion in helping others unlock their full potential, enabling them to live the abundant lives they were created to have.

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by Linda Calder

The Golden Years



A lot of people look forward to winter. They enjoy skating, skiing, and other winter sports. I'm not one of these people. I enjoy winter in my own way. Sitting next to a warm fire during a snowstorm while the wind howls and blows snow around. Watching my geraniums that I moved inside bloom pink and red against the wonderful backdrop of white snow outside. Cozy and comforting—this is what winter is all about for me.

The wonderful thing about winter is the “white” all around. Just like the Inuit have fifty words for snow (for example, ‘qanik’ is ‘snow falling’, ‘aputi’ is ‘snow on the ground’ and ‘pukak’ is ‘crystalline snow on the ground’), I read that there are approximately almost 500 shades of white. How many shades of white do we see when we look at fresh snow on the ground?

It's so pretty to see the ground covered with freshly fallen snow. Or the sun shining on ice covered trees before they slowly begin to drip. What an opportunity it is to take pictures of this beautiful, silent landscape. Take pictures from a distance when the sun is shining. Take pictures on cloudy days. Take pictures of things that strike your fancy (like a plant or tree). Then move in for some close ups. Once I took a picture of my frosty kitchen window from the inside. What I got was a magical picture that resembled an underwater scene. I would show it to people and ask them to guess what it was; not too many people guessed correctly.

Once you have taken pictures of the ‘serene landscape’, let your grandkids loose outside in the snow. A fun activity is to catch snowflakes on cold construction paper and compare them under a magnifying glass (no two snowflakes are alike)! Then let the fun begin. Snow angels, snow forts, and snow ball fights are just a few of the things that I did as a child that are still enjoyed by my grandson. (A clothes dryer comes in handy when the kids get really soaked in slushy snow!)

Take lots of pictures. When my grandson was young, I made him a book of pictures I had taken. I printed one picture on each page and then wrote a few words about the picture. I stapled half a dozen pages together to make a picture book of memories.

You can use the pictures you take for scrapbooking. Take pictures of your grandkids and you enjoying winter. Take pictures of winter scenes, especially your garden. If you have summer and fall pictures of your garden, try taking pictures of the same spots covered in snow. Write a few words below each picture to retain your memories if you wish. Encourage your grandkids to take up scrapbooking as well. When my grandson was younger, he made a small scrapbook of his own.

The coming of winter is inevitable, but there are many ways you can enjoy the season. Discover yours.

Linda Calder is a retired teacher. She likes to write and enjoys spending time with her family. She also enjoys going on cruises, taking pictures and scrapbooking.

Winter Horoscope

DECEMBER 2019 to FEBRUARY 2020

by Julie Antoinette



Aries (March 21 – April 20)

You are in a pivoting stage, gearing to launch into a new direction. The universe has lined up all circumstances and cooperative components. Everything you ordered is about to be served. It seems someone in your life opposes this change. They'd be best served if you were to remain as you were. Since our external reality often reflects the internal, you may want to examine what part of yourself this person represents. Fear of moving forward? Fear of the unknown? Do you fear you don't deserve all you've asked for? Work it out or miss out.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

A recent loss has caused you to re-evaluate how you've been living. Living in the past creates depression and living in the future creates anxiety. It is in the midst of each moment that you feel truly alive. Since you are always in the midst of one moment or another, the opportunity to feel truly alive is available to you always. This loss was designed for your gain. Carpe each diem.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

You lack a boundary with someone in your life who feels quite liberal with using your energy. Consider them your teacher. Your lesson is to learn the effective use of the word, "NO". Yes, it can also function as a complete sentence. Proper use of this word can help to identify the border where this person's respect for you ends – and your respect for yourself begins.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

It is said that you are the sum of the five people you surround yourself with. Consider the individuals in your life that you are in most frequent contact with. Chances are, you have absorbed and exchanged energies. Notice the quality of these energies and make changes if necessary.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

You are in awe at the synchronicities happening in your life. One day, you'll think randomly of a person from the past. The next day, they call or you bump into them or hear news of them. Trust that nothing is random. If you are thinking of them, they are also thinking of you.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Control issues are surfacing lately. You notice little controlling quirks in others and it bothers you that every detail is micro-managed. Think about why this behavior is so bothersome to you. What does it trigger with you? It's time to examine your own control issues. Most importantly, remember to relax, nothing is under control.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Conflicts around commitment are arising in your personal life. You love your freedom, but the planets have designed you specifically for partnership. The lesson here is to un-learn the negative associations you've attached to the idea of commitment related to loss of freedom. A balanced approach would help you realize that sometimes two heads are better than one and that backs cannot scratch themselves.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

That dream you've had since you were a kid is still waiting for you to bring it to life. But it seems that life got in the way. Still, it pops up in your thoughts, is present in your sleep and nags you in your silent moments. Your dream is valid and persistent. There are people whose dreams depend on yours becoming a reality. They say either build your own dream or help someone else build theirs. Luckily in your case, you can do both.

Sagittarius (November 23 – December 21)

As cooler temperatures approach, thoughts of sunny days and ocean vistas draw you away from concentrating at work. Put the wheels in motion by planning a vacation with loved ones or go solo if you must. It will be like hitting the proverbial RESET button. When you return, you'll feel refreshed, focused and energized.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

While considering a particular relationship, you see that your efforts to preserve peace and harmony have backfired. Someone has grown very comfortable with your accommodating manner and pushes your boundaries often. You wonder whether you are just kept around for the perks. When respect is no longer being served, it's time to leave the table.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Avoidance and detachment have been your coping strategies since you endured that traumatic event long ago. To date, you've successfully avoided and detached yourself into several million fragments. Painkillers are for the acute period of injury only. Anything beyond that becomes a slippery slope into addiction. And eventually, the drugs won't work. Feel it and heal it.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

A recent health issue is causing concern. You would do well to consider that mind, body and emotion work in concert. Sometimes emotions get stuck in our bodies. If we refuse to feel things, our body will feel them for us. You can talk with your body, but listening would benefit you more. It's got lots to say to you.

Written by Julie Antoinette. Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate. In her free time, she is a crochet adventurer and musical muse. In this horoscope, she relays intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.

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